

SOFT POWER DOWN

Britain's influence and reputation is on the wane

H2	ACT	PLAN	TRACK	PARK	OPP	THR	NEU
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Poor, isolated and destined to disintegrate. That's how the United Kingdom looks from the outside, in the first few weeks of its 'freedom' from the European Union, according to Paul Mason.

Not a surprise to Boris Johnson who predicted this in his unpublished Remain article before the referendum. He thought that:

- there would definitely be economic fallout from leaving the EU but nobody knew how big that would be
- there would be the pressure on the make-up of the United Kingdom
- leaving would mean the UK had a diminished standing on the world stage.

It is felt by many that Brexit has damaged the UK's reputation globally. Much of the rest of the world sees Brexit as a resounding defeat for Britain and a demonstration of its international decline. Internal Market Bill damages our reputation for fair dealing. By breaking international law, we have put at risk future international agreements with the UK. And the 2020 Autumn statement to temporarily reduce overseas aid from 0.7% to 0.5% of UK budget has not helped maintain the UK's 'soft' power.

More trade deals will come but are likely to be on worse terms than the EU had adopted. Size matters in trade talks.

In a global poll for the BBC World Service, conducted in 19 countries just after the referendum, views of the United Kingdom, historically quite positive, had gone down, led by pronounced drops in positive views among EU citizens and in several of the Commonwealth nations. Attitudes in China bucked this trend, with favourable opinion of the UK among the Chinese rising markedly. A slight majority of 51 per cent still regarded British influence in the world as mostly positive, but this was down four points since 2014.

However, younger people around the world still see the UK as an attractive country overall, according to a 2020 poll in G20 countries.

WELCOME STRANGER

The UK's changing immigration policies

H1	ACT	PLAN	TRACK	PARK	OPP	THR	NEU
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Following the UK's withdrawal from the EU, the Government has introduced a points-based immigration system similar to the policy in Australia. The new policy is meant to attract talent to the UK and help to fill key jobs. It is also aimed at reducing overall immigration numbers.

The new regulations apply from the start of 2021 and will apply to both EU and non EU citizens.

Anyone moving to the UK for work will have to show that the job they are taking has a skill level of RDF3 or above (A level) and a minimum salary of £25,600. If the job is in shortage sector, or requires a PhD, then the job seeker can trade points for a minimum salary of £20,480.

Student visa routes have been opened up to EU, EEA and Swiss citizens. You can apply for a visa to study in the UK if you:

- have been offered a place on a course
- can speak, read, write and understand English
- have enough money to support yourself and pay for your course

A new graduate immigration route will be available to international students who have completed a degree in the UK from summer 2021. Students will be able to work, or look for work, in the UK at any skill level for up to 2 years after the end of their course, or 3 years for PhD graduates. The UK government is aiming for up to 600,000 overseas students a year by 2030 as part of its new International Education Strategy.

The 2021 update to the Strategy focuses on five countries for overseas recruitment - India, Nigeria, Indonesia, Vietnam and Saudi Arabia and suggests other markets such as EU, Brazil, Mexico, Pakistan, China and Hong Kong.

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