



BMW closing Britain plant as experts weigh Brexit proposal

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Germany luxury car maker BMW said Tuesday it will shut down a plant in Britain to minimize potential disruption if no Brexit deal is reached.

"While we believe this worst case scenario is an unlikely outcome, we have to plan for it," a BMW spokesperson said.

"We remain committed to our operations in Britain, which is the only country in the world where we manufacture for all three of our automotive brands."

Brexit advocates proposed Tuesday a free trade deal between the the United States and Britain in a report by the Cato Institute.

The institute, a conservative think tank in Washington, D.C., and the Initiative for Free Trade prepared the report, and consulted other conservative groups like the Heritage Foundation. The authors call for a free trade agreement that would loosen government controls on capital and become a model for future deals post-Brexit as "more liberalizing than any other FTA in the world."

It would open the National Health Services to foreign competition and limit consumer and environmental regulations.

The proposal would remove tariffs and eliminate the precautionary principle that has been at the center of European Union regulation on genetically-modified foods, chlorine-washed chicken, hormones in meat, and pesticides and chemicals in cosmetics.

The 239-page report said changes to health services could be unpopular.

"Health services are an area where both sides would benefit from openness to foreign competition, although we recognize any changes to existing regulations will be extremely controversial, " it stated. "Perhaps, then, for other areas the initial focus should be on other fields

such as education or legal services, where negotiators can test the waters and see what is possible."

Some trade experts have criticized the proposal.

"The measures supported in this paper represent a free trade utopia, entirely divorced from economic reality," Nick Dearden, director of Global Justice Now, said. "The authors view good government as 'getting out of the way' of business, and letting profit drive every aspect of our society. If carried out, these policies would destroy huge swathes of our economy, including farming, and they would lay waste to public services."