

Engaging Europe: Recalibrating UK–EU Relations in the Post-Brexit Era

Wednesday 3 June 2026 10:45 (1h 30m)

This panel explores the evolving forms and meanings of engagement between the United Kingdom and the European Union in the post-Brexit period. While formal membership has ended, diplomatic, political and societal channels of interaction continue to structure relations across multiple levels (Martill and Carrapico, 2025; Wolff and Piquet, 202). The papers collectively interrogate how engagement operates as both a policy instrument and a legitimacy practice in this new phase of UK–EU relations. Tobias Hofelich, Carolyn Rowe and Ed Turner analyse how EU norms and procedural reflexes continue to shape bilateral engagement through a detailed study of UK–German relations. Julie Smith and Birgit Bujard assess the Kensington Treaty as a high-profile experiment in bilateral re-engagement and a potential pathway toward renewed UK–EU cooperation. Benjamin Martill and Pauline Schnapper examine how the Starmer government’s attempt to “reset” relations reflects competing understandings of engagement within UK domestic politics. Finally, David Phinnemore and Katy Hayward explore stakeholder participation and legitimacy-building in the operation of the Windsor Framework. Together, the panel develops a multi-dimensional understanding of engagement as a process of reconnection, negotiation and adaptation that defines the contours of the continued post-Brexit European order.

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