

Brexit turmoil: Small businesses 'fed up with the whole thing'

By Ben Morris Business reporter, BBC News

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It's hard enough to run a small business at the best of times. But the Brexit talks are adding an extra level of stress for many entrepreneurs.

During the run-up to the referendum in June 2016, the BBC spoke to dozens of small business owners about the prospect of the UK leaving the European Union.

Almost two and a half years later, we got back in touch, to find out what they make of the show so far and the prime minister's draft Brexit agreement.

'Really fed up with the whole thing'

Stephen Britt's firm, Anchor Storage, organises warehousing and distribution for other companies. His Suffolk-based business employs 19 people.

Mr Britt voted to leave the European Union, but has become unhappy about the way the talks have been handled. "I'm getting increasingly sick and tired of the paucity of ambition of our Whitehall civil servants and the supine politicians who are in charge of them.

"I'm just really fed up with the whole thing, at how inadequate we've all been, in what should have been a relatively sensible, level-headed negotiation."

But despite his frustration, he would vote to leave again. The talks have proved, in his opinion, that the European Union is a "protectionist organisation" not interested in "making globalism work".

Kris Ingham is the founder and chief executive of Rejuvenation, a health drinks business. The London-based firm employs four people.

Kris, who voted to remain, says of the current situation: "It's carnage, but carnage from a political sense more than anything else.

"From a business perspective I still hold the same view, it's business as usual."

His company is planning to expand into Europe. "I'm more than happy to be involved in Europe, to have production in Europe and sales in Europe."

He always suspected the European Union would not make it easy for the UK to leave. "They kind of have to make this as protracted as possible to put off other nations doing this as well."