

# Abandoning taxes to keep trucks moving is a profoundly ...

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As [The Independent](#) has reported:

*Taxes totalling £800m could go unpaid this year because of border checks on lorries being scaled back to avoid queues at ports after Brexit, MPs have been told.*

*HM Revenue and Customs accepts that money will be lost because of a decision to prioritise free flow of traffic over revenue protection, chief executive Jim Harra told the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee.*

This is important for a number of reasons.

First, tax requires that the rule of law be consistently upheld. If the Revenue choose not to do that then so will others. Tax evasion will increase.

Second, there is deliberate economic distortion implicit in this policy. We all have heard stories of significant charges on parcels deliveries, whilst pallet load hauliers who service smaller business appear to have pretty much given up attempts to import or export, meaning that sector is now left isolated by Brexit, with markets being destroyed in the process. That means most of the trucks being waved through will now be carrying goods for big business. This creates significant risk if yet more concentration in the UK business sector is to be avoided.

And third, there is risk in this process that Brussels might suggest that the waiver of taxes is unfair state subsidy or the creation of an unlevel playing field, with retaliation being possible. I did not see anything in the Brexit agreement that said national unpreparedness was a reasonable excuse for such things to be created.

Add it up, and this could be a mightily costly and deeply resented blind eye being turned to hide the simple fact that Brexit has profoundly unfortunate consequences. The price will be paid eventually, but my fear is that it will be in lawlessness. And that is really worrying.