

# News from the Brexit Cliff Edge

## 13th Mar 2019

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### News Highlights

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#### Welcome to the Brexit Cliff Edge

#### UK Economic Impact

- The House of Commons Public Accounts Committee has flagged the IT systems of DEFRA and the Department of Transport as being unprepared for a No Deal Brexit
- The Road Hauliers Association slammed the Department of Transport for `failing to make timely preparations to procure the additional freight capacity needed to transport critical goods.` It also said `its procurement approach has been rushed and risky and preparations conducted in secrecy with inadequate stakeholder engagement`
- Nissan announced it will stop manufacturing Infiniti Q30 sedan and QX30 SUV models in Sunderland by mid 2019 putting 250 jobs at risk
- Both IHS Markit and Manpower Group surveys found that a growing number of companies are preparing to cut jobs across the country
- City UK, Make UK and the CBI director general all urged MPs to `stop this circus and bring the curtain down on the risk of a No Deal Brexit. An outcome that would be disastrous for UK manufacturing and jeopardise many thousands of jobs`
- In January UK GDP grew by 0.5% month-on-month, after a decline of 0.40% in December. It remains sluggish, but there is speculation that January saw a one-off boost by businesses, who have been busy stockpiling for a No Deal Brexit
- The National Audit Office revealed that the government is spending £1.5bn on `urgent civil contingencies` this year alone as part of Operation Yellowhammer which is the planning vehicle for No Deal Brexit

#### EasyJet, Sanofi, Irish Border Customs, Brexit social media interference and Bloody Sunday charges

- EasyJet has shored up its supply chain at its new Austrian subsidiary, stockpiling spare parts in case of a No Deal Brexit
- Sanofi`s UK managing director, Hugo Fry, spoke to Sky about how the company is stockpiling medicines including insulin and flu vaccines
- Climate activist group Extinction Rebellion said it planned to blockade major routes into the port of Dover the day after a No Deal Brexit
- The Internet security group F-Secure has identified a large number of fake accounts based outside the UK and automated bots which are pushing the Leave EU message
- It is understood that the UK government has no hard and fast plans for Irish border controls to collect customs duties. The BBC believes customs will rely on businesses crossing the border and `self-reporting,` using an app-based record of goods being moved across the frontier. The government`s formal plans will be published later today
- The UK government will also publish tariff rate proposals for goods, produce and trade moving between the EU and the UK
- The Ministry of Defence put out a note on Tuesday, preparing MPs for the possibility of charges being brought against former soldiers, in relation to the Bloody Sunday murders at

the start of the Troubles. The MoD expects a charging decision on Thursday

- The `new IRA` confirmed it had sent three bombs to prominent transport addresses in London recently

### **Theresa May`s Deal is Defeated a Second Time**

- Theresa May`s deal was defeated in the House of Commons by 149 votes with 391 MPs voting against the Withdrawal Agreement
- The PM said a vote on whether Parliament supported a No Deal Brexit would proceed on Wednesday, and there would be no `whip` for Conservative MPs, a sign the PMs hand is much weakened, according to political commentators
- Theresa May announced that a further Parliamentary vote on whether to ask the EU Commission for an extension to the proposed date for Brexit, would occur the following day
- The PM stressed the fact that the EU required the UK to present a `credible justification for any extension` - such as clear plans for a softer Brexit, or a General Election or a Second Referendum
- The EU Commission confirmed that there would be no `third chance` for Theresa May`s deal and that it is now up to the UK to decide what it would like to do next

### **Political Shenanigans**

- Nicola Sturgeon told the Daily Record that the case for Scottish independence, after the PM`s second defeat, has never been stronger
- Tory MP Robert Halfon floated the idea of a `Common Market 2.0` as a solution to the Brexit impasse on the website Conservative Home
- Sinn Fein`s deputy leader said the DUPs actions in Parliament were driving everyone in the UK towards a No Deal Brexit catastrophe
- Hardcore Brexiteers are warming to the idea of a delay, suggesting a new leave date of May 22nd, the eve of the European elections
- The same group of hardcore Brexiteers also said they are going to push for a `Managed No Deal` option as the basis for the UK`s exit from the EU
- Jacob Rees-Mogg was interviewed by the BBC`s Andrew Neil, shortly after yesterday`s Parliamentary vote, and the Express quoted Neil as telling Rees-Mogg `it was the night you lost Brexit`
- There are rumblings on the Conservative benches for Theresa May to consider her position

### **Jobs at Risk**

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#### **House of Commons Public Accounts Committee confirms RHA Brexit fears**

RHA chief executive, Richard Burnett said: "For the past 18 months we have strongly voiced our concerns to government officials, specifically to the Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling. Each time our concerns were met with the same response: that UK international hauliers had nothing to worry about. "We have never shared Mr Grayling`s optimism and this report confirms our doubts." To quote from the report: The Department for Transport has failed to make timely preparations to procure the additional freight capacity needed to transport critical goods. The Department`s procurement approach has been rushed and risky and preparations have been conducted in secrecy with inadequate stakeholder engagement. "We could not agree more," Richard Burnett continued. "The road freight industry relies on accurate planning yet with only 13 working days until Brexit we are still in the dark about future border crossing procedures. Our pleas for clarity have been constant - yet none has been forthcoming.

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/europe/eu-policy-agenda/brexit/press-release/road-haulage-association/102478/>

[house-commons](#)

### **Nissan to stop manufacturing Infiniti models in Sunderland, 250 jobs affected**

Nissan has said its Infiniti Q30 sedan and QX30 SUV will no longer be produced in Sunderland. The company said by the middle of 2019 manufacture will cease, as it plans to exit western Europe early next year and turns its attention to sales in the world's two biggest car markets instead. Infiniti has around 250 employees working on it in the Sunderland plant. Nissan said it is working to find alternative opportunities for staff, consulting with employee representatives where necessary and identifying opportunities for transition and training support where appropriate.

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/money/breaking-nissan-stop-manufacturing-premium-14123309>

### **Nissan's luxury brand Infiniti leaves Britain**

Workers at Britain's biggest car plant received more bad news yesterday when Nissan's luxury Infiniti division said that it would halt production in Sunderland within months. Trade union leaders sought urgent assurances over the fate of about 200 jobs at the site. Executives said that they were "working to find alternative opportunities" for all affected staff. The carmaker has decided to shift production of its Q30 model to Japan amid weak sales in western Europe. Work is due to conclude in Sunderland "by mid-2019". About 5,000 had been manufactured at the plant each year.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/business/nissan-s-luxury-brand-infiniti-leaves-britain-ssnjzqv8p>

### **Brexit uncertainty prompts more UK firms to prepare for job cuts**

Growing numbers of British companies are preparing to cut jobs or put hiring plans on hold as Brexit uncertainty intensifies, in the latest sign of stress on the economy. In an indication that Britain's long jobs recovery since the financial crisis is gradually running out of steam as Brexit nears, IHS Markit said UK employers' staff-hiring intentions had reached a six-year low in February. A separate survey of more than 2,000 firms by the employment agency ManpowerGroup found that growing numbers of companies were preparing to cut jobs across the country.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/mar/12/brexit-uncertainty-prompts-more-uk-firms-to-prepare-for-job-cuts>

## **Economic Impact**

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### **Plans for Irish border in event of no-deal Brexit to be published**

Plans for the Irish border in the event of a no-deal Brexit are set to be published. Speaking after her Withdrawal Deal was defeated in a House of Commons vote, Theresa May said her Government will publish its plans for a no-deal Brexit on Wednesday. The Prime Minister said these will include its approach to tariffs and the Northern Ireland border among other matters, if the United Kingdom leave the European Union without a deal on March 29.

<https://www.aol.co.uk/news/2019/03/12/plans-for-irish-border-in-event-of-no-deal-brexit-to-be-published/>

*Additional sources: ([The News Letter](#))*

### **MPs urged to avoid no-deal Brexit 'own goal'**

The City UK, the finance industry body, said leaving without a deal "would be an own goal of historic proportions". The government is set to publish more details of its no-deal plans on Wednesday, including trade tariffs and Irish border proposals. CBI director-general Carolyn Fairbairn said the extension of the Brexit process "should be as short as realistically possible and backed by a clear plan". "It's time for Parliament to stop this circus," she added. Stephen Phipson, chief executive of manufacturers' group Make UK, said: "It is now essential that Parliament brings the curtain down on this farce and removes the risk of no deal. "That outcome would be disastrous for the UK manufacturing, jeopardising many thousands of jobs in every constituency in the land."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-47546925>

### **Business leaders call for new approach to Brexit**

Business leaders on Tuesday night called for a “new approach” to Brexit as Theresa May’s Brexit deal fell to its second major defeat in the House of Commons. “Enough is enough,” said Carolyn Fairbairn, director-general of the Confederation of British Industry. Referring to Tuesday’s tumultuous parliamentary debate on the prime minister’s Brexit deal as another day of “failed politics”, she demanded a different course from the government, warning that “jobs and livelihoods depend on it”

<https://www.ft.com/content/23073a20-450a-11e9-b168-96a37d002cd3>

### **UK avoids 'Brexit black hole' in January, but economy still sluggish - as it happened**

The UK economy expanded at a faster-than-expected pace in January, supported by growth in all main sectors such as manufacturing, services and constructions, preliminary figures from the Office for National Statistics showed on Tuesday. Gross domestic product grew 0.5 percent month-on-month in January after a 0.40 percent decline in December. Economists had expected a 0.20 percent increase. In November, GDP grew 0.2 percent monthly.

<https://markets.businessinsider.com/news/interestrates/uk-january-economic-growth-beats-forecast-1028022213>

### **No-deal Brexit will cause fresh food shortages, price hikes and border delays, government believes**

Fresh food will run out, prices will rise and UK travellers will face border delays after a no-deal Brexit, civil servants are predicting. Whitehall’s “reasonable worst case scenario” for crashing out of the EU is revealed by a government watchdog – one day before a promised Commons vote on ruling out the prospect. The National Audit Office also reveals that £1.5bn is being spent by government on “urgent civil contingencies funding” in this financial year alone. The projections are made as part of Operation Yellowhammer, the emergency planning project first disclosed when Philip Hammond was photographed with a secret Treasury document last autumn.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/no-deal-brexit-food-shortage-nao-report-price-uk-border-delays-eu-cost-economy-a8819671.html>

## **Administrative Fall Out**

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### **Brexit news: Travel Insurance warning - medical fees could soar by 900 per cent in no deal**

Brexit uncertainty could see travellers forking out almost 900 per cent extra for their medical care abroad, travel insurance experts have claimed. In the case of a no deal scenario, the protection offered by the current European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) is unknown. Yet it might offer no assurances at all, with Admiral Travel Insurance estimating treatment for food poisoning could cost £2,000 should a British traveller fall ill overseas. Meanwhile for a more serious operation such as an appendix removal, this fee could surge by almost 900 per cent post March 29.

<https://www.express.co.uk/travel/articles/1098681/brexit-news-latest-uk-travel-insurance-holiday-no-deal>

### **Sanofi building drug stockpiles ahead of Brexit | Business News**

Hugo Fry, UK managing director of Sanofi, supplier of medicines including insulin and flu vaccines, reveals how it is preparing for Brexit.

<https://news.sky.com/video/sanofi-building-drug-stockpiles-ahead-of-brexit-11662203>

### **EasyJet shores up EU supply chain in case of no-deal Brexit**

Low-cost airline easyJet is stockpiling parts for its aircraft in continental Europe, in case a no-deal Brexit severs its supply chains. Johan Lundgren, chief executive, said easyJet had also been transferring three aircraft a week to its new Austrian subsidiary, which now had a fleet of 130. He said the airline was “stockpiling” spare parts for the Austrian fleet, “so as part of our Brexit preparations we’re making sure we’re not reliant on spare parts . . . only in the UK”. He said easyJet had “pre-purchased a number of spare parts” and allocated them to the right facilities.

<https://www.ft.com/content/4de95ff8-4419-11e9-a965-23d669740bfb>

### **Norton motorbike boss: Brexit has kicked us up the backside**

He voted Remain, but now thinks that leaving the European Union could revolutionise Norton's fortunes. "All day long we would have preferred to remain but now we've looked and reviewed our business model in the light of Brexit," he told me. "We have the potential to be bigger, better and stronger, to go across a wider range of export territories than we would ever have looked at if we had stayed Remain." Mr Garner is a confident, cheerful and eloquent businessman with a background as unusual as his company.

<https://news.sky.com/story/norton-motorbike-boss-brexit-has-kicked-us-up-the-backside-11662637>

### **'IRA' says it is responsible for parcel bombs - police**

A group calling itself the IRA says it was behind the parcel bombs sent to three London transport hubs and the University of Glasgow last week, according to police. Officers say the group claimed five devices were sent but only four have been found so far. Police Scotland and the Metropolitan Police have said the claim was received by a Northern Ireland media outlet using a recognised codeword.

<https://news.sky.com/story/ira-says-it-is-responsible-for-parcel-bombs-police-11662974>

### **Brexit news: Brexit will see WINE and CAR prices rise - but you could have YOUR tax CUT**

The most recent news to come out of Brexit has shown the price of wine and high-value cars could go up. According to a report by the Wine and Spirit Association, 99 percent of wine drunk in Britain is imported - and half of this is produced in the EU. According to a study done by the Journal of Wine Economics, customers may have to pay up to 25 percent more by 2025 in the event of a hard Brexit. If the UK exit the EU with a softer version of the withdrawal agreement, the price would only go up by 11 percent, the research shows.

<https://www.express.co.uk/finance/city/1098896/brexit-news-hard-brexit-no-deal-brexit-tariffs-uk-import-wto-theresa-may>

## **Political Shenanigans**

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### **Brexit crisis: Another day and more humiliation looms for Theresa May**

MPs will vote on ruling out a no-deal Brexit, after the Prime Minister was forced to concede a free vote for Conservative MPs to avoid ministerial resignations. If MPs vote against no deal, 24 hours later they will vote on extending Article 50, which if carried would mean the UK would not leave the EU on the proposed date of March 29

<https://news.sky.com/story/brexit-crisis-another-day-and-more-humiliation-looms-for-theresa-may-11663798>

### **Breakingviews - Britain positions for longer Brexit limbo**

Even then, a postponement is not guaranteed: the EU's 27 members must all approve it. Keeping Britain in the bloc for more than a few extra months could complicate elections for a new European Parliament, which will be held at the end of May. Eurosceptics will seize on any delay beyond March 29 as a betrayal of the result of the 2016 referendum. More importantly, buying time will not change the fundamental choice that British politicians have yet to make: to leave the European Union - with a deal or without one - or reverse the decision to quit, probably following another referendum. That moment of truth is no more predictable after Tuesday's defeat, but it's probably a little bit further away.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-britain-eu-breakingviews/breakingviews-britain-positions-for-longer-brexit-limbo-idUKKBN1QT2XU>

### **Nicola Sturgeon says case for independence has 'never been stronger' after May's Brexit deal suffers crushing defeat**

Nicola Sturgeon has said the case for Scotland's independence has 'never been stronger' after the

Prime Minister's EU exit plan was heavily defeated for a second time in the House of Commons. Speaking after the vote - which saw MPs reject the UK Government's proposals by 391 to 242 - the Scottish First Minister said the Brexit plan had ignored "the needs and voice" of Scotland and left the entire UK "poised on a cliff edge". The First Minister insisted Theresa May "definitively" rule out the "catastrophe" of a no-deal Brexit and warned that the UK had been left with a Government which has "effectively ceased to function".

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/nicola-sturgeon-says-case-independence-14126251>

### **Robert Halfon: If you don't like the backstop and you want a Brexit deal done quickly, there's only one answer: Common Market 2.0**

All we need to do turn the Prime Minister's deal into Common Market 2.0 is to renegotiate the Political Declaration. We know that the EU won't make problems, because they have already told us that they would be happy to agree to a future relationship that would keep us in the Single Market. Going for Common Market 2.0 would minimise the delay in delivering Brexit. It is the only Brexit compromise that really can be agreed and ratified in under 3 months.

<https://www.conservativehome.com/thecolumnists/2019/03/robert-halfon-if-you-dont-like-the-backstop-and-you-want-a-brexiteal-done-quickly-theres-only-one-answer-common-market-2-0.html>

### **What is a free vote and why did Theresa May call one for the No Deal Brexit vote?**

Conservative MPs have a free vote on a motion stating that "this House declines to approve leaving the European Union without a Withdrawal Agreement and a framework on the future relationship on March 29 2019 and notes that leaving without a deal remains the default in UK and EU law unless this House and the EU ratify an agreement". In short, they can vote with their conscience - instead of having to toe the party line, as dictated by Conservative managers in a "whipped vote".

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8623179/free-vote-brexiteal-explained/>

### **Business groups react to Brexit vote**

Carolyn Fairbairn, CBI director-general, said: "Enough is enough. This must be the last day of failed politics. A new approach is needed by all parties. Jobs and livelihoods depend on it." She added: "Extending Article 50 to close the door on a March no-deal is now urgent. It should be as short as realistically possible and backed by a clear plan. "Conservatives must consign their red lines to history, while Labour must come to the table with a genuine commitment to solutions. It's time for Parliament to stop this circus."

<https://www.financialdirector.co.uk/2019/03/12/business-groups-react-to-brexiteal-vote/>

### **Theresa May warns of no-deal damage following heavy Brexit defeat**

Prime Minister Theresa May has warned of the potential damage leaving the EU without a Brexit deal could do, after MPs rejected her Withdrawal Agreement for the second time. Mrs May said she "profoundly regrets" the decision of 391 MPs to vote against her withdrawal agreement, which she still believes is "the best and only deal available". She also said she will allow a free vote among her party, which will allow Conservative MPs to vote according to their personal beliefs rather than party policy. She said: "Brexit is an issue of grave importance for the future of our country, just like the referendum there are strongly held and legitimate views on both sides. For that reason I can confirm that this will be a free vote on this side of the house.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/theresa-may-warns-of-nodeal-damage-following-heavy-brexiteal-defeat-37906974.html>

### **EU Tells May To Provide 'Credible Justification' For Delaying Brexit**

The EU has demanded a "credible justification" before it can grant any request to delay Brexit, suggesting Theresa May may have to pivot to a softer deal or call an election or referendum. The prime minister is now highly likely to be forced by MPs to seek an extension of the Article 50 withdrawal process beyond March 29 after her Brexit deal was defeated in the Commons by a

149 vote majority. MPs now look likely to reject a no-deal Brexit in a vote on Wednesday before ordering May to seek an extension Article 50 in another vote on Thursday.

[https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/eu-tells-may-to-provide-credible-justification-for-delaying-brexit\\_uk\\_5c88171fe4b0450ddae52008](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/eu-tells-may-to-provide-credible-justification-for-delaying-brexit_uk_5c88171fe4b0450ddae52008)

### **Climate activists to blockade major routes at Dover day after Brexit due**

Climate protesters are planning to blockade the main routes in and out of Dover on the day after Brexit to deepen any disruption to Britain's food imports. Activists say their demonstrations on major roads from the port will "cause major delays but nothing critical", and will "highlight the need for emergency action" on the climate and ecological crisis. But news of the plans by Extinction Rebellion organisers on Saturday 30 March was met with an immediate backlash from supporters, who warned that delaying food supplies was unfair and risked turning the public against them.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/climate-change-protest-block-roads-dover-brexit-day-a8818096.html>

### **How a second referendum on Brexit could work: the question, when it could happen and who would win**

Whilst the original Brexit referendum was based on a simple, binary choice of Remain or Leave, it is now implausible that a second poll could rerun the same question. For starters, there are no longer two options on the table....

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/0/second-brexit-referendum-could-work-question-could-happen-would/>

### **Juncker: There will be no third chance to pass Brexit deal - as it happened**

Juncker warned there would be no further chance to pass a withdrawal deal. He said: "In politics, sometimes you get a second chance ... There will be no third chance." And he added a warning that "it is this deal or Brexit might not happen at all". Moreover, he said, the UK would be legally obliged to hold European Parliament elections in May, should Brexit not be sorted by then.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/live/2019/mar/11/brexit-latest-news-vote-tuesday-tories-suspect-may-could-pull-tuesdays-key-vote-after-talks-fail-to-deliver-progress-politics-live>

### **After May's crushing defeat, Gibraltar prepares for all options but hopes for Remain**

Theresa May's defeat in the House of Commons has increased the chances of the UK and Gibraltar remaining in the European Union, Chief Minister Fabian Picardo said on Tuesday, even as he insisted that Gibraltar was nevertheless prepared for all possible outcomes, including a hard Brexit. Mr Picardo was speaking after Mrs May's Brexit strategy was dealt a devastating blow by MPs, who rejected her EU Withdrawal Agreement by an overwhelming majority for the second time.

<http://chronicle.gi/2019/03/mays-crushing-defeat-gibraltar-prepares-options-hopes-remain/>

### **Michelle O'Neill: DUP 'hell-bent' on 'driving us all towards a no-deal catastrophe'**

Sinn Féin's deputy leader Michelle O'Neill has claimed the Democratic Unionist Party is "hell-bent" on pursuing a reckless and blinkered Brexit strategy that is "driving us all towards a no-deal catastrophe". "The EU has shown considerable patience and a willingness to facilitate a Brexit agreement that enables Britain to leave the EU without creating a hard border in Ireland, or undermining the Good Friday Agreement," she said.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/breakingnews/ireland/michelle-oneill-dup-hell-bent-on-driving-us-all-towards-a-no-deal-catastrophe-910349.html>

### **Is Theresa May intent on a no-deal Brexit?**

As Brexit day on March 29 approaches, Mrs May's publicly stated willingness to lead Britain out of the EU without a deal — if none can be agreed by parliament — is causing a collective loss of nerve at Westminster and beyond. Hilary Benn, Labour chair of the Commons Brexit select committee, said business leaders were "tearing out their hair" at the prospect of the UK crashing out of the EU

without an agreement at the end of next month.

<https://www.ft.com/content/21363782-2ed5-11e9-8744-e7016697f225>

### **Now even the ERG wants to DELAY Brexit: Hardcore Leavers reveal their plan for Britain to leave the EU without a deal... but admit the UK 'won't be ready' to crash out until MAY**

Hardcore Brexiteers have thrown their weight behind a plan for a no-deal Brexit - but want it delayed until May. Senior Tory eurosceptics, the DUP leader in Westminster Nigel Dodds and moderate Leaver leader Simon Hart have signed up to an amendment to be tabled by former Brexit minister Steve Baker. It would alter the terms of the no-deal Brexit plan to be voted on tomorrow to extend Article 50 until 10.59pm on May 22 before we leave without a deal. This would give businesses time to prepare for a new customs tariff system that would come into play if the UK crashed out without a deal.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6801227/Jacob-Rees-Mogg-fires-Brexit-delay-warning-shot-Remainers-crushing-defeat-May.html>

### **EU leaders warn Britain it will need 'good reason' for delay and to prepare for no deal as they've done 'everything possible' to agree a plan**

Britain will need a good reason for a Brexit delay if the House of Commons asks for an extension to Article 50 this week, Donald Tusk has warned. The European Council president said Brussels would consider a 'reasoned request' for a longer Brexit process but demanded that the UK supply a 'credible justification'. Mr Tusk said the chances of a no-deal Brexit were 'significantly higher' after MPs rejected Theresa May's agreement for a second time. He said it was 'difficult to see what more we can do' to help Mrs May win support for her deal in Parliament.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6801121/Britain-need-credible-justification-Brexit-delay-warns-Donald-Tusk.html>

### **No-deal Brexit still possible even if MPs vote against it - ERG**

Steve Baker, the former Brexit minister who is the ERG's chief organiser, announced late on Tuesday that he and others would attempt to force a so-called "managed no deal" in the Commons on Wednesday, when MPs will have a free vote on whether the UK should leave with no agreement. In a late-night amendment signed by the former remainers Nicky Morgan and Damian Green, Baker proposed a 21-month transition to no deal, an idea that the EU's chief negotiator, Michel Barnier, has explicitly rejected.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/12/no-deal-brexit-still-possible-even-if-mps-vote-against-it-erg>

### **New poll finds majority of Scots want another independence referendum**

A new poll has found that 60% of Scots want another independence referendum. Survation research asked Scots for their view on the timing of a second referendum on independence. Only around one-third of those polled (32%) said "there should never be another Scottish independence referendum". By contrast, 60% of Scots backed a fresh vote on the country's future. With "don't knows" excluded, that figure rises to 65% in support of an indyref2.

<https://www.thenational.scot/news/17495536.new-poll-finds-majority-of-scots-want-another-independence-referendum/>

### **@BBCPolitics Tory Brexiteer Jacob Rees-Mogg blames #Brexit impasse on a "historic disconnection" between voters and MPs**

Tory Brexiteer Jacob Rees-Mogg blames #Brexit impasse on a "historic disconnection" between voters and MPs - "52% of voters voted to leave, but probably 500 out of 650 MPs voted to remain" #BrexitVote

<https://twitter.com/BBCPolitics/status/1105559367045144576>

### **@MikeySmith I'm told Tory HQ is actively preparing to take part in European Elections.**

### **CCHQ Director General Alan Mabbutt is briefing Tory campaign managers at 4pm.**

I'm told Tory HQ is actively preparing to take part in European Elections. CCHQ Director General Alan Mabbutt is briefing Tory campaign managers at 4pm.

<https://twitter.com/mikeysmith/status/1105459270701772802>

### **@BBCPolitics "The proper thing to do is to put it back to the public in a people's vote, in a second referendum"**

"The proper thing to do is to put it back to the public in a people's vote, in a second referendum"

Former Attorney General Dominic Grieve says he'll vote against the PM's latest #Brexit deal

<https://twitter.com/BBCPolitics/status/1105370818719113216>

### **Brexit: Foreign far-right Twitter users 'manipulated debate'**

Foreign Twitter accounts have recently tried to influence the debate around Brexit, with pro-Leave tweets receiving the most support, researchers say. Cyber-security firm F-Secure analysed 24 million tweets published between 4 December 2018 and 13 February 2019. Much "inorganic" activity was discovered - including excessive retweeting carried out by bots or fake accounts. Both sides received amplification, but pro-Leave much more so than pro-Remain. Twitter declined to comment on the findings.

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-47538021?ns\\_source=twitter&ns\\_mchannel=social&ns\\_campaign=bbc\\_politics&ns\\_linkname=news\\_central](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-47538021?ns_source=twitter&ns_mchannel=social&ns_campaign=bbc_politics&ns_linkname=news_central)

### **@SteveBakerHW Heading to table a #MalthouseCompromise Plan B amendment with @DamianGreen, @NickyMorgan01 and @Simonhartmp, supported by @Jacob\_Rees\_Mogg, @NigelDoddsDUP and Iain Duncan Smith**

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<https://twitter.com/SteveBakerHW/status/1105568607084441602>

### **@AlexWickham At 6:42pm, 18 minutes before the meaningful vote, the MoD sends out a dear colleagues letter confirming they expect Bloody Sunday charging decisions on Thursday and that the govt will fund veterans' defences**

At 6:42pm, 18 minutes before the meaningful vote, the MoD sends out a dear colleagues letter confirming they expect Bloody Sunday charging decisions on Thursday and that the govt will fund veterans' defences

<https://twitter.com/alexwickham/status/1105541748644823041>

### **@MichelBarnier Let me be clear: the only legal basis for a transition is the WA. No withdrawal agreement means no transition.**

Listening to debate in @HouseofCommons : there seems to be a dangerous illusion that the UK can benefit from a transition in the absence of the WA. Let me be clear: the only legal basis for a transition is the WA. No withdrawal agreement means no transition.

<https://twitter.com/MichelBarnier/status/1105531020575678466>

## **Political Setbacks**

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### **'The night you LOST BREXIT!' Jacob Rees-Mogg STUNNED as Andrew Neil lets loose on ERG**

European Research Group (ERG) leader Jacob Rees-Mogg was left shocked after BBC presenter Andrew Neil accused the eurosceptic of losing Brexit. Mr Neil said a Brexit extension is now more likely and with that comes an uncertainty on when - if at all - Brexit will be achieved. The comments came moments after Theresa May failed to pass her withdrawal agreement through Parliament.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1099264/Brexit-News-update-latest-today-Jacob-Rees-Mogg-Andrew-Neil-vote>

### **Tory Brexit crisis is even worse than it looks**

The defeat of Theresa May's deal shows just how big a problem Brexit will be for her party in years to come. There are abstract benefits to leaving the EU but many of the concrete advantages are ones that Brexit voters don't really want. Which leaves the Conservative Party facing two directions at once. Today the position of the Tories looks grim. Perhaps, however, its external foes might come to its aid. A Norway-plus Brexit may now be imposed. This could make Brexit largely pointless. But at least it would relieve the Conservative Party of its strategic dilemma.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/comment/tories-are-in-even-bigger-mess-than-they-think-blwsd63h6>

### **Theresa May loses control of Brexit policy as MPs move to dictate terms over next 48 hours**

Theresa May has finally lost control of Brexit after her deal was once again defeated in parliament by a huge margin on a catastrophic night for her plans. She must now let MPs decide whether to rule out a no-deal Brexit and has been forced to allow her ministers to vote as they wish to stop a devastating public split in her cabinet. In a humiliating Commons speech the prime minister said with a broken voice that she will also let the Commons vote on delaying the UK's departure beyond 29 March and agreed to enact whatever was decided.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/theresa-may-brexit-vote-defeat-no-deal-article-50-votes-mps-erg-conservative-labour-dup-a8820186.html>

### **A No-Deal Brexit Would Be "Unlawful", Dominic Grieve Says**

A no-deal Brexit would be "unlawful" and "very difficult" to include in any second referendum, former attorney general Dominic Grieve told LBC. The Tory rebel, who is calling for another public vote on Brexit, said the government had a legal obligation to obtain a soft border between Northern Ireland and Ireland.

<https://www.lbc.co.uk/radio/presenters/iain-dale/a-no-deal-brexit-would-be-unlawful-dominic-grieve/>

### **Sinn Fein's McDonald: May's Brexit defeat shows 'absolute disregard for the people of Ireland'**

Sinn Fein president Mary-Lou McDonald has hit out at the defeat of Theresa May's Brexit deal, claiming it shows an "absolute disregard for the people of Ireland". Mrs McDonald was speaking after the Prime Minister's latest deal was defeated in the Commons by 149 votes. "We are 17 days away from Brexit and the uncertainty and confusion continues," she said. "A crash out Brexit would be unthinkable for the peace process, jobs, trade and to the loss of people's rights and quality of life, particularly in border communities.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/sinn-feins-mcdonald-mays-brexit-defeat-shows-absolute-disregard-for-the-people-of-ireland-37907653.html>

### **Brexit: MPs reject Theresa May's deal for a second time**

Theresa May's EU withdrawal deal has been rejected by MPs by an overwhelming majority for a second time, with just 17 days to go to Brexit. MPs voted down the prime minister's deal by 149 - a smaller margin than when they rejected it in January. Mrs May said MPs will now get a vote on whether the UK should leave the EU without a deal and, if that fails, on whether Brexit should be delayed.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-47547887>

*Additional sources: ([MSN.co.uk](https://www.msn.co.uk))*

### **2 weeks till Brexit and Defra, at the very least, looks set to be caught with its IT pants down**

The UK government has moved so slowly to prepare for a no-deal Brexit that backup plans for IT systems will be burdensome and more error-prone, MPs on the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) have warned. The committee has hounded government departments about their plans for the UK's

exit from the European Union without a deal for more than a year. Throughout, the MPs expressed concern about the pace of progress and lack of urgency – and have today said they are disappointed some of these fears have come to fruition. In a report titled Brexit: Risky and rushed activity must not become "new normal", the committee looked particularly at the Department for Transport and the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

[https://www.theregister.co.uk/2019/03/12/brexit\\_border\\_defra\\_it\\_not\\_ready/](https://www.theregister.co.uk/2019/03/12/brexit_border_defra_it_not_ready/)

### **Theresa May's Brexit deal defeated by 149 votes**

MPs have rejected Theresa May's Brexit deal for a second time to prompt further instability at Westminster and uncertainty over the UK's departure from the EU. The prime minister, whose political future has also been thrown into doubt, saw 391 MPs vote against her withdrawal agreement on Tuesday night, with 242 voting in favour. This delivered a defeat by 149 votes for Mrs May's deal.

<https://news.sky.com/story/theresa-may-suffers-149-vote-defeat-as-mps-reject-brexit-deal-for-second-time-11663375>

### **Theresa May loses Brexit vote by crushing margin of 149 - and is now expected to come out against no-deal**

Theresa May is set to vote on Wednesday to block a no-deal Brexit after she suffered another humiliating Commons defeat which left her fighting for her Premiership life

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/03/12/brexit-vote-latest-news-meaningful-vote-result-theresa-may-deal/>

### **Lost & ruined: May humiliated once again by Commons**

It's not right to pity her. She has been utterly hopeless throughout. She gave away her red lines in 2016 to win Conservative party support and has been limited by that decision ever since. She triggered the timetable of Article 50 without bothering to have a plan and then wasted precious months calling a snap election which only succeeded in removing her majority. She made countless political decisions to placate the extremist wing of her party rather than seek the kind of consensus which might conceivably have united the country. She treated parliament with utter contempt. She lied and lied and lied. She lied as easily as she breathed. She followed a path based on the most mean-spirited and inward-looking of all possible political convictions. Her strategic failure has been equal only to her moral failure. She deserves all of the consequences of her actions and none of the pity which might normally have come with them.

<http://www.politics.co.uk/blogs/2019/03/12/lost-broken-ruined-may-humiliated-once-again-by-commons>

### **Theresa May's Brexit deal fails again**

IT WAS once rare for British governments to lose big votes in the House of Commons. Under Theresa May it is becoming a habit. On the evening of March 12th, for a second time, her proposed Brexit deal was roundly rejected by MPs. The margin of defeat was 149 votes—significantly less than the 230-vote defeat the deal suffered in January, but still a huge loss by historical standards.

[https://www.economist.com/britain/2019/03/12/theresa-mays-brexit-deal-fails-again?fsrc=scn/tw/te/bl/ed/theresamay\\_sbrexitdealfailsagainmayday](https://www.economist.com/britain/2019/03/12/theresa-mays-brexit-deal-fails-again?fsrc=scn/tw/te/bl/ed/theresamay_sbrexitdealfailsagainmayday)

### **Croaky Horror Show - Theresa May's rejigged Brexit deal inflicted with another defeat by hardline Tory MPs as she loses her voice**

The PM, who lost a vote on her Brexit deal in January by a record 230 votes, this time managed to reduce the number of Tory rebels from 118 to 75 - she still crashed to the fourth biggest Commons defeat in history.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/brexit/8623392/theresa-may-brexit-deal-defeat-loses-voice/>

### **This was May unplugged, unvoiced and once more exposed**

In her statement after the defeat, the prime minister insisted her deal was still the only deal on offer. It was bordering on clinical madness. Her limitations as leader once more exposed. This was

May unplugged. Unvoiced even. Her words no more than the occasional gasp. Even when she glimpsed reality by barking out that there would be a no-deal vote the next day, she was unable to prevent herself from more self-harm by declaring she would fail to whip it. Weakness piled on weakness. The martyrdom of St Theresa. Condemned by her own hand. A kinder Tory party would put an end to her suffering right now.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/12/this-was-may-unplugged-unvoiced-and-once-more-exposed>

### **Theresa May's Brexit lost to the ultimate adversary: reality**

There might still be ways that Brexit can go badly; unexplored dead ends and byways of failure. But the road to success is now closed. Parliament's second verdict on Theresa May's deal is slightly less crushing than the first one in January. But a defeat by 149 votes, just weeks before Britain is due to leave the EU, indicates not only the last evacuation of any authority from the prime minister but a profound crisis in the project that is the only purpose of her government. She had one job, and she cannot do it. Vital questions about the future will now be settled in a state between despondency and panic. There is no strategy, no guiding intelligence. A plan must be salvaged from the wreckage of a bad idea badly executed.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/mar/12/theresa-may-brexit-reality-prime-minister-eu-exit>

### **Fake, foreign and far-right: Dodgy accounts uncovered pushing Brexit agenda on social media**

Far-right political groups have been using fake accounts and co-ordinated behaviour on Twitter to amplify pro-Leave views, according to new research. In a study examining Brexit-related activity on Twitter, researchers from cyber security firm F-Secure identified fake accounts had been attempting to influence both sides of the debate. However, the firm found that astroturfing - the practice of faking grassroots support for a cause or subject - was "far more prominent in Leave conversations" than on Remain's side. They found this by examining tweets made between 4 December 2018 and 13 February 2019, well after the referendum, but during a critical time of parliamentary debate.

<https://news.sky.com/story/fake-foreign-and-far-right-dodgy-accounts-uncovered-pushing-brexit-agenda-on-social-media-11663202>

### **Democratic Unionist party will not support May's deal in vote**

The Democratic Unionist party has rejected Theresa May's bid for support for her Brexit deal, in another serious setback for the prime minister. Hours after the attorney general revealed that his legal advice over the Irish backstop remained "unchanged", the party said it would not be supporting her at Tuesday night's crunch vote. Their decision could have a devastating domino effect on the outcome of the vote with many in the Eurosceptic European Research Group led by Jacob Rees-Mogg likely to vote the same way as the DUP.

[https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/12/democratic-unionist-party-will-not-support-mays-deal-in-vote?CMP=share\\_btn\\_tw](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/12/democratic-unionist-party-will-not-support-mays-deal-in-vote?CMP=share_btn_tw)

### **Nicola Sturgeon told she 'is not bright enough' to understand May Brexit deal**

Nicola Sturgeon was told that she "simply wasn't bright enough" to understand the benefits of Theresa May's Brexit deal during a Downing Street meeting, according to an SNP MSP. The claim by Michael Russell, the Scottish constitutional relations secretary, was described as ridiculous by senior British government sources. Mr Russell was party to a terse meeting between Ms Sturgeon and Mrs May at No 10 in January, after which the Scottish first minister accused the prime minister of "running scared" of a second independence referendum.

[https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/nicola-sturgeon-told-she-wasn-t-bright-enough-to-understand-may-deal-benefits-gwjx2jqn6?utm\\_medium=Social&utm\\_source=Twitter#Echobox=1552411980](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/nicola-sturgeon-told-she-wasn-t-bright-enough-to-understand-may-deal-benefits-gwjx2jqn6?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1552411980)

*Additional sources: (The National)*

### **Theresa May warns 'Brexit could be lost tonight' ahead of key vote**

The Prime Minister claimed victory in a last-ditch trip to Strasbourg, where she unveiled some "legally binding" changes at the last possible moment. But Tory Brexiteers and the DUP rejected the changes after her Attorney General said they won't guarantee we can quit the 'Irish backstop.' Cornered, embattled and suffering a nasty cold, the croaky-voiced PM warned MPs they "risk No Deal or no Brexit" by voting her down. And she said "Brexit could be lost" tonight if she loses. If the deal is defeated tonight, MPs vote on whether to reject No Deal Brexit at 7pm on Wednesday. They then vote on delaying Brexit at 5pm on Thursday

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/brexit-vote-live-theresa-faces-14121769>

### **May's Brexit deal has reached the end of the road: Boris Johnson**

"This deal has now reached the end of the road. If it is rejected tonight I hope that it will be put to bed," Johnson told parliament. Johnson said if the EU was unwilling to accept further changes, Britain should leave without a deal as while this would be more difficult in the short term, in the end it would be "the only safe route out of the abyss and the only safe path to self respect".

[https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-johnson-idUKKBN1QT2H7?utm\\_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm\\_content=5c8803143ed3f00001f0be23&utm\\_medium=trueAnthem&utm\\_source=twitter](https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-johnson-idUKKBN1QT2H7?utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_content=5c8803143ed3f00001f0be23&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter)

### **Theresa May is appallingly weak and has brought about a surreal new level of crisis - she must go**

It was painful watching the Prime Minister in the Commons on Tuesday, it really was. And not just because that familiar voice with a hesitant scratch in it had deteriorated to the same Dalek croak that wrecked her speech to the Conservative Party Conference back in 2017. The second defeat of Theresa May's Brexit Bill was not as bad as the first, but 149 votes against would still count as a pulverising loss under normal circumstances.

[https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/03/12/theresa-may-appallingly-weak-has-led-us-surreal-new-level-crisis/?WT.mc\\_id=tmgoff\\_pso-tw\\_main\\_premium-politics&utm\\_source=tmgoff&utm\\_medium=tmgoff\\_pso-tw&utm\\_content=main\\_premium&utm\\_campaign=tmgoff\\_pso-tw\\_main\\_premium-politics](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/03/12/theresa-may-appallingly-weak-has-led-us-surreal-new-level-crisis/?WT.mc_id=tmgoff_pso-tw_main_premium-politics&utm_source=tmgoff&utm_medium=tmgoff_pso-tw&utm_content=main_premium&utm_campaign=tmgoff_pso-tw_main_premium-politics)

### **EU says it can do nothing more to help Theresa May after her Brexit deal suffers another huge defeat**

The EU can do nothing more to break the Brexit deadlock in the House of Commons, the European Commission and the president of the European Council said after MPs rejected Mrs May's deal by a huge margin for the second time on Tuesday night. "On the EU side we have done all that is possible to reach an agreement. It is difficult to see what more we can do. If there is a solution to the current impasse it can only be found in London," said Donald Tusk's spokesman.

[https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/03/12/brussels-gets-ready-play-hardball-theresa-may-fails-deliver/?li\\_source=LI&li\\_medium=li-recommendation-widget](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/03/12/brussels-gets-ready-play-hardball-theresa-may-fails-deliver/?li_source=LI&li_medium=li-recommendation-widget)

### **Brexit vote result: All 75 Tory rebels, and how your MP voted on Theresa May's deal**

Theresa May's Brexit Withdrawal Agreement has been voted down by MPs in another landmark defeat for the Government. Some 118 Conservative MPs had rebelled against the Government in the first Meaningful Vote, delivering a record defeat. This meant that Prime Minister May had a huge task at hand in order to regain her majority. This time round, in the second Meaningful Vote, the Government lost by a margin of 242 to 391 - a majority of 149. Some 75 Conservative MPs rebelled this time, delivering the fourth largest Government defeat in parliamentary history.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/03/12/brexit-vote-result-tory-rebels-mp-voted-theresa-mays-deal/>

### **Theresa May's Brexit deal is dead — MPs must now take over**

Mrs May must end the fantasy of bringing her deal to parliament a third time. EU officials have made clear there will be no further concessions on the backstop aimed at avoiding a hard border in Ireland. Mrs May should instead allow parliament to take control. She must work to promote and facilitate exactly the kind of cross-party co-operation in the national interest that she has so far

stubbornly resisted.

<https://www.ft.com/content/def3dae4-44d9-11e9-b168-96a37d002cd3>

**@UKParliament We're aware of a technical issue with our website and our live feed to the House of Commons Chamber and we're working quickly to bring you coverage of the #WithdrawalAgreement.**

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<https://twitter.com/UKParliament/status/1105540837755244544>

**Tory and DUP eurosceptics set to vote down May's Brexit deal**

Theresa May's hopes of securing House of Commons approval for her Brexit deal suffered a shattering blow as leading Tory and DUP eurosceptics said they would not recommend that MPs vote for it. The so-called Star Chamber of lawyers convened by the Leave-backing European Research Group found that agreements reached by the Prime Minister in 11th-hour talks in Strasbourg do not deliver the legally-binding changes the Commons has demanded.

<https://www.thenational.scot/news/17494963.tory-and-dup-eurosceptics-set-to-vote-down-mays-brexit-deal/>

**EU washes hands of Brexit deal: 'We have done all that is possible'**

Brussels has washed its hands of trying to help Theresa May get her Brexit deal through parliament, warning that it is up to the UK to either pass the agreement or not. Immediately after MPs rejected the withdrawal package for the second time on Tuesday evening, a spokesperson for European Council president Donald Tusk said that the EU had "done all that is possible to reach an agreement". "Given the additional assurances provided by the EU in December, January, and yesterday, it is difficult to see what more we can do. If there is a solution to the current impasse it can only be found in London," he told reporters in Brussels.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-deal-eu-response-vote-result-irish-backstop-talks-uk-theresa-may-no-deal-a8820071.html>

## **Trade Deals/Negotiations**

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**Brexit: Government has no plans for Irish border controls**

The BBC understands the UK government does not intend to collect customs duties or have any other controls at the Irish border in the event of a no-deal Brexit. Instead it will rely on self-reporting by businesses. Details of how the UK will manage the border if there is no deal will be published on Wednesday. Meanwhile the DUP will vote against a motion in Parliament that would rule out the UK leaving the EU with no deal. It is also understood the government's border plan will suggest an app-based system to record cross border trading.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-47544149>

**UK plan to trade with Commonwealth nations after Brexit is 'utter b\*\*locks', former Australian PM says**

Claims Britain will be able to recuperate its trade losses with the EU by dealing with Commonwealth nations are "utter bollocks", Australia's former prime minister has said. Kevin Rudd said the idea trade deals with his country, Canada, New Zealand and India would make up for leaving the EU was "the nuttiest of the many nutty arguments" made by Brexit supporters. Writing in The Guardian, he said that while Australia, Canada and New Zealand would "do whatever they could" to work out new free-trade agreements with the UK, their total population of 65 million people does not "come within a bull's roar of Britain's adjacent market of 450 million Europeans".

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-uk-trade-commonwealth-kevin-rudd-australia-a8818996.html>