Burnham Calls for Closer EU Cooperation Ahead of UK-EU Summit

13 OCTOBER 2026

Cleo Hatton-Papaioannou



Photo by Antoine Schibler on Unsplash

Burnham Calls for Closer EU Cooperation

On Monday, Burnham spoke to MPs about his plans to push for new deals with the EU in a summit expected to be held in November. The government is seeking agreements on food and drink standards, emissions trading, and youth mobility schemes, in hopes to lessen bureaucratic pressures and help drive economic growth. Burnham is also looking to improve relations on policing and security, through agency cooperation and information sharing.

Burnham's speech was met with criticism from the opposition, with Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch accusing the prime minister of "unpicking the deal this country signed with the EU a decade after the referendum".

Boosting economic growth has been a key element in Burnham's policies, and moving closer to the EU is a logical step. The UK has been experienced sluggish economic growth, and Brexit has been a considerable factor, hurting productivity and causing uncertainty in the markets.

The economic pressure on British manufacturing could increase, with the UK at risk of being shut out of the EU's Made in Europe initiative if closer alignment is not achieved. This would see British made components being blocked from EU supply chains in key strategic sectors.

New EU-UK Relationship

The prime minister has made it clear he hopes to 'reset' Britain's relationship with the bloc, stating that the existing one is no longer working. Agreements on modest concerns could represent a clear step forward for a new EU-UK relationship. However, Burnham's decision to maintain former prime minister Keir Starmer's red lines reduces the likelihood of significant progress being achieved by the end of the year. Ultimately, Labour's commitment to its election manifesto may come at the expense of the closer ties with the EU that it hopes will deliver economic growth.

EPIS