



# Brexit: Unite demands protections for you

 **Brexit** **Check** 

**Automotive Sector**

# Brexit: Unite demands protections for you



**The referendum result on 23rd June sent shock waves throughout the UK, making the politicians and the media sit up and take notice.**

Unite recognises that millions of working people, including many of our members voted to exit the EU. The question now is on whose terms will Brexit happen?

We must unite to make sure that Brexit happens on our terms – protecting jobs and retaining vital workers' rights while outlining our vision for Post-Brexit Britain.

The same out-of-touch Tory government which called the referendum now has no plan for dealing with the result. That negligence has led to uncertainty which threatens all sectors of our economy – from manufacturing, to transport and finance.

As the financial crisis proved, in Tory Britain it is working people who are always forced to pay the price in times of uncertainty. A Tory vision of Brexit would see further austerity and attacks on our working rights, while racism and division would be allowed to run unchecked in our communities. Brexit must not be used as an excuse to cut jobs, move work out of the UK or attack workers' rights.

We cannot sit back and accept Brexit on the Tories' terms.

Unite is demanding a new industrial strategy, a plan which includes all our sectors, with decent jobs, fair pay and strong working rights at its heart.

Such a strategy must use every tool at the government's disposal including: plugging the skills gap by supporting apprenticeships; use of the public sector procurement to support manufacturing; removing barriers to reshoring jobs; and direct support for our strategic industries such as steel and energy.

This should culminate in new infrastructure projects to create jobs and grow our economy. Such a strategy would make sure Britain retains the best of the EU, while putting trade union values at the centre of Post-Brexit Britain.

***“Nobody knows how long the Brexit negotiations will take or what the outcome will be. One thing is certain. Unite will defend our members. Together we will campaign to protect jobs, pay and conditions.”***

***Len McCluskey, Unite General Secretary***



**We Won't Pay for 'Brexit':** Exiting the EU must not result in a renewed attack on our jobs, rights and communities.



**Article 50:** The government must not trigger 'Article 50' before a clear negotiating position has a mandate from the people via a vote in Parliament.



**Access to the Single Market:** Tariff-free access to the Single Market is vital to defend jobs. Such access will allow us to retain the best of the EU, while committing to a much needed industrial strategy.



**A Seat at the Table for Workers:** The collective voice of millions of working people must be central to the negotiations.



**An Ambitious Industrial Strategy:** The only way to mitigate the impact of Brexit is with an ambitious industrial strategy, using all options at the government's disposal.



## Safeguards Against Exploitation Unite on 'Freedom of Movement'

Unite is calling for safeguards that defend all workers against wage cutting and that must include ending the exploitation of migrant workers.

These safeguards must include stronger collective bargaining rights, so any employer wishing to recruit labour abroad should only be able to do so if they are either covered by a proper trade union agreement or by sectoral collective bargaining.

This would allow us to hold the line and guarantee a union-backed 'rate for the job', no matter a workers' country of origin. Such safeguards would end the race-to-the-bottom attacks on wages, terms and conditions.

**Len McCluskey, Unite General Secretary, says:**

*"The problem is not cheap labour in Britain – its cheap labour anywhere. Anyone who has had to negotiate for workers, in manufacturing in particular, knows the huge difficulties that have been caused by the ability of capital to move production around the world in search of far lower labour costs and higher profits. Supply and demand affects the sale of labour too, pitting worker against worker."*

Unite supports all our members and will continue to support the right of EU workers to remain in the UK after Brexit.

Our role as a trade union is to unite working people to defend and promote our shared interests – secure work, decent pay and a strong collective voice.

We must not allow 'Tory Brexit' to be used as a weapon to divide us and drive down wages.

# The Impact of Brexit in the Workplace

**The government has signalled that the UK is likely to Leave the European Union before 2020, but that doesn't mean Brexit won't have an immediate impact in our workplaces.**

Already several large companies have made statements about future investment decisions. Unite is demanding that the government end the uncertainty by stating that guaranteed tariff-free access to the Single Market will be a red line in the coming negotiations.

Similarly, Unite is demanding that all workers' rights, health and safety standards and consultation rights which are underpinned by EU law are retained in UK law when Brexit takes effect.

Some employers may look to take advantage of the uncertainty, using Brexit as a cover to cut investment or undermine our rights.



If you sit on a European Works Councils or Social Dialogue project you cannot be excluded while the UK remains a member of the EU.



Employers cannot opt out of EU legal rulings, such as the ruling protecting holiday pay, which remain in effect.



Employers cannot claim that legislation such as the Working Time Directive, the Agency Worker Directive or the Driving Hours Directive no longer applies to UK workers.



## Brexit In Your Workplace

Unite will be launching a new 'Brexit Check' website to monitor the impact of Brexit and provide the resources you need.

Let us know what impact Brexit is having in your workplace. Contact: [automotive@unitetheunion.org](mailto:automotive@unitetheunion.org)



## A Time to Unite: Fighting Racism with Solidarity

It is a guiding principle of our movement that an injury to one is an injury to all. That means Unite is committed to opposing any incidence of racism, prejudice or sectarian division in the workplace.

The EU referendum was divisive. Opinions were strongly held, debate was heated and some of the deep divisions in our society were exposed.

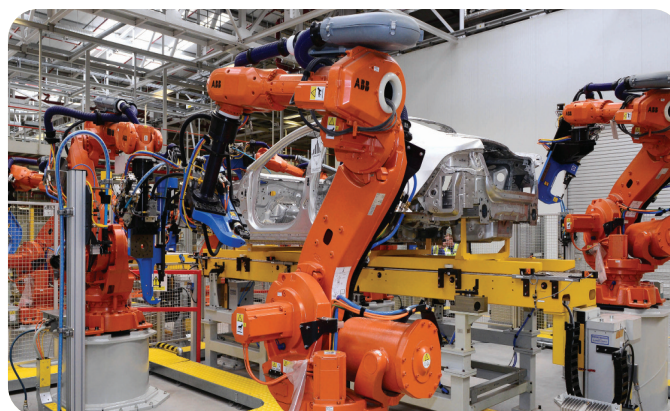
Right-wing politicians and their allies in the media did all they could to sow distrust and exploit these divisions for their own ends.

No matter which way you voted, the priority now is to unite.

As Britain prepares to withdraw from the European Union, the resulting uncertainty may once again give way to fear.

It is a priority of our union not only to defend our members' jobs, but to defend their safety. Unite will continue to defend EU nationals and other migrant workers who live and work in the UK. We support their right to remain.

It is our role, as workplace representatives and shop stewards, to take the lead and make sure that solidarity triumphs over division.



## Defending Your Workplace: Make Your Voice Heard

Our strength as a trade union comes from our organisation in the workplace. It is vital that we use this strength to protect our members from the possible impact of Brexit.



You have the right to disclosure. Demand that your employer shares information about their planned response to Brexit, including plans for future investment.



If you have pay talks or other negotiations planned demand that your employer publically pledges to retain all working rights, terms and conditions, including access to European Works Councils.



Can you organise a branch or workplace meeting to discuss the impact of Brexit at work and how to organise our response?



# Brexit and Your Sector



## Brexit and the Manufacturing Sectors

### Brexit and an Industrial Strategy

There is no doubt that the threat of so-called 'Hard Brexit' hangs over our manufacturing industries.

Brexit on the Tories' terms would follow over thirty years of de-industrialisation. Indeed, senior Tory economists such as Patrick Minford see Brexit as their chance to finish the job Thatcher started. This is why it is essential that Brexit is linked to an ambitious, long-term industrial strategy.

Such a strategy must marshal all options at the government's disposal to re-balance our economy, and grow a 21st century manufacturing base. It is our job to make sure that trade union values are central to this - that's secure work, decent pay and a strong collective voice.

Unite is calling for the government to develop an 'Industrial Toolkit' a range of options to create new jobs and give manufacturing a vital boost. This includes:

- **Reshoring Jobs:** Removing the barriers to bringing manufacturing work back to the UK.
- **Invest in Skills:** The UK needs nearly 1 million new engineers and highly skilled workers by 2020 and that need must be met with high quality apprenticeships
- **Support our strategic industries:** From steel to energy and the railways, the government must retain the option to bring these vital industries into public ownership.
- **Positive Procurement:** The government can use the £200 billion a year public sector budget to

create a strong, stable internal market to support manufacturing

- **Invest in Infrastructure:** Road and rail should be just the start of ambitious new infrastructure projects, ranging from HS2 to a new 5G Broadband network.

Such an industrial strategy must be linked to securing tariff-free access to the Single Market and retaining all positive EU-based laws – from workers' rights to environmental protections.

Taken together this is a strategy for retaining the best parts of the EU, while taking full advantage of any opportunities that arise from Brexit. The priority in the months ahead is for the government to end the uncertainty that is plaguing industry – and come clean on its plans for Brexit.

We must make sure our members' voices are heard – in the workplace and in Parliament - to scrutinise the government's plans, and show we will not accept a version of Brexit that threatens our members' jobs and livelihoods.





## Brexit and the Automotive Sector

The Automotive sector has been one of UK manufacturing's greatest success stories. Unite members across the industry are rightly proud to be the essential component at the heart of this world beating industry. The Tories cannot be allowed to put this at risk.

The automotive sector is truly global. The cars rolling off the production lines may be badged with the most British of brands - Mini, Bentley, Rolls-Royce, Jaguar Land Rover – but these firms are international.

Similarly the industry is dependent on a UK-EU wide supply chain. Many manufactures, such as Nissan and Toyota operate 'Just in Time' supply chains, where they only stock essential components for a number of hours. Any break in the supply chain that runs from Aberdeen to Athens has the potential to cause major problems.

That is why Unite is demanding that the government publically commits to pursuing tariff-free access to the Single Market. This would maintain the integrity of the supply chain, while giving industry the stability needed to invest in new vehicle models.

However, both employers and the government can go much further than this.

Unite is calling on all employers to pledge that hard earned workers' rights – from equality of pay, to the Working Time Directive, access to European Works Councils and the rights to consultation – are all retained regardless of Brexit.

Unite will not accept any watering down of workers' rights, terms or conditions. We are calling on shop stewards, reps and members to be vigilant for any employer who seeks to take advantage of the ongoing uncertainty.

The union is also lobbying the government – centrally, devolved and regionally – to adopt new procurement rules so public bodies, from councils to police forces, can support our industry by buying UK made vehicles. This is just one way that a stable and strong internal market can be create to support the communities which rely on our industry,

***The future of the automotive industry must be based on decent pay, guaranteed rights and a strong voice at work. That must mean defending hard earned employment rights, such as agency worker protections, while also pursuing an ambitious industrial that grows our sector, with more quality apprenticeships. That is what Brexit on our terms can look like.***

***Tony Murphy, National Officer,  
Automotive Sector***

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Q) How can Workers' Rights be protected?

From equal pay to the Working Time Directive, EU laws underpin many of the rights and protections trade unions have fought for. These must be protected by UK law and retained in full from the moment Brexit takes effect. We must also use our strength in the workplace to demand that employers publically pledge to retain all rights, terms and conditions, including access to European Works Councils.

## Q) Why is access to the Single Market important for Automotive?

Unite is calling for the UK to achieve tariff-free access to the Single Market

- If the UK leaves the EU without a trade deal exporters face costly tariffs on goods being sold into Europe
- Value of EU exports across automotive was over £10 billion in 2015 – 49% of all carmakers' exports.
- Example: 55% of Nissan sales are to the Single Market. New tariffs would cost Nissan £290 million a year. That's £1.8 billion over the a model's lifecycle

## Q) What about 'Hard Brexit'?

If the UK fails to negotiate a new trade deal with the EU in the two-year window that follows the triggering of Article 50 the result is 'Hard Brexit'. This would result in the UK falling back on World Trade Organisation rules, which means costly tariffs. This could be as much as 10% on all exports and 4% on imports, which would hit manufacturing hard as it would sever UK-European supply chains. It would also result in a new cost of living crisis with a dramatic rise in cost of imports such as food and consumer goods. This is why tariff-free access to the Single Market is vital to defend jobs.

## Q) What alternatives are there to EU membership?

Unite has analysed the most commonly mentioned alternatives to full EU membership including the so-called 'Norwegian' and 'Swiss' options, as well as trade deals based on CETA and TTIP. It is clear that none of these models are suitable for the UK. Instead tariff-free access to the Single Market must be secured, allowing a government with the political will to keep all that is positive about the EU, while also retaining the right to intervene directly in support of our industries.

As the government's cowardice to confront the steel crisis shows, intervention is a question of political will. It is Unite's job to pile on the political pressure to make sure that will is exercised. Any new free trade deals must not be based on the failed models of TTIP or CETA. Workers' rights must be guaranteed, there must be no 'ISDS' secret courts and there must be strong trade defence mechanisms to prevent the illegal dumping of Chinese steel, tyres or ceramics.

## Q) What happens next?

Unite will be lobbying the governments of Westminster and the devolved countries to make sure our collective voice is heard. The true power of our union is our strength in the workplace. We must organise to use this strength to protect our members from the impact of Brexit. Discuss the impact of Brexit at your next union branch meeting and campaign for your employer to publically pledge to retain all workers' rights, standards and protections.

Brexit must not be something our union simply watches from the side-lines. We have a unique role to play in protecting and advancing the interests of our members.

**Not yet a member of Unite? Join today: [www.unitetheunion.org/join](http://www.unitetheunion.org/join)  
[@unitetheunion](http://www.unitetheunion.org)**