Twitter Thread by Nick Gutteridge



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1/ Some EU frustration at UK griping over trade problems and suggestions Brussels needs to improve its attitude to make the relationship work better. There's a feeling of déjà vu, that the UK never really accepted the practical reality of the deal it wanted and still doesn't.

2/ In particular there's exasperation that the UK is moaning about the deal not including arrangements that it ruled out itself to keep its own red lines intact. It's seen as a pattern of behaviour - first there was visa-free travel for musicians, now it's shellfish.

3/ EU sources say the lack of provisions on shellfish exports was brought up numerous times in the talks as a concern. But the UK refused to engage, as it did on wider SPS issues, over fears of 'being drawn into the EU's regulatory sphere'.

4/ The EU has rules vis-a-vis third countries, they say, and the UK knew this. Indeed, as they see things it's the British attitude that needs a reset. 'The problem is it wants to be a better third country than others, and that’s not an option.'

5/ That's seen as particularly rich after the UK turned down the EU's offer for a much closer relationship in pursuit of a 'Canada-style' one. Recent complaints perpetuate concerns the UK still hasn't really come to terms with the sovereignty/access trade-off.

6/ That doesn't mean there isn't a willingness to work on solutions, however tricky they may be. On shellfish, for example, one EU source says where there's a will there's a way. But any solution 'will always be a compromise that will come with some demands on this side as well'.

7/ It's the same with the NI Protocol. The EU is willing to look at facilitations and the application on the ground, but not wholesale changes. The Protocol, again, is seen in Brussels and EU capitals as a consequence of the UK's chosen red lines.

8/ After four years of covering Brexit from here in Brussels, it's that same old feeling of the two sides talking at cross-purposes. Relations are in a tetchy place right now, and the drinks trolley with the G&T and peanuts is still stowed away.

9/ Usual disclaimer: This is an EU perspective on recent events. I've reported the UK's views extensively in previous tweets. It is useful and healthy to know how both sides see things.