

Closer UK-EU relationship “a no brainer” amid global economic uncertainty – TUC

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[The TUC](#) has called a closer trading relationship with the EU “a no brainer” in an increasingly unpredictable global economy.

The call comes ahead of this week’s UK-EU summit, after months of international economic volatility amid Trump tariffs.

The TUC general secretary has called the summit a “positive first step” towards a closer relationship – and urged the government to continue to show ambition and keep its options open on what a reset looks like.

TUC polling has shown significant support for a reset in the UK’s relationship with the EU.

According to the nationally representative poll of 5,000 people, two in three (66%) Brits back a closer relationship with the EU – with just 20% opposed.

This includes key target voters:

- Eight in ten Conservative to Labour switchers at the 2024 general election
- More than half (56%) of Reform-leaning voters (who voted Labour in 2024 but would now vote Reform) support a closer UK-EU relationship- 28 pc oppose

Botched Tory agreement

The TUC says the Conservatives' Brexit arrangement was "botched" – and set workers and business back in both the UK and EU.

The TUC says the 2016 Brexit referendum must be honoured while delivering a "much-needed" closer trading relationship.

The union body is calling for:

- Increased opportunities for UK workers to take up good quality jobs in the EU and removal of barriers for creative workers to tour in the EU through a UK-EU mobility agreement
- Increased opportunities for vocational skills training through schemes such as Erasmus+
- Alignment of UK and EU emissions trading schemes so that UK goods are not hit with EU carbon border tariffs
- Reduction in trade barriers and border checks to improve trade flows between the EU and the UK, which in turn is good for job creation and growth. This must include mutual recognition of professional qualifications, and closer alignment of chemical and food standards, among other areas.
- Commitment to uphold mutual high standards on workers' rights

TUC General Secretary Paul Nowak said:

"In an increasingly volatile economy, a closer trading relationship with the EU is a no brainer.

"Today's summit is a positive first step to securing that much-needed reset – the government must continue with an ambitious approach and keep its options open.

"The Conservatives' botched Brexit agreement set workers and business back at home and abroad.

"It's time for a new approach that honours the referendum result while giving us a much-needed closer trading relationship with EU.

"Fundamentally that means reducing trading barriers to deliver a boost to British jobs.

"It means greater mobility and opportunities for British workers in the EU and European workers in the UK.

And it means upholding mutual high standards on workers' rights.

"Unions stand ready to work with the government to achieve these goals."

Mike Clancy, Chair of the Domestic Advisory Group and General Secretary of Prospect said:

"Any government that is serious about growth needs to be serious about getting a better deal with the EU.

"In the UK-EU reset talks the UK government must be bold and focus on the art of the possible, rather than drawing up so-called red lines.

"At the heart of their approach must be removing barriers to trade, and improving workers' rights and social protections."