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## Sweden, UK and the EU: Managing post-Brexit Relations and Defining a new Agenda for European Competitiveness

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**Brussels, Belgium, 28th February 2019** - There is an urgent need to move on from the shock of the UK's vote to leave the European Union, and all the melodrama in the past two years over what form Brexit should take, and focus on building a new relationship between the UK and EU.

Trade and political relationships face change, but there is much that can be done to make sure that negative effects are temporary, and that we find a stable future path. The relationship will only be decided with many years of talking, but in this paper we suggest a structure that builds on existing EU practice of putting in place a web of agreements with other countries, anchored by something like an Association Agreement.

It is likely that the most economically significant trade agreement that the next Commission will negotiate is with the UK. The EU's response to Brexit will help define, and be defined by, the EU's future development.

Is this to be a Europe espousing openness to trade and continuing to develop the most advanced single market in the world, or a Europe retreating to fortress EU, where complete adherence to EU regulations is a pre-requisite to any sense of openness?

The EU without the UK will be a different organisation, and countries such as Sweden will have to step up to protect their interests. In short, the future relationship with the UK could also define the future of the EU.

Publication details:

*Sweden, UK and the EU: Managing post-Brexit Relations and Defining a new Agenda for European Competitiveness, ECIPE Policy Brief No. 1/2019*

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