

News from the Brexit Cliff Edge

14th Feb 2019

News Highlights

Welcome to the Brexit Cliff Edge

Right across the UK media there is a palpable sense of a Brexit clock being run down by the UK government, instead of an agreement being sought to stop a No Deal exit. Labour says it is acting to stop it, but its MPs appear to disagree. There is talk of party resignations, some Leave area Labour MPs are pondering voting against the Labour whip in favour of the Conservative government, and Corbyn`s integrity is being called into question over his Brexit stance.

The EU says Theresa May is only `pretending to negotiate a revised deal` as no renegotiations are on offer. The EuroSceptic Tory ERG are planning to vote against her in Parliament.

Ford Motor says it is going to find alternative sites for manufacturing, putting thousands of jobs at risk. Bank of America is moving its HQ out of the UK. Arch-Brexiteer Liam Fox has secured continuity trade agreements for just £16bn out of the £117bn the UK economy needs just to stand still when it leaves the EU.

Forty former diplomats tell Theresa May that there must be a delay to Brexit to avoid severe economic disruption. The UK is threatening to withhold military cooperation with the EU in the future, were a No Deal Brexit to occur. The British Haulage Association says the Department of Transport is running a ludicrous lottery in post Brexit EU transport permits, which threaten its members and their businesses. The Food & Drink Federation is alarmed by a No Deal Brexit and warns many food businesses may go under.

Jobs at Risk

Brexit: Ford reveals its plans for move abroad

Ford has become the latest carmaker to sound the alarm over Brexit, saying that it is stepping up preparations to move production out of Britain. The business, which has 13,000 staff in the UK, told the prime minister on a private call with business leaders that it was preparing alternative sites abroad. The warning comes after Nissan announced last week that it was cancelling plans to build a new model in its Sunderland plant, a decision that it attributed in part to Brexit uncertainty.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/b7b8135a-2f12-11e9-b50c-c6da8f614c54>

Ford warns no-deal Brexit would be 'catastrophic'

Ford declined to comment directly on The Times' report, but said it had long warned against a "hard Brexit". The company is the latest carmaker to warn on the risks of a no-deal Brexit. "Such a situation would be catastrophic for the UK auto industry and Ford's manufacturing operations in the country," the company said in a statement. "We will take whatever action is necessary to preserve the competitiveness of our European business."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-47225787>

Ford told UK PM May it is preparing alternative production sites - The Times

Ford Motor Co told British Prime Minister Theresa May that it is stepping up preparations to move production out of Britain, The Times reported on Tuesday. The automaker told the prime minister

during a private call with business leaders that it is preparing alternative sites abroad, The Times said. Ford was not immediately available for comment.

https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-ford-motor/ford-told-uk-pm-may-it-is-preparing-alternative-production-sites-the-times-idUKKCN1Q12SK?utm_source=applenews

Bank of America says no going back on its \$400m plans for Brexit move

Anne Finucane, Bank of America's vice-chair, said her company would spend about \$400m — the upper bound of a \$300m-\$400m range previously given by BofA — on everything from offices to moving people and technology as it tries to ensure clients can trade seamlessly with the EU after the UK's exit. BofA's plans include moving \$50bn of banking assets to Dublin and creating a 500-strong trading business in Ireland, which will also have a sizeable but as-yet unspecified asset base. The bank is also moving traders to a new Paris hub. "Dublin is our headquarters for our European bank now — full stop," she said. "There isn't a return. That bridge has been pulled up . . . From a trading perspective, likewise, Paris would be the European trading arm."

<https://www.ft.com/content/b9d43bba-2f7a-11e9-8744-e7016697f225>

Brexit: This is how many people could lose their jobs in each area of Coventry and Warwickshire

Almost 4,000 jobs could be lost in Coventry if Britain crashes out of the EU without a deal, according to research. The numbers are cited in research by the University of Sussex's UK Trade Policy Observatory. In Coventry, a total of 1,750 jobs could be lost among residents if a soft Brexit happens, according to the research. The worst hit will be those living in the Coventry South constituency, with 650 jobs expected to be lost among residents there. In Coventry North East, 600 jobs are set to be lost and 550 in Coventry North West.

<https://www.coventrytelegraph.net/news/coventry-news/brexit-jobs-lost-coventry-warwickshire-15817394>

Economic Impact

Brexit threatens surge in market abuse, financial watchdog warns

Brexit presents its own threat to market cleanliness because City corporates may fail to "knit back together" their oversight after Britain's departure, Julia Hoggett, the FCA's director of market oversight, said in a speech on Wednesday. Companies have had to set up EU hubs to retain access to the bloc because Brexit will result in the loss of so-called passporting, which allows them to be based in one country and sell services seamlessly across the EU without separate regulatory permission or ringfenced capital.

<https://www.ft.com/content/f248bf32-2f9f-11e9-ba00-0251022932c8>

Brexit Set To Break the GBP

Neil Wilson Chief Market Analyst from Markets.com and this is what he is predicting "You have to assume that a no-deal Brexit is very much in play and therefore there are severe downside risks to GBPUSD should that occur. I'd anticipate a very severe shock in the FX markets even from where the pound is now. Sterling is undervalued but a no-deal Brexit could push it as low as 1.10. Should Theresa May somehow get her deal through - stranger things have happened - then a rally through to 1.40 would be on the cards. At present risks are tilted to the downside but a last-ditch agreement on the deal is an upside risk.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/samuelleach/2019/02/12/brexit-set-to-break-the-gbp/>

5 levers to tackle the economic shock of no-deal Brexit

The five recommended 'levers' to manage a No Deal Brexit are: Drop import tariffs to avoid big price hikes - Use the Article 21 'nuclear option' - Interest Rates. Should I cut or should I hike? - Stop Customs Checks - Deregulate to become a fiscal paradise

<https://www.politico.eu/article/five-levers-to-tackle-uk-economic-shock-of-no-deal-brexit/>

UK inflation falls to two-year low, offering households help before...

Allan Monks, an economist with JP Morgan, said the impact of the power price cap would be short-lived because tariffs were likely to rise by around 10 percent in April. "Unlike when the cap is lowered, energy firms don't have to automatically raise prices when the cap is lifted. But we expect they will," Monks said.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-britain-economy-inflation/uk-inflation-falls-to-two-year-low-offering-households-help-before-brexit-idUKKCN1Q20ZD>

Administrative Fall Out

Brexit doubts leave firms 'hung out to dry'

UK firms have accused the government of leaving them "hung out to dry" in the event of a no-deal Brexit. With less than 50 days until 29 March when the UK is due to leave the EU, the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) says 20 key questions remain unresolved. How to move skilled staff between the UK and EU, which rules to follow, and what trade deals will be in place are all still unknown, the BCC says.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-47217801>

Carney is right. Brexit could lead to a better, fairer kind of globalisation

The Guardian's Larry Elliott argues: Free market economics has created a world fit for multinationals. But we need less frictionless trade and more local control so Brexit is good

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/feb/13/mark-carney-brexit-free-market-economics-frictionless-trade>

Cautious Dublin reaps benefits of Brexit exodus

With the terms of the UK's scheduled exit next month still in doubt, the Central Bank of Ireland is processing a large volume of applications from London financial institutions. A Dublin official familiar with the authorisation process says "a broad number" in excess of 100 groups are on track for approval "based on current circumstances".

<https://www.ft.com/content/c5d4b930-1d5f-11e9-b2f7-97e4dbd3580d>

EU markets watchdog calls for rapid response powers after Brexit

After Brexit, the EU will have a large, liquid and interconnected capital market next door which is no longer subject to the bloc's rules, Steven Maijoor, chair of the European Securities and Markets Authority, said. "This creates the need to have tools to react rapidly to new developments," he told an industry event in Dublin. Lawyers said the comments signalled an arm's length relationship with the EU for Britain's financial sector after decades of being deeply interlinked.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-markets-idUKKCN1Q22FZ>

Eastern European companies fear 'chaos' of no-deal Brexit

Trade with central and eastern Europe already affected and local GDP could shrink by 5%. For Future Processing, there are three main concerns about a hard Brexit. First, the likelihood that the pound will plummet, creating currency risk. Second, that transport connections between Poland and the UK will be disrupted, making it harder for the Polish company's representatives to visit British clients. Finally, that the UK breaking away from EU law will create legal uncertainty and potential additional costs as the Polish and British systems diverge.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/13/eastern-european-companies-fear-chaos-of-no-deal-brexite>

@BBCNewsnight "The overwhelming feedback is that a no-deal Brexit would be extremely damaging... politicians are still not taking it sufficiently seriously" - Economics Editor Ben Chu

"The overwhelming feedback is that a no-deal Brexit would be extremely damaging... politicians are still not taking it sufficiently seriously" - our Economics Editor Ben Chu on what he's been told by

both big and small business firms today @BenChu_ | #newsnight

<https://twitter.com/BBCNewsnight/status/1095819587940114432>

@Peston Nicola Sturgeon says the Scottish govt will develop advice to people about how to handle Brexit over the coming weeks

When asked by @Peston if she would advise Scottish people to start stockpiling essentials, @NicolaSturgeon says advice will 'develop' over the next few weeks. #Peston

<https://twitter.com/itvpeston/status/1095780096336482304>

Brexit: Government must 'get its act together' to prevent panic-buying and civil unrest, officials warn

The government needs to "get its act together" to prevent panic-buying and civil unrest over Brexit, officials have warned. A group coordinating contingency planning in London heard that with 44 days until Britain is due to leave the EU, authorities still have "no direct indication of what we're planning for". Fiona Twycross, chair of the London Resilience Forum, said people would stockpile food, fuel and other supplies because of the uncertainty.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-food-supplies-panic-buying-medicine-london-warning-uk-government-a8778241.html>

Brexit: Sturgeon steps up no-deal planning

The Scottish government has stepped up its preparations for a no-deal Brexit as it again called on Theresa May to rule out the possibility. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said she still believes no deal can be avoided. But she said her government had a duty to plan for the possibility as best it could.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-47226482>

Anti-terror checks deliver fresh Brexit threat for UK hauliers

The freight industry has warned of the potential for a *fresh* Brexit ferry fiasco after it emerged all British truckers will be required to have counter-terrorism safety ...

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/13/freight-industry-fears-security-check-chaos-under-no-deal-brexit>

@Peston Nicola Sturgeon tells Robert Peston her horror that we are discussing food and medicine shortages in a prosperous country

First Minister of Scotland @NicolaSturgeon tells @Peston that it is 'frankly incredible' we are discussing the possibility of food and medicine shortages in a prosperous country. #Peston

<https://twitter.com/itvpeston/status/1095778008835620864>

@Peston CBI President tells Peston that many businesses are currently making plans to transfer out of the UK due to Brexit uncertainty

President John Allan says that many businesses are currently making plans to transfer out of the UK due to Brexit uncertainty. #Peston

<https://twitter.com/itvpeston/status/1095794135645052928>

How the UK Visas and Immigration department is preparing for Brexit

After March 29, EU citizens will need to apply for settled or pre-settled status to remain in the UK. This obviously won't apply to your husband as he is Japanese but I can see why you are concerned about increased waiting times if most EU citizens do need to contact the UK Visas and Immigration department at a similar time. The good news is that the deadline for applying will be June 30, 2021, if we leave with a deal in place, or December 31, 2020 without a deal, so hopefully applications will be spread out over that time period.

<https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/how-the-uk-visas-and-immigration-department-is-preparing-for-brexit-1-9590453>

Brexit delay will serve no purpose, PM tells business

The prime minister said delaying Britain's departure from the EU would bring no end to Brexit

uncertainty or get parliament closer to approving a withdrawal agreement, according to people who participated in the phone briefing with Mrs May. Her conference call with business leaders came after Mrs May told the House of Commons she needed more time to negotiate a revised Brexit deal with the EU. Her statement was met with weary horror by business leaders who reiterated the urgency of taking a no-deal Brexit off the table, which she has repeatedly declined to do.

<https://www.ft.com/content/5c200018-2ede-11e9-ba00-0251022932c8>

Ian Wright, CEO of @Foodanddrinkfed, says a no deal Brexit is "the biggest threat businesses have faced since 1939"

"This is really really scary... one in four food exporters could go out of business within six weeks" Ian Wright, CEO of @Foodanddrinkfed, says a no deal Brexit is "the biggest threat businesses have faced since 1939" #r4today | <http://bbc.in/2DtPcUK> | @dominicoc

<https://twitter.com/BBCr4today/status/1095259398447030272>

Carmageddon: The future is catching up with the motor giants

An argument is put to say the public comment from car companies expressing disquiet about Brexit is not the real reason. Technological change, the demise of diesel and middle class angst in China are the real reasons behind it. Only very reluctantly in the final paragraph is it admitted that Brexit 'might' be involved in the decision making process

<https://www.spectator.co.uk/2019/02/carmageddon-the-future-is-catching-up-with-the-motor-giants/>

Political Shenanigans

Theresa May forced to deny she's secretly planning to delay Brexit after bombshell leak reveals plan to run the clock down

Theresa May has today been forced to deny that she's secretly planning to delay Brexit after a bombshell 'leak' revealing the PM wants to run the clock down. Last night Theresa May's chief Brexit negotiator was overheard in a bar saying she will threaten MPs with a huge delay if they don't back her deal next month.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/brexit/8416583/brexit-latest-theresa-may-delay-brexit-run-down-clock-leak/>

Brexit: Call for Irish border poll during deadlock 'irresponsible'

Last week, several cabinet ministers told the BBC a no-deal Brexit could lead to a vote on Irish unification. Sinn Féin President Mary Lou McDonald has also called on the Irish government to begin planning for a border poll, in the event of a no-deal Brexit. Now Bertie Ahern has called such a move irresponsible

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-47227297>

Varadkar expects UK to leave EU with Brexit deal at end of March

Taoiseach Leo Varadkar expects the UK to leave the European Union at the end of March with a withdrawal deal, although his Government continues to prepare for "for all outcomes", including a no-deal Brexit. Addressing more than 300 international bankers and finance executives at a conference in Dublin, Mr Varadkar said it was necessary to ensure that there would be no return to a hard border in Ireland and that the peace process be protected.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/business/economy/varadkar-expects-uk-to-leave-eu-with-brexit-deal-at-end-of-march-1.3792248>

@BBCNewsnight "The Brexiteer Tories are not happy with the government motion and are threatening to vote against it"

"The Brexiteer Tories are not happy with the government motion and are threatening to vote against it" Newsnight's Political Editor Nick Watt lays out the potential landscape facing the government in tomorrow's Brexit motion @nicholaswatt | #newsnight

<https://twitter.com/BBCNewsnight/status/1095820074756169728>

Jeremy Corbyn urges Theresa May to publish tax return as he reveals his own £46000 bill

Figures published by Labour show that the Labour leader handed over £46,074.90 to the HMRC for the 2017/18 tax year. The new data represents the fourth time Mr Corbyn has made his own tax return public, and shows that he earned £132,611 in the 12-month period from his salary as an MP and pensions.

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/labour-party/news/101807/jeremy-corbyn-urges-theresa-may-publish-tax>

EU officials: UK only 'pretending to negotiate' over Brexit impasse

The British government is “pretending to negotiate” with the European Union and has not presented any new proposals to break the Brexit deadlock, according to EU officials. Barnier, has said current talks with the UK do not even qualify as negotiations. In a call on Tuesday morning with Guy Verhofstadt, chief Brexit representative for the European parliament, Barnier said there were “no negotiations” with the British. “These are courtesy calls at best and we have nothing new to say,” Barnier was reported to have said, by a source familiar with the conversation.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/13/kicking-up-dust-little-sign-of-progress-in-uk-eu-talks>

Does Theresa May want a no-deal Brexit?

On Monday, HuffPost’s Paul Waugh contended that, unwilling to countenance a solution that will split her party, the prime minister has warmed to the once “unthinkable” idea of leaving the EU without a deal as a fallback position should her withdrawal agreement be rejected for a second time by MPs. ITV’s Robert Peston generated much excitement with a similar argument in a blog published the same day.

<https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2019/02/does-theresa-may-want-no-deal-brexit>

Labour launches bid to stop Theresa May 'running down the clock' towards no-deal Brexit

Jeremy Corbyn tabled an amendment to the Prime Minister's Brexit plan which would force the Government to hold a fresh meaningful vote on her deal by the end of February. MPs will vote on Labour's attempt on Thursday and the Labour leader said: "This amendment would stop the Government from running down the clock on the Brexit negotiations, hoping Members of Parliament can be blackmailed into supporting a botched deal. "This is an act of gross irresponsibility. The Prime Minister is playing for time and playing with people’s jobs, our economic security and the future of our industry."

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/foreign-affairs/brexit/news/101825/labour-launches-bid-stop-theresa-may-running-down-clock>

Brexit: Could Labour rebels form new party?

The unhappiness with the Labour leadership is of course not new. But the moment of decision may have arrived because some of the MPs in the small group who are contemplating leaving felt it was worth staying in a party they felt was hostile to them as individuals while they had a chance of influencing Brexit policy. But as the final shakedown over Brexit approaches and Jeremy Corbyn's attitude to another referendum stays the same - obviously not enthusiastic - their frustration is reaching new levels. And if they can't get him to the position of backing another vote, for them, what's the point of hanging around to defend a policy they don't believe in, in a party they believe is no longer their own.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-47234322>

Hardline Brexiters threaten to vote down Theresa May's motion

Members of the Tory European Research Group are unhappy with the wording of a No 10 motion because it endorses parliament’s vote against any Brexit without a withdrawal agreement. The motion for debate on Thursday simply affirms “the approach to leaving the EU” backed by the Commons on 29 January, when an amendment was passed in favour of an attempt to replace the

Northern Ireland backstop with “alternative arrangements”. The motion was thought to be fairly uncontroversial until pro-Brexit supporters realised it also encompassed a second amendment passed on that day, which ruled out a no-deal Brexit. The amendment, tabled by Dame Caroline Spelman, “rejects the United Kingdom leaving the European Union without a withdrawal agreement and a framework for the future relationship”.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/13/hardline-brexiteers-threaten-to-vote-down-theresa-mays-motion>

Dark money is pushing for a no-deal Brexit. Who is behind it?

So who or what is Britain’s Future? Sorry, I have no idea. As openDemocracy points out, it has no published address and releases no information about who founded it, who controls it and who has been paying for these advertisements. The only person publicly associated with it is a journalist called Tim Dawson, who edits its website. Dawson has not yet replied to the questions I have sent him. It is, in other words, highly opaque. The anti-Brexit campaigns are not much better. People’s Vote and Best for Britain have also been spending heavily on Facebook ads, though not as much in recent weeks as Britain’s Future.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/feb/13/dark-money-hard-brexit-targeted-ads-facebook>

Our constituencies voted to leave - based on an impossible promise

After two years of talks, the government has admitted that every form of Brexit will hurt our economy. That means our constituents will be poorer, for many of them their jobs will be put at risk, and the pressures on our NHS and other public services will only deepen. And far from taking back control, Brexit would see the UK forced to follow EU rules over which we will no longer have a say.

https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/12/our-constituencies-voted-to-leave-based-on-an-impossible-promise?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

Brexit: Will there be a resolution to months of indecision?

And at the start of this Westminster week, it's hard to find anyone in Westminster who is confident that there will be any ending to the drama much before the end of March. There is a summit with EU leaders where the prime minister will gather with her counterparts seven days before the departure date of 29 March. And while it seems like the kind of kamikaze politics the UK doesn't tend to do, traditionally at least, there is growing expectation, horrific to some, exciting to others, that the prime minister may well not come back with her final deal that she wants them to vote on until after that.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-47206342>

Political Setbacks

Part David Cameron, part Piers Morgan - Alan Partridge returns in time for Brexit

Steve Coogan said it “feels right” for his character to return now, particularly given Brexit: “There might be a missive at the BBC saying that a certain area of the viewing audience had been disenfranchised ... Alan potentially represents that. You can imagine them thinking we might as well give this guy another bite of the cherry.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2019/feb/14/alan-partridge-bbc-brexit-steve-coogan>

Exclusive: UK Could Hold Back Military Help For EU Under No-Deal Brexit

European governments are being warned that Britain may in future hold back military help for EU countries if there is a no-deal Brexit, HuffPost UK understands. Officials have told foreign diplomats that while Theresa May is fully committed to maintaining strong defence and security ties, future governments could be less willing to support new missions in the EU like the current deployment of troops to Estonia, on Russia’s border.

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/exclusive-no-deal-brexit-could-make-uk-hold-back-military-help-for-eu_uk_5c645933e4b0018ed01b21f4

Dutch PM warns of ‘devastating’ consequences of no-deal Brexit

Mark Rutte, the Dutch prime minister, has said Britain is a “diminished” country after its vote for Brexit and warned that a no-deal exit from the bloc risked “insurmountable” consequences for the UK economy. Mr Rutte expressed alarm that Britain appeared to be doing nothing to stop itself from crashing out of the EU on March 29, saying it could be “devastating.” “At the moment the ball is rolling towards the Dover cliff and we are shouting ‘Stop the ball from rolling any further’ but nobody is doing anything at the moment, at least not on the UK side,” he said in an interview with the Financial Times and a group of other European newspapers

<https://www.ft.com/content/44f6a5f8-2f8e-11e9-ba00-0251022932c8>

The surprising truth about Brexit Britain - we're a country full of moderates

The sobering thing for me was the realisation that I only heard these moderate voices because I was stuck with them - this being the whole point of the programme, to go back to those I had heard from before. In the normal run of things they wouldn't have made the cut and they would never have got on air. What good is a moderate, considered voice in a news vox pop? If I had been doing a radio phone-in and one of this lot had been put through to me, I'd be mouthing annoyance through the glass at my producer, asking what they were playing at.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/feb/13/the-surprising-truth-about-brexit-britain-were-a-country-full-of-moderates>

The UK government has set up a 'spectacularly badly run lottery' which could bar most British lorries from Europe under a no-deal Brexit

Industry figures say the government's no-deal Brexit plans would bar thousands of British lorries from entering EU countries. Up to 90% of British trucks could be barred from operating in Europe in the event of a no-deal Brexit, which the Road Haulage Association said would bankrupt many firms. The Road Haulage Association described the permit allocation process as "the most spectacularly badly run lottery." The Department for Transport said it was confident of securing a deal which would allow lorries to continue enjoying the current access they enjoy.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/brexit-chris-grayling-running-lottery-which-could-bar-british-lorries-from-europe-under-no-deal-2019-2>

Labour split erupts over Brexit as Keir Starmer suggests general election plan no longer 'credible'

Labour splits on Brexit have been laid bare once more after Sir Keir Starmer appeared to suggest that pushing for a general election was no longer a “credible ...

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/labour-party/jeremy-corbyn/news/101839/labour-split-erupts-over-brexit>

Brexit: Government admits it has ‘run out of time’ to find ships to bring emergency supplies after no-deal

Officials have admitted they have “run out of time” to find ships to bring extra emergency supplies after a no-deal Brexit, following the Seaborne Freight fiasco. No “large amount of further additional capacity” will be available across the Channel before the end of March, MPs were told - by either sea or rail. The admission follows the embarrassment of the cancelled £13.8m contract handed to Seaborne - a firm with no ships - which has sparked calls for Chris Grayling, the transport secretary, to be sacked. “It would not be possible to complete procurement and make it operational for 29 March,” the Department for Transport’s director general admitted.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-no-deal-planning-emergency-supplies-seaborne-freight-chris-grayling-a8777766.html>

Labour MPs warn Corbyn: back a second referendum or we quit

Jeremy Corbyn faces up to 10 resignations from the Labour frontbench if he fails to throw his party’s

weight behind a fresh attempt to force Theresa May to submit her Brexit deal to a referendum in a fortnight's time, frustrated MPs are warning. With tension mounting among anti-Brexit Labour MPs and grassroots members, several junior shadow ministers have told the Guardian they are prepared to resign their posts if Corbyn doesn't whip his MPs to vote for a pro-referendum amendment at the end of the month.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/13/labour-mp-submits-plan-for-referendum-on-brexit-deal>

UK officials deny May is taking no-deal off the table

Members of the backbench European Research Group say that it effectively endorses another amendment ruling out no-deal, which was approved by MPs the same day but is not binding on the British government. One ERG member told the BrexitCentral website: "We told the government very clearly last night that we will not support this motion and in fact we urged them, indeed pleaded with them at senior level, to withdraw it yesterday - but they took absolutely no notice. Frankly, we despair."

<https://www.rte.ie/news/brexit/2019/0213/1029249-may-mps-brexit/>

As Brexit Deadline Looms, Billboards Call Out Politicians' 'Quick And Easy' Claims

The protest group Led By Donkeys wants to remind citizens of what it considers to be misleading pledges by pro-Brexit leaders, as political chaos continues ...

<https://www.npr.org/2019/02/13/693949313/as-brexit-deadline-looms-billboards-call-out-politicians-quick-and-easy-claims>

Theresa May reportedly scrapes the mold off jam. Is this the perfect metaphor for Brexit?

British Prime Minister Theresa May reportedly said she scrapes the mold off jam, which was quickly dubbed a perfect metaphor to describe Britain's European Union departure plans. The British leader, who is a keen cook, reportedly told members in her top leadership team that instead of throwing out moldy jam, she scoops off the mold and eats what is underneath. What is left is perfectly edible, she reportedly said. Her views came up in a discussion about food waste, according to the Daily Mail.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2019/02/13/theresa-may-reportedly-scrapes-mold-off-jam-is-this-perfect-metaphor-brexit/>

Theresa May faces Valentine's Day revolt as Tory hardliners vow to keep no-deal alive

Theresa May faces a Commons revolt by Tory Right-wingers amid chaos over her Brexit policy. Members of the hardline European Research Group said they will vote against the Government tomorrow night, putting her at risk of another humiliating defeat. The clash erupted over the wording of a government motion that "supports" a previous Commons vote that opposed crashing out of the EU without a deal. At Prime Minister's Questions, Mrs May attempted to reassure Tory MPs that she still planned to leave the EU on March 29. However, she did not rule out a delay altogether.

https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/brexit-latest-theresa-may-faces-valentine-s-day-revolt-as-tory-hardliners-vow-to-keep-nodeal-alive-a4065906.html?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1550076895

Theresa May facing Commons defeat as Eurosceptics fear she is going soft on Brexit

Theresa May risks an embarrassing Commons defeat on Thursday at the hands of Eurosceptic Tories who claim she has taken a no-deal Brexit off the negotiating table. Tory whips are trying to quell a threatened rebellion by the European Research Group (ERG), which is pushing for a harder Brexit. It has more than 80 members. Mrs May's tiny working majority could be swept away if even a small number of ERG supporters refuse to support the Prime Minister.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/brexit/theresa-may-facing-commons-defeat-as-eurosceptics-fear-she-is-going-soft-on-brexit/>

@channel4News "Crashing out without a deal is a disastrous option for this country... and so it must be stopped." Dominic Grieve

"Crashing out without a deal is a disastrous option for this country... and so it must be stopped."

Former Tory Attorney General Dominic Grieve explains why he is backing an attempt to block a no-deal Brexit.

<https://twitter.com/Channel4News/status/1095650928005394432>

Delay Brexit, 40 former diplomats tell May - The Times

More than 40 former British ambassadors have called on Prime Minister Theresa May to extend Britain's stay in the European Union, The Times reported on Wednesday. The diplomats said it would be best to delay Brexit in order to clarify the terms of the future relationship between Britain and the EU or allow for a second referendum, the Times said, citing a statement sent to it. Unless May can get a Brexit deal approved by the British parliament before March 29, she will have to decide whether to delay Brexit or thrust the world's fifth largest economy into chaos by leaving without a deal.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-diplomats/delay-brexit-40-former-diplomats-tell-may-the-times-idUKKCN1Q231I?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews>

Additional sources: (The Guardian)

Theresa May attacks Jeremy Corbyn over Brexit flip-flopping as secret poll shows trust in him has plummeted

Theresa May mounted a startling personal attack on Jeremy Corbyn yesterday after secret Tory polling revealed his integrity rating has collapsed. The Labour leader used to boast record high ratings for being a man of principle. Close to 40% of the nation previously said the lifelong Socialist was a man of his word, whether they agreed with him or not. But that has now plummeted down to just 11% after the opposition leader was seen as flip-flopping over a series of Brexit issues, surveys carried out for Tory chiefs have revealed.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/brexit/8422620/jeremy-corbyn-integrity-collapse-brexit/>

YP Letters: Labour must back People's Vote or suffer Brexit backlash

Indeed it would surprise me actually ever to see a Labour government again if this happens, since Scotland will be on its way and the chances of Barron's Brexit-loving bedfellows in the bigoted DUP actually ever supporting a Labour government are nil. Let's hope that the sense and realism of David Blunkett and both recent Labour prime ministers wins out and that a second referendum is held that will deliver 20 million votes for Remain, which will be the case if young people are allowed to express a preference.

<https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/opinion/yp-letters-labour-must-back-people-s-vote-or-suffer-brexit-backlash-1-9591389>

@Peston Len McCluskey asked if 'Remain' should be on the ballot paper says 'staying in the EU would not be the best option for our nation'

When pressed by @Peston if 'Remain' should be on the ballot paper, @LenMcCluskey says that staying in would not be the best option for our nation. #Peston

<https://twitter.com/itvpeston/status/1095791065674612736>

Kicking The Can Down The Road Makes Theresa May "Deluded": Layla Moran

Layla Moran believes Theresa May is "deluded" for kicking the can down the road and that there are enough MPs in Parliament to put through a so-called People's Vote. The Liberal Democrat called the Prime Minister "deluded" for kicking the can down the road, describing Brexit "beginning to look like something out of a farce".

<https://www.lbc.co.uk/radio/presenters/iain-dale/layla-moran-theresa-may-deluded/>

Trade Deals/Negotiations

Post-Brexit trade partners ask UK to lower human rights standards

Britain has received demands to roll back its human rights standards in exchange for progress on

post-Brexit trade deals, including from some countries that ...

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/13/post-brexit-trade-partners-ask-uk-to-lower-human-rights-standards>

Switzerland to impose immigration QUOTA for working Britons under no deal Brexit plans

The Bern government is set to introduce a new quota system, giving 3,500 British citizens the right to work in the country after the UK leaves the EU, according to Reuters. The number of those who can apply for residence permits will be capped at 2,100. Switzerland will also offer 1,400 short-stay visas for Brits as part of the system which will replace the current free movement agreement between the two countries.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1086611/Brexit-news-eu-migrants-switzerland>

Brexit: UK has rolled over just £16bn out of £117bn trade deals

The government's push to roll over EU trade deals from which the UK currently benefits has yielded agreements covering only £16bn of the near-£117bn of British trade with the countries involved. Despite frenetic efforts by ministers to ensure the continuity of international trade after the UK leaves the EU on 29 March, the international trade secretary, Liam Fox, has so far only managed to secure deals with seven of the 69 countries that the UK currently trades with under preferential EU free trade agreements, which will end after Brexit.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/feb/13/brexit-uk-trade-deals-eu>

Liam Fox Branded 'Abject Failure' Over Lack Of Pre-Brexit Trade Deals

Cabinet minister Liam Fox was accused of "abject failure" after it emerged just six of the 40 trade deals he promised will actually be signed in time for Brexit. The trade secretary, who once said a free trade agreement with the EU would be the "easiest in human history", had vowed to "roll over" 40 EU deals with 70 countries before Britain breaks from the bloc on March 29. But, according to a document leaked to The Sun, Fox has secured just a handful and is now asking countries to sign non-binding "letters of understanding" instead.

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/liam-fox-branded-abject-failure-over-pre-brexit-trade-deals_uk_5c63f69fe4b07115222bbfeb?ncid=tweetlnkukhpmg00000008

Brexit: Britain's trade application that the WTO rejected

What happened was that a number of WTO members, which included the U.S., New Zealand and more than a dozen major exporters said they opposed the U.K.'s approach and terms and then formally objected to the British government application, the consequence was that Britain's proposal to join on WTO terms were rejected ... by some of the very countries that Liam Fox is claiming Britain will be able to trade with. Even Peter Mandelson, sacked from high office as many times as Fox has been could see that WTO rules would not instantly work for Britain. Trading under WTO rules, would, he argued "wipe out agreements and take away preferential access". And how right he was on both counts.

<https://truepublica.org.uk/united-kingdom/brexit-britains-trade-application-that-the-wto-rejected/>