

# News from the Brexit Cliff Edge

## 28th Feb 2019

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### News Highlights

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#### Welcome to the Brexit Cliff Edge

- The French President, Emmanuel Macron, has vowed to block any Brexit delay if there is no clear UK objective for doing so
- Make UK say post-Brexit migration rules where a salary of £30K is needed for someone to qualify to work in the UK would cause shortages of welders, robotic workers, toolmakers and maintenance technicians and must be urgently reconsidered
- BMW said `piecemeal delays` to Brexit would hurt its bottom line, spelling uncertainty for its four UK plants
- A third of the government`s no-deal Brexit plans are behind schedule, ministers have admitted, as government in turn blamed business for ignoring warnings to prepare. Of the 240,000 businesses that trade with the EU, only 40,000 have registered to export, meaning their goods would be turned back at the border
- Six out of eight critical IT systems required to allow the UK border security force to function under a no-deal Brexit are in danger of not being ready, the government`s own National Audit Office has found
- The government has identified 7,000 medicines that would be worst hit by customs restrictions, when the UK leaves the EU, and has asked pharmaceutical companies to stockpile at least a six-week buffer stock. The government has also `hired ferries` to ship goods to Poole, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Immingham and Felixstowe - away from Dover
- Hardline Brexiteers say they may need to soften their opposition to Theresa May`s Irish border backstop proposals, otherwise Brexit will be certainly delayed, or perhaps come under threat of not happening at all, due to a Second Referendum
- Paul Mason wrote a New Statesman opinion article arguing that Labour needs to slay the myth of the working class voter who backs Brexit. Timely, as up to 20 Labour MPs in Leave constituencies are mulling over whether to support Theresa May`s Brexit deal on March 12th
- Tory Minister, Alberto Costa, resigned from the government, as per convention, in order to push his proposals to protecting the rights of EU citizens through parliament. With a vote won - the situation now looks more optimistic for all those EU citizens who had been living under threat for the last 2 years
- The Cooper-Letwin amendment was passed by Parliament with a thumping majority, which gives Parliament the opportunity to vote on a delay to Article 50. However, this would come AFTER the vote on Theresa May`s deal on March 12th - so it may become academic if the May Deal wins Parliamentary support
- The co-founder of US buyout giant Carlyle Group, David Rubenstein, called for a second referendum to help the UK out of its Brexit impasse
- One of the richest men in Scotland, Sir Tom Hunter, has called for a fresh referendum on Brexit
- The DUP`s Brexit strategy was described as `a massive act of self-harm and completely ill-judged` by the Northern Ireland Alliance Party leader Naomi Long
- A Politico-Hanbury opinion poll revealed the UK public to be in favour of a Brexit extension, but only if it is a short one

- Wired highlighted the huge sums of dark money pouring onto Facebook from Vote Leave backing front groups, which have little transparency and are spending vast sums to force through a no deal Brexit
- Jacob Rees-Mogg has publicly warned that delaying Brexit beyond the European elections `risk a surge in right-wing extremism` citing a known- Far Right criminal, Tommy Robinson, as a likely beneficiary of such an event were it to occur

## **Jobs at Risk**

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### **Post-Brexit migration rules disastrous, say manufacturers**

Make UK said the move would cause shortages of welders, robotics workers, toolmakers and maintenance technicians. "Few of these roles initially pay more than the £30,000 necessary under the new rules to qualify to work in the UK," said the organisation, formerly known as the EEF. Its director of employment and skills policy, Tim Thomas, urged the government to "urgently reconsider" the salary threshold plans.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-47389423>

## **Economic Impact**

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### **BMW says piecemeal Brexit delays 'not good' for its four UK plants**

BMW has said piecemeal delays to Brexit "would not be good" for the carmaker, spelling more uncertainty for its four UK plants. Andreas Wendt, a BMW board member and purchasing chief, said in an interview with the German industry journal Automobilwoche that a stop-start approach would add unwelcome disruption to its manufacturing in Britain. "A start date [for Brexit] delayed a little at a time would not be a good scenario for us," he said.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/26/bmw-says-piecemeal-brexit-delays-not-good-for-its-four-uk-plants>

### **UK consumer morale edges up from five-year low as Brexit uncertainty persists**

British households are showing "amazing" stoicism as the country heads for Brexit, a market research company said on Thursday as its measure of consumer confidence edged up in February. The GfK consumer confidence index rose to -13 from -14 in January. Economists taking part in a Reuters poll had expected a slight fall to -15.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-britain-economy-consumersentiment/uk-consumer-morale-edges-up-from-five-year-low-as-brexit-uncertainty-persists-idUKKCN1QH00Q>

## **Administrative Fall Out**

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### **Brexit: Critical no-deal plans running late**

A third of the government's most critical no-deal Brexit plans are behind schedule, ministers have admitted, as they blamed business for ignoring warnings about the need to prepare. In a bleak assessment of the economic impact of no deal published yesterday, the government said that 10 per cent of all food could be subject to shortages as well as price rises. It warned that cross-Channel disruption would be increased by the failure of British companies to register for customs formalities. The paper revealed that of the 240,000 businesses that trade only with the EU, 40,000 had registered with the government to export, which would result in goods being turned back at the French border. "The lack of preparation for EU controls greatly increases the probability of disruption," it stated.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/brexit-critical-no-deal-plans-running-late-3rkmp0vlw?shareToken=04562bc8327b7fef31fd79cc5cc20e60>

### **The Tory plan for no-deal medical shortages is staggeringly negligent**

A no-deal Brexit ... is expected to have an immediate and drastic effect on supply chains" for medicines. From the pen of an op-ed writer, such language might seem alarmist. But this comes

from a report published this week in the Lancet, a world-class scientific journal – and it should terrify you. The scale of the problem is huge. You will know someone affected, even if you are not. NHS figures show that almost half the population regularly takes a prescribed medicine. And around 75% of the medicines the NHS uses come into the UK from the EU.

[https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/feb/27/tory-plans-no-deal-brex-it-medical-shortages?CMP=share\\_btn\\_tw](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/feb/27/tory-plans-no-deal-brex-it-medical-shortages?CMP=share_btn_tw)

### **IT systems to run UK borders 'may not be ready for no-deal Brexit'**

Six out of eight critical IT systems required to allow the UK's borders to function under a no-deal Brexit are in danger of not being ready, Whitehall's spending watchdog has found. The National Audit Office has also concluded that with 31 days to go before the UK is due to leave the EU, the readiness of UK's businesses are a "red-rated" risk if the government crashes out of Europe. The findings were released on Wednesday evening in a memo sent to the public accounts committee. Meg Hillier, the chair of the committee, said serious questions remained about whether the UK would be prepared at the border, and what this would mean for individuals and businesses.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/27/six-out-of-eight-border-it-systems-may-not-be-ready-for-no-deal>

### **Government identifies 7000 medicines for no-deal Brexit planning**

Companies that supply these 7,000 medicines have been asked to provide a six-week buffer stock, and health minister Stephen Hammond said in a written ministerial statement on 25 February 2019 that "the majority of companies have confirmed that stockpiling plans are in place". Hammond also announced that the government had bought "tickets" from two cross-channel ferry operators that run routes to Poole, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Immingham and Felixstowe, away from the straits of Dover, which are expected to become congested if there is a no-deal Brexit.

<https://www.pharmaceutical-journal.com/news-and-analysis/news/government-identifies-7000-medicines-for-no-deal-brex-it-planning/20206222.article>

### **No-deal Brexit would lead to food shortages and cost business billions, government reveals**

Ministers also admitted that up to a third of "critical" infrastructure projects were now behind schedule, partly due to firms failing to view a no-deal scenario as "sufficiently credible". Members of the public are also failing to prepare for a no-deal Brexit, according to the 15-page document, which warned that industries like the automotive sector would be "severely" impacted by new tariff and non-tariff barriers if the Commons does not back the Withdrawal Agreement negotiated by Theresa May.

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/foreign-affairs/brex-it/news/102130/no-deal-brex-it-would-lead-food-shortages-and-cost>

### **UK citizens living in EU 'still entitled to social security benefits' in case of no-deal Brexit**

EU citizens in the UK and UK citizens in the 27 EU countries will keep any social benefits acquired before withdrawal in the event of a no-deal Brexit. Text adopted by the Employment and Social Affairs Committee subject to full EU Parliament approval aims to safeguard people's entitlements to social security benefits based on insurance, employment or residence. The contingency measures would apply to EU citizens living in the UK and UK citizens living in one of the 27 member states who have acquired social entitlements due to the free movement of people. The measures will be adopted across the EU only if the UK leaves with no withdrawal agreement in place. The European Commission will assess how the measures are working one year after the regulation is implemented and produce a report for the EU Parliament and MEPs

<https://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/news/business/uk-citizens-living-in-eu-still-entitled-to-social-security-benefits-in-case-of-no-deal-brex-it-1-4880086>

**@AlbertoCostaMP I'm hugely grateful to those colleagues who have very kindly**

## **supported my amendment to ringfence rights for those EU citizens in the UK and those in UK citizens in the EU.**

1/4 Can't begin to say how brilliant it is to see my amendment in black and white on the order paper today. I'm hugely grateful to those colleagues who have very kindly supported my amendment to ringfence rights for those EU citizens in the UK and those in UK citizens in the EU.

<https://twitter.com/AlbertoCostaMP/status/1100707739481841664>

## **UK will pay: German businesses to OVERCHARGE Brits after Brexit 'why should WE suffer?'**

A leading industrial lobby, which is based in the region around car giant Volkswagen's headquarters, is leading a charge for "price adjustments" to cover the costs of exporting to Britain in event of a no-deal Brexit. Smaller firms are also following the lead after Lueneburg Chamber of Commerce published "five Brexit tips", which includes charging Britons more to cover potential customs duties. The plans have been pushed out to over 10,000 people as part of an effort to prepare businesses near Hamburg for a hard Brexit

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1093137/Brexit-news-UK-EU-Germany-business-no-deal-cost-plan-latest>

## **'They LOATHE her!' British expats in Spain FURIOUS with May over Brexit health chaos**

'Brexpat in Spain' co-founder Anne Hernandez said Spanish-based Britons with existing medical problems are "very concerned" with 30 days until Brexit and health rights still not guaranteed. EU-based British pensioners are currently able to access free healthcare through the S1 scheme, which is ultimately paid by the British government. But this week the government warned British nationals may have to pay for private health insurance in the event of a no-deal Brexit.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1093350/brexit-spain-expats-health-theresa-may-health-rights-brexpat-in-spain>

## **Political Shenanigans**

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### **The smart money is on the Brexit can being kicked down the road again**

After a tumultuous three days where decisions were forced by threats of resignation and the realities of splits and defection, Westminster faces a different set of Brexit choices - there are now plausible routes to delay, and a new referendum, but also the increased credibility of both those outcomes could yet motivate rebellious Tory Brexiters to cash in their chips and accept the PM's deal.

<https://news.sky.com/story/the-smart-money-is-on-the-brexit-can-being-kicked-down-the-road-again-11650467>

### **Another Sign of Hope for Her Deal**

The hardline Conservative Brexit backers, whose support May needs to get her deal ratified in Parliament, appear to be softening after May's tactical gamble to take a no-deal Brexit off the table and replace it with the option of postponing the exit day. The prospect of a delay or, worse, the divorce that euroskeptics have spent their careers fighting for being reversed, may be focusing minds.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-02-27/brexit-rees-mogg-softens-stance-on-may-s-deal-brexit-update>

### **The Prime Minister must use Brexit deal to give Britain a new start... then she May go**

Henry Newman of the Open Europe 'Think Tank' argues that jitters over Brexit happening are understandable and that Brexiteers need to stand firm to see Brexit goes over the line and then Theresa May steps down

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8528310/the-prime-minister-must-use-brexit-deal-to-give-britain-a-new-start-then-she-may-go/>

### **Rees-Mogg Won't Insist on Dropping Irish Backstop, Report Says**

Pro-Brexit lawmaker Jacob Rees-Mogg is no longer insisting that the “Irish backstop” be dropped as a condition for supporting Prime Minister Theresa May’s Brexit deal, he told the Financial Times in an interview. In a sign that he’s softening opposition to the plan, Rees-Mogg -- the leader of the pro-Brexit European Research Group of Conservative Party lawmakers -- said he would consider other legal fixes to ensure the so-called backstop didn’t become permanent, the paper reported. That could be in the form of an appendix to the text, he said. “I think you can add an appendix without reopening the text,” Rees-Mogg said, according to the Financial Times. “You’d be adding something on at the end, but it’s still part of the text.”

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-02-27/rees-mogg-tells-ft-he-won-t-insist-irish-backstop-be-dropped>

### **Jacob Rees-Mogg softens position on Theresa May’s Brexit deal**

Jacob Rees-Mogg, the head of the leading Eurosceptic faction of Conservative MPs, has softened his opposition to Theresa May’s Brexit deal, amid rising hopes in Downing Street that the prime minister might win approval for a revised agreement next month. Mr Rees-Mogg told the Financial Times that he was no longer insisting that the contentious “Irish backstop” be scrapped as a condition for his support for Mrs May’s deal and was prepared to consider other legal fixes to ensure it did not become permanent.

<https://www.ft.com/content/44530d70-39df-11e9-b856-5404d3811663>

### **Labour will win more votes than it loses by backing another referendum**

John Mann, the pro-Brexit Labour MP, says the party will lose support if it pursues the policy announced by Jeremy Corbyn, and ends up enabling a public vote ...

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/feb/27/labour-vote-referendum-jeremy-corbyn>

### **Labour to push for Commons vote on second Brexit referendum - John McDonnell**

Labour will push for a vote on calling a second referendum as soon as Theresa May brings her Brexit deal back to the Commons. Shadow chancellor John McDonnell said Labour would take the first opportunity to test whether MPs will back a public vote.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/labour-to-push-for-commons-vote-on-second-brexit-referendum-john-mc-donnell-37863892.html>

### **May and Corbyn have failed us on Brexit again. MPs must back a people’s vote**

Take the prime minister first. She triggered article 50 without any clue as to what kind of Brexit could command the confidence of parliament or her party, and she did so without having any conversation with MPs or the country. Instead, the referendum result was taken as an instruction to deliver a hard Brexit, with the UK leaving the single market and the customs union.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/feb/27/may-corbyn-failed-brexit-peoples-vote-independent-group>

### **@the3million @AlbertoCostaMP looking very happy after the #CostaAmendment has been adopted as Govt policy.**

@AlbertoCostaMP looking very happy after the #CostaAmendment has been adopted as Govt policy. We are now one step closer to truly protect #citizensrights of EU citizens in the UK & @BritishInEurope even in case of no-deal Brexit.

<https://twitter.com/the3million/status/1100843513762205696>

### **Brexit Vote: Here are the key amendments and what they mean for Theresa May**

MPs are to have another chance to vote on Theresa May’s ongoing Brexit negotiations and strategy and propose their own suggestions. On Wednesday evening the Prime Minister will table another so-called “neutral motion” after updating the house on her Brexit talks the previous day. This will give members the chance to table their own amendments, which can be voted on, providing the Government with an indication to the Commons’ intentions over Brexit.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/brexit/brexit-vote-today-amendments-explained-when-time-deal/>

## **EXPLAINED: All the Brexit amendments MPs are voting on tonight**

Here we go again... MPs will vote tonight on a string of non-binding Brexit tweaks and alternatives, as Theresa May tables another 'neutral' motion on her deal to leave the EU. PoliticsHome gives you the lowdown on every single one.

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/foreign-affairs/brexit/news/102151/explained-all-brexit-amendments-mps-are-voting-tonight>

## **The band of 11 who broke Corbyn and May on Brexit**

For Mr Corbyn this was to announce his support for a second referendum if he cannot get the Brexit deal he wants. The risk of the People's Vote band in parliament following Chuka Umunna et al out of the door was simply too great. In reality, a plan to hold another referendum probably won't get through parliament, so this is a promise Mr Corbyn might never have to actually keep. But that he was forced into making the pledge for fear of a split is ample proof that this was the week traditional command-and-control party politics was turned on its head.

<https://news.sky.com/story/the-band-of-11-who-broke-corbyn-and-may-on-brexit-11649454>

## **Sir Keir Starmer says second EU referendum should include Remain but not no-deal**

Labour's Sir Keir Starmer has told Sky News a second EU referendum should be a "basic choice" between a "credible Leave option and Remain" - but voters should not have the option of a no-deal Brexit. Labour have announced their support for a fresh public vote on Brexit to prevent a "damaging Tory Brexit being forced on the country"

<https://news.sky.com/story/labours-sir-keir-starmer-says-second-eu-referendum-should-be-leave-vs-remain-11648505>

## **Brexit has already ravaged the northeast. Of course we'll support Labour in backing a Final Say**

Inevitably, focus will now be on parliamentary arithmetic, and how many Labour rebels will needed to be offset by Conservative MPs supporting a people's vote to gain a majority in the House of Commons. The reality is that if a significant number of Labour MPs - such as John Mann and Caroline Flint - vote against a people's vote, it is unlikely to happen. To do so, based on the misconception (propagated not just by a small group of MPs, but unelected advisors to the leader's office) that northern and Midlands voters - specifically in Labour heartlands - are a homogenous group of die-hard Brexit voters, would be simply criminal.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/brexit-second-referendum-labour-corbyn-eu-deal-a8799351.html>

*Additional sources: ([The Independent](#))*

## **@ITVPeston Oliver Letwin says to find a Brexit solution there should be a succession of votes to identify where the consensus lies in Parliament.**

Oliver Letwin says to find a Brexit solution there should be a succession of votes to identify where the consensus lies in Parliament.

<https://twitter.com/itvpeston/status/1100886891887378432>

## **Brexit news latest: Brussels 'will insist on delay of up to two years if UK fails to agree deal'**

Senior ministers believe that the European Union will insist on a Brexit delay of up to two years if Britain fails to agree a deal in the next few weeks. Several sources have told the Standard they do not think the sort of "short, limited extension" of Article 50 suggested by Theresa May in the Commons yesterday would be permitted by Brussels. Ministers closely involved in Brexit preparations believe the EU would probably demand an extension until December 2020, effectively replacing the planned transition period with continued EU membership.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/brexit-news-latest-brussels-will-insist-on-delay-of-up-to-two-years-if-uk-fails-to-agree-deal-a4077851.html>

### **Carlyle co-founder says new vote only way out of Brexit impasse**

US billionaire David Rubenstein has said a second referendum on whether the UK should leave the EU is “the only solution” that could break Britain’s stalemate over Brexit. Speaking at a private equity conference in Berlin, Mr Rubenstein, who co-founded US buyout fund Carlyle in the 1980s, added that Brexit was hurting UK growth but that considerable “political will” would be needed for the country to hold a new EU referendum.

<https://www.ft.com/content/e40eecba-3aae-11e9-b72b-2c7f526ca5d0>

### **Why Centrist Dads will stop Brexit**

What most accurately characterises Centrist Dads is a rejection of dogmatic certainty – along with an at times annoyingly compulsive habit to tell younger people that they may think that way now but they’ll see things differently when they get to his/her age. As their favourite joke goes: A Centrist Dad takes his children to feed the ducks, a Conservative Dad takes his children duck shooting, a Socialist Dad takes his children to a Solidarity With Ducks rally. When Centrist Dad pin-up figure Tony Blair called the Independent Group a “fightback in an era of crisis and extremism” it was the perfect application of the soothing moderate analgesic centrist Dads like to bathe in.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/why-centrist-dads-will-stop-brexit-1.3808505>

### **Public backs Brexit extension — but only if it’s short**

U.K. voters support a delay to Brexit, but only if it lasts no longer than three months, according to an exclusive POLITICO-Hanbury poll published ahead of a crucial showdown in the British parliament over the next steps in the Brexit process. While voters remain skeptical about the intention behind any delay, overall they support pushing back Brexit day (with 47 percent in favor to 26 percent opposed) if it is needed to continue the exit negotiations or to ratify the deal. But support for an extension lasting any longer than three months drops dramatically, according to the survey of 2,006 adults.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/poll-public-uk-voters-backs-brexit-extension-but-only-if-its-short-deal/>

### **A second Brexit referendum is now essential**

Theresa May’s aim is to convert fear of a no-deal Brexit into acceptance of her bad deal, which would leave the UK at the EU’s mercy. In the end, the rhetoric about “taking back control” has come down to a choice between suicide and vassalage. This march of folly needs to be stopped, for the UK’s sake and Europe’s. The only politically acceptable way to do this is via another referendum. That is risky. But it would be better than sure disaster.

<https://www.ft.com/content/d69fe31e-38f0-11e9-b856-5404d3811663>

### **Theresa May backs down to buy herself more time on Brexit**

Mrs May now appears more like a driver who has lost control of the stagecoach. More important, the horses are pulling in two different directions. Her MPs, her ministers, her cabinet and even her close Downing Street advisers are divided. The prime minister’s only focus is keeping them from pulling the entire contraption apart. From the moment she lost the support of Brexit hardliners in her own party, Mrs May’s entire strategy has been to play for time until she can scare MPs into voting for her withdrawal agreement. Unfortunately the cliff edge is too close and she has, quite simply, lost the trust of even her allies in cabinet.

<https://www.ft.com/content/a6731eb0-39b1-11e9-b72b-2c7f526ca5d0?segmentId=635a35f9-12b4-dbf5-9fe6-6b8e6ffb143e&campaign=brexit>

### **Political Setbacks**

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#### **Naomi Long labels DUP Brexit strategy a 'massive act of self-harm'**

Naomi Long has described the DUP's Brexit strategy as a "massive act of self-harm and completely ill-judged". The Alliance leader said Arlene Foster's party was now being driven by its 10 MPs, who

she claimed had become aligned with "extremists" and "slightly giddy" at the attention Westminster's finely-poised arithmetic had brought upon them.

<http://www.irishnews.com/news/politicalnews/2019/02/28/news/naomi-long-labels-dup-brexit-strategy-a-massive-act-of-self-harm--1562077/>

### **Sir Tom Hunter: Politicians 'have let us down' on Brexit**

One of Scotland's richest men has accused politicians of letting down the country as he called for another referendum to be held on Brexit. Sir Tom Hunter said voters had been lied to by the Leave campaign during the EU referendum in 2016. They had ...

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-47392422>

### **The Yorkshire Post says: Theresa May on back foot over Brexit**

Back in November, Theresa May compared herself to her cricketing hero Geoffrey Boycott as she insisted she had the obduracy and resolve to get her Brexit deal through Parliament. But the Prime Minister now finds herself on an increasingly sticky wicket on the issue. On Monday, Mrs May told a Press conference in Egypt that a delay to Brexit "doesn't deliver a decision in Parliament, it doesn't deliver a deal" and "just delays the point at which you come to that decision". But 24 hours later, she addressed the Commons to say that if her deal is rejected for a second time and MPs then prevent leaving without a deal on March 29, they will then be given the chance to vote to delay Britain's departure to the end of June.

<https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/opinion/the-yorkshire-post-says-theresa-may-on-back-foot-over-brexit-1-9618271>

**@Channel4News "The stark truth is this: not one word of the Withdrawal Agreement or the Political Declaration has changed since it was signed off on 25th November last year."**

"The stark truth is this: not one word of the Withdrawal Agreement or the Political Declaration has changed since it was signed off on 25th November last year." Labour's Sir Keir Starmer says Theresa May is wrong to believe that her Brexit deal with the EU is going to be changed

<https://twitter.com/Channel4News/status/1100799216086077440>

### **MP accuses former Tory official of being a 'fraudster' and 'cowboy' who exploited legal loophole to hide source of 'dark money'**

Although the Constitution minister, Chloe Smith, told the debate that responsibility for unincorporated associations lay with the Electoral Commission, and that data held by them was "treasure trove of information", Docherty-Hughes said the way the DUP donation was organised was "the exact opposite of open, properly-functioning parliamentary democracy." He questioned whether anyone in the DUP knew the source of the cash that was largely used to fund pro-leave campaigning on the UK mainland, and whether any "requisite due diligence" was done ahead of the money being accepted. Under previous Northern Ireland electoral laws, donations to any of the major political parties were protected. The exact origins of £435,000 could have been revealed if the government had honoured its promise last year to back-date legal changes to the time of the 2016 referendum. This did not happen.

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/uk/brexitinc/james-cusick/mp-accuses-former-tory-official-of-being-fraudster-and-cowboy-who-exploite>

**@YoungTories4PV We voted to leave not for a deal" We'll just wait for someone to show us anything from Vote Leave that mentioned no deal**

"We voted to leave not for a deal" We'll just wait for someone to show us anything from Vote Leave that mentioned no deal

<https://twitter.com/YoungTories4PV/status/1100740104887459840>

## **Betrayal Jeremy Corbyn forced to formally back second referendum and betray 17.4m Leave voters after losing bid for his own 'alternative Brexit'**

Jeremy Corbyn has tonight formally backed a second referendum after MPs threw out his plans for a soft Brexit. The Labour boss's official policy will now be to betray the 17.4million Brits who voted to leave the EU, and send them back to the polls to have another go. Labour's amendment was defeated by 240 votes to 323 in the Commons this evening after his last-ditch plans for a soft Brexit failed. And Mr Corbyn tonight confirmed it was now party policy - but risked anger from Remainers by saying he would look at other options too.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/brexit/8524755/brexit-jeremy-corbyn-second-referendum-labour-commons-votes/>

## **@BBCPolitics "People have been thoroughly misled, over a long period of time, by a form of propaganda that believes the EU is evil" Conservative MP Dominic Grieve says**

"People have been thoroughly misled, over a long period of time, by a form of propaganda that believes the EU is evil" Conservative MP Dominic Grieve says many people calling for a "catastrophic" no-deal #Brexit have been led to believe "mad fantasies"

<https://twitter.com/BBCPolitics/status/1100816362291806208>

## **French President Emmanuel Macron vows to block any Brexit delay without a 'clear objective'**

French President Emmanuel Macron has vowed to block any extension to Brexit unless there is a "clear objective" for the delay. Speaking at a press conference alongside German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Paris, Mr Macron warned Theresa May that France would use its veto power to prevent any extension to Article 50. Any request from the Prime Minister to delay Brexit past 29 March would require the unanimous agreement of all 27 EU member states. "We would support an extension request only if it was justified by a new choice of the British," he told reporters. "But we would in no way accept an extension without a clear objective."

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/foreign-affairs/brexit/news/102149/french-president-emmanuel-macron-vows-block-any-brexit>

*Additional sources: (Reuters)*

## **France will block Brexit delay without 'new choice' by UK**

Emmanuel Macron has said France will block a Brexit delay unless there is a "new choice" by Britain, as Spain's prime minister said that merely postponing the no-deal deadline would not be "reasonable or desirable". In a sign of the heightened risk of an accidental crash-landing for the UK, both leaders signalled their disapproval of Theresa May's suggestion of a last-minute request for a two-month extension if her deal is voted down again. The French president said there would need to be a clear purpose to delaying the UK's exit from the EU, in comments that will inevitably raise cross-party concerns among those seeking to take no-deal Brexit off the table.

[https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/feb/27/spanish-pm-warns-may-brexit-delay-with-no-plan-not-reasonable-or-desirable?CMP=Share\\_AndroidApp\\_Tweet](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/feb/27/spanish-pm-warns-may-brexit-delay-with-no-plan-not-reasonable-or-desirable?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Tweet)

## **Labour must challenge the myth that the working class supports Brexit**

The party must campaign on the values its supporters in the real, progressive, multi-ethnic working class believe in, not on the values of people who will never vote for it. Look at the MRP polling done by Hope Not Hate and Best for Britain: it shows that, even in those constituencies where Leave scored high, and where Labour stands a chance of winning the next general election, on average there's been a six percentage point swing from Leave to Remain - with working class women, young Labour voters and Muslims the groups most likely to change their mind. And look at the real working class of Britain. It contains 2.7m European citizens, many of who are the very factory workers and farm hands the labour movement was born to represent. Do we include them in the British working class? Scotland did in 2014 - when it gave them the vote - so why can't we?

<https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/brexit/2019/02/labour-must-challenge-myth-working-class-supports-brexit>

### **Government aide quits over bid to guarantee EU citizens' rights after Brexit**

Alberto Costa, whose parents are Italian, resigned as parliamentary private secretary to Scottish Secretary David Mundell after tabling an amendment to the Government's Brexit business in the Commons. He had called on the Government and Brussels to make a joint commitment to protect the rights of EU and UK ex-pats regardless of whether Britain leaves with or without a deal. Labour accused the Prime Minister of sacking the South Leicestershire MP, but Downing Street insisted he had no option but to stand down. A spokesman for Mrs May said: "He's resigned from the Government. There's a long-standing convention that members of the Government payroll don't table amendments to government bills.

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/conservative-party/news/102148/government-aide-quits-over-bid-guarantee-eu>

### **Dominic Grieve: No-deal Brexit would be 'catastrophic'**

A no-deal Brexit would be catastrophic for Britain, according to Dominic Grieve MP. Speaking to talkRADIO's Julia Hartley-Brewer, the former Attorney General said he would "not allow" the UK to leave the European Union without a deal, and would do "everything possible" to achieve his goal. "A no-deal Brexit would be catastrophic for our country. I must do everything possible to stop it happening," he said. "Brexit has damaged trust in our democracy. It's a dreadful process and one that is dragging this country to a third-rate future. The third-rate future is going to be infinitely more damaging than continuing to have a debate at the moment about the best terms of exit."

<https://talkradio.co.uk/news/dominic-grieve-no-deal-brexit-would-be-catastrophic-19022730036>

### **Talk of a second Brexit referendum has created a surge in sketchy Facebook ads**

Earlier this month, Open Democracy raised the alarm about a cluster of Facebook pages that were publishing ads supportive of no-deal Brexit, while providing very little information on who was behind the organisations nominally paying for the posts. One could again lay the blame on Facebook's doorstep: publishing political ads on the platform only requires a British or EU identity document and a UK bank account. But the problem runs deeper. It has to do, for instance, with the British Electoral Commission's utter toothlessness when it comes to supervising digital campaigning, let alone forcing an organisation to reveal its backers.

<https://www.wired.co.uk/article/brexit-second-referendum-facebook-adverts-money>

### **Brexit: Sajid Javid stuns MPs by backing bid to secure EU citizens' rights after no-deal after Theresa May dismissed it**

Sajid Javid has pledged the government will back a move to protect the rights of EU citizens if there is a no-deal Brexit - a day after Theresa May dismissed it. The home secretary stunned and delighted a committee of MPs by saying there was "nothing" wrong with the amendment, tabled by a Tory MP. However, he was blindsided when told the government had suggested it would fight the amendment, saying: "When did you hear that? From who."

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-no-deal-eu-citizens-rights-sajid-javid-theresa-may-alberto-cost-a-a8799181.html>

### **Theresa May: the new Iron Lady or a heap of rusting Brexit metal?**

May was horrified that some MPs might have thought she was trying to run down the clock and force them into accepting her deal that they had already overwhelmingly rejected, or risk either no deal or no Brexit. So to alleviate any uncertainty, she was going to give parliament the certainty of even longer uncertainty by offering it the chance of delaying Brexit for a couple of months in which nothing would change and then allow the country to go over a cliff edge at the end of June.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/feb/26/theresa-may-the-new-iron-lady-or-a-heap-of-rusting-brexit-metal>

## **The inescapable irony of the Brexit crackup**

An economic study by the Bank of England estimated that a “disorderly no deal” could result in as much as a 10 percent drop in the economy (gross domestic product). The pain would be shared with E.U. countries, because the United Kingdom is a large market for their exports. Assuming widespread economic consequences, Kirkegaard doubts that a “no deal” decision could “last very long.” Both the E.U. and the United Kingdom would be drawn back to the bargaining table. But to what end?

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-inescapable-irony-of-the-brexit-crackup/2019/02/27/ec832094-3aab-11e9-a06c-3ec8ed509d15\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-inescapable-irony-of-the-brexit-crackup/2019/02/27/ec832094-3aab-11e9-a06c-3ec8ed509d15_story.html)

## **A ‘clean’ Brexit doesn’t exist. May finally admits it now**

Brexit is irredeemably complex. There is no tidy way to do it, and the messiest version of all is the one that the hardest Brexiters advocate – quitting without a comprehensive agreement. This is routinely called the “no deal” scenario, but that is a misnomer. Only if Britain wants to be more isolated than North Korea will there be literally no deal.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/feb/27/clean-brexit-theresa-may>

## **EU27 citizens see no big Brexit hit for them, but think Brits will be ‘worse off’: poll**

Citizens across the EU27 generally reckon their countries will “not be much affected” by the U.K.’s exit from the bloc, and more think Britain will be “worse off” after the divorce, according to newly released data. A study by the Bertelsmann Foundation published Wednesday found that 61 percent of people living in the EU27 believe there “will not be a significant change in EU countries because of Brexit.” The foundation asked 10,434 people across the EU27 in December what “best describes the consequences” of Brexit for both the EU as well as the United Kingdom.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/eu27-citizens-see-no-big-brexit-hit-for-them-but-think-brits-will-be-worse-off-poll-extension-dutch-uk-britain/>

## **May using Nixon’s ‘madman theory’ to play chicken with Brexit**

The “crazy guy” strategy, as it is sometimes called, is of little value in the UK’s negotiating approach towards the EU. The major flaw is that the “no deal” button over which May’s finger now deliberately hovers would, if triggered, rain down its destruction principally not on the EU-27 but on the UK itself. For the EU to give any credence to the threat of volatility and irrationality, it would have to believe that the UK government is not only completely mad but also colossally stupid.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/may-using-nixon-s-madman-theory-to-play-chicken-with-brexit-1.3807003>

## **Brexit: Alberto Costa MP loses his job for protecting EU citizens in new fiasco**

Theresa May was accused of a “nasty and petty” act in “sacking” Alberto Costa - despite accepting the plan that got him ditched in the first place. Though she argued that it was a resignation and it was an Executive norm for ministers to stand down when proposing motions in this fashion

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/breaking-brexit-alberto-costa-mp-14060851>

## **Former Brexit secretary David Davis: The utter folly of defeatist Mrs May taking No Deal off the table**

I would not blame the Prime Minister if she felt isolated. Who could blame her for looking for a way out? The right playbook however is Churchill’s. Keep bugging on. This is not the time to capitulate, to fold and to be defeatist. Now is the time to stand firm and hold our nerve. Mrs May’s announcement yesterday in which she conceded two Commons votes on Brexit in mid March is the wrong move. It sends the wrong message to the EU. Opening up the possibility of ruling out No Deal, or extending Article 50, may harm our negotiating position.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-6749435/DAVID-DAVIS-says-utter-folly-defeatist-Mrs-taking-No-Deal-table.html>

## **Brexit: Cabinet split over Theresa May's offer to extend Article 50, but she's avoided resignations**

Andrea Leadsom is said to have "gone off like a firework" when Mrs May raised the prospect of Brexit being deferred

[https://inews.co.uk/news/brexit/brexit-deal-theresa-may-cabinet-split/?utm\\_campaign=how-likely-do-you-think-it-is-th-at-the-u-6b0E&utm\\_customer=inews&utm\\_medium=twitter&utm\\_source=opinary](https://inews.co.uk/news/brexit/brexit-deal-theresa-may-cabinet-split/?utm_campaign=how-likely-do-you-think-it-is-th-at-the-u-6b0E&utm_customer=inews&utm_medium=twitter&utm_source=opinary)

## **Delaying Brexit risks a surge in right-wing extremism, warns Jacob Rees-Mogg**

Jacob Rees-Mogg has warned that delaying Brexit beyond the European elections risks a surge in right-wing extremism. Addressing a 2,500 strong audience at the London Palladium, the leading Brexiteer said denying the public the biggest democratic mandate in British history would open the door to right-wing firebrand Tommy Robinson. Speaking at the sellout Spectator event, the MP for North East Somerset said: "If we try to stay and we stay beyond the European elections, there will only be one winner from that, and that would be Tommy Robinson.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/02/26/delaying-brexit-risks-surge-right-wing-extremism-warns-jacob/>

## **Evening Standard comment: At last the ice melts as Brexit positions collapse**

Even in the past few days she was refusing, in public and private, to countenance delay. Her insistence that a no-deal departure remained on the table — solely as a negotiating tactic to bully her own party — has already cost the British economy billions of pounds, as businesses move key operations off-shore, some never to return. It has taken an unprecedented revolt from the sensible wing of her party to force her to stop this madness. Backbenchers like Oliver Letwin and Nick Boles, and the Cabinet trio of Amber Rudd, Greg Clark and David Gauke, deserve the nation's thanks

<https://www.standard.co.uk/comment/comment/evening-standard-comment-at-last-the-ice-melts-as-brexit-positions-collapse-a4076846.html>

## **Trade Deals/Negotiations**

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### **Brexit victory 'of sorts': UK secures WTO agreement**

BRITAIN has secured a deal of sort with a body connected to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and will remain within the its Government Procurement Agreement (GPA) after it leaves the EU

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1093237/brexit-news-WTO-world-trade-organization-trade-uk-us-relationship>

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