

News from the Brexit Cliff Edge

15th Mar 2019

News Highlights

Welcome to the Brexit Cliff Edge

Impact on the UK economy

- CNBC said it had seen 93 large company `earning calls` from S&P 500 companies, all cite the negative impact of Brexit on their business during the last 3 months
- The Irish media responded to the proposed UK No Deal tariffs on imports, with a firm view that the EU would `respond in kind,` and a trade war would quickly escalate
- House prices are predicted to fall by 0.3% during 2019, according to the UK government`s Office for Budget Responsibility
- Doctors and pharmacists have been told not to oversubscribe medicines to patients, so as to stop them hoarding medicines and exacerbating any shortages
- The Independent surveyed travel companies which all said Brexit confusion was hitting them in the pocket, and leading to prices for breaks going down, due to falling demand
- RICS saw Brexit uncertainty freezing up the UK property market, saying it would be a challenging Spring
- Harvard Business Review has a running survey of 7,000 UK business leaders, who put forward their views on Brexit. HBR say the group says there has been a 6% reduction in UK investment in 2016-18. Brexit is predicted to reduce productivity by around half a percentage point. The majority of businesses anticipate Brexit will reduce sales and increase their costs over time
- Public Health Minister, Steve Brine, told a House of Lords sub-committee on Energy and Environment, that the UK not being included in the EFSA food standards agency arrangement would mean it lacked access to food safety risk assessments.

Political Shenanigans

- Eight of Theresa May`s top Cabinet ministers voted against her motion in Parliament to extend Article 50. The Brexit Secretary, Stephen Barclay, had the company of another 187 Conservative MPs in the lobby when he voted against her proposal
- There were several votes during the course of yesterday. One was a move to propose a second Referendum. It was resoundly defeated, as the Labour Party was ordered by Jeremy Corbyn to abstain. He then sacked several Shadow ministers who broke the whip to vote against a second referendum
- Donald Trump chimed in with his opinion that if Theresa May had taken his advice negotiations on Brexit would have been successful
- The EU Commission stressed it would only get member states to agree to an extension to Article 50, **IF** there was a clear plan, or pathway, indicating the UK side had an agreed position
- Nigel Farage said he was lobbying foreign governments in the EU to get them to block any extension to Article 50 for the UK
- Theresa May intends to introduce her Withdrawal Agreement to Parliament early next week for a third time. She is now challenging her Eurosceptic ERG Tory MPs to back her or risk losing Brexit

- BuzzFeed News said some Eurosceptics are seriously considering voting against Theresa May for a third time
- Attorney General, Geoffrey Cox, ruled out Brexiteer plans to push for the inclusion in the Withdrawal Agreement of a form of words recommending the Vienna Convention's Article 62, as a 'get out clause' for the Irish Backstop, in next week's 3rd meaningful vote
- An attempt by cross-party backbenchers to find Commons time to launch a debate a series on indicative ideas about Brexit next week, was narrowly defeated by the government by just two votes
- Liam Fox's recent high profile claims to have secured a great new trade deal with Switzerland fell to pieces as it turned out the deal did not include services, which makes up 52% of all UK-Swiss trade
- Fox did sign a trade continuity deal with Fiji and Papua New Guinea hailing it as a success
- The CBI, the TUC all concurred any the no-deal tariff regime the government is proposing would have the effect of taking a sledgehammer to the UK economy

Economic Impact

As Brexit stumbles, Salesforce and other tech companies warn of possible fallout

In the past three months, 93 earnings calls of the S&P 500 companies addressed Brexit and its potential impact, according to FactSet. Among those are some of the largest companies, including Facebook, Cisco and Walmart. While most companies were cautious with their answers, sharing very little detail, some companies were more upfront about it. Expedia, for example, said it's seen a drop-off in U.K flight bookings due to "uncertainty around Brexit." Booking Holdings, the owner of a group of travel sites including Priceline.com, also said Brexit is creating a "tremendous amount of uncertainty." Facebook's CFO David Wehner also said during January's earnings call that macroeconomic concerns, like Brexit, are a "risk on top of other issues" facing the company.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2019/03/14/brexit-shows-up-in-risk-factors-earnings-calls-for-salesforce-others.html>

EU will not match zero tariffs - May's no-deal Brexit plan means hard border in Northern Ireland, warns CBI chief

The UK proposals - announced on Wednesday morning in a bid to "inform" MPs ahead of a no-deal vote in parliament - state there will be no checks and no tariffs imposed on goods moving from the Republic of Ireland across the border into Northern Ireland.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/eu-will-not-match-zero-tariffs-mays-nodeal-brexit-plan-means-hard-border-in-northern-ireland-warns-cbi-chief-37908595.html>

It's war: EU will retaliate over British tariffs threat

The EU will fight "fire with fire" by levying tariffs on UK food exports to Europe if Britain enacts draconian new taxes on Irish farm products in a no-deal Brexit. In the event of a disorderly Brexit, the UK will levy beef, lamb, pork, poultry and some dairy imported from the EU, including Ireland. The moves will lead to retaliatory measures by the EU, imposing levies on UK foodstuffs coming into EU markets under its normal 'third party trade regime'.

<https://www.independent.ie/business/brexit/its-war-eu-will-retaliate-over-british-tariffs-threat-37912125.html>

Pound holds losses after MPs back Brexit delay

Sterling remained lodged in the red on Thursday evening after Britain's parliament voted in favour of extending the Brexit date past March 29. The currency was down 0.67 per cent at \$1.3250, well off the low of \$1.3209 that was hit in the London morning. It had rallied as much as 2.4 per cent to a high of \$1.3383 during the previous session. The pound only very briefly trimmed its losses after the House of Commons voted to tell the government it should delay the UK's break from the EU, either until June if Theresa May's deal is agreed or further into the future if not.

<https://www.ft.com/content/63967122-45fb-11e9-b168-96a37d002cd3>

Administrative Fall Out

House prices will fall this year as Brexit uncertainty freezes market, Budget watchdog predicts

House prices across the UK are expected to drop by the end of the year for the first time since 2012, according to an official Government watchdog. The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), which analyses the Government's finances, predict that house prices will fall by 0.3 per cent in 2019. It's a sharp contrast to its five-year forecast made in October 2018, which saw house prices rise by more than three per cent in the last three months of the year. Experts have blamed the lagging property market on a dragged out Brexit and lack of affordability.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/money/8634115/house-prices-fall-2019-brexit-uncertainty-freezes-market/>

No deal Brexit could mean passports are checked at Porthcawl

Bridgend council also says its catering services, which takes care of catering in schools and care homes, have stockpiled six weeks of goods as a precautionary measure

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/local-news/no-deal-brexit-could-mean-15974512>

Doctors given post-Brexit advice on patient prescriptions

Doctors and pharmacists are being told not to give patients extra prescriptions in advance after Brexit. The NHS has stockpiled medication in case of difficulties in the event the UK leaves the EU without a deal at the end of this month. There have been concerns that it may be problematic to get some supplies into the country because of a potential backlog at ports.

<https://www.yorkshireeveningpost.co.uk/news/doctors-given-post-brexit-advice-on-patient-prescriptions-1-9651305>

Brexit confusion providing below cost bargain holidays for UK travellers

Senior travel industry executives surveyed by The Independent unanimously reported an apparent reluctance to commit to short breaks and longer holidays over the next few weeks in the run up to 29 March and across the Easter school break. They blame uncertainty over international travel in the event of a no-deal departure from the European Union (EU) - the present Brexit default. The consequences would range from British driving licences and the passports of millions of UK travellers losing validity for the EU, to confusion over arrangements for medical treatment. As a result, air fares and hotel rates are tumbling.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/brexit-cheap-holidays-bargains-buffer-p-o-cruises-uk-travel-business-budget-a8822036.html>

Brexit uncertainty 'holds back house moves'

Buyers and sellers are "sitting tight" as Brexit uncertainty continues to freeze the UK property market, surveyors have said. Some 77% of members asked by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) said that the Brexit impasse was holding back activity. New buyer enquiries, sales, and homes being put on the market all fell in February, the survey said. This would mean a "challenging spring" for housing and the economy, it sa

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-47556539>

The Young People Staring Down an Endless Brexit

For a number of reasons, Brexit has been an invidious political process. But one of the most unsettling has been the mismatch between the generations that voted for Britain's departure and the generations that will have to bear the consequences. Around seventy per cent of those under the age of twenty-four voted Remain, while sixty per cent of those older than sixty-five voted Leave. "It's really, really scary to watch politicians who are trying to implement something which the vast majority of us don't want and have never wanted,"

<https://www.newyorker.com/news/letter-from-the-uk/the-young-people-staring-down-an-endless-brexit>

Austerity created this mental-health crisis. Brexit has sent it into overdrive

Calls not to politicise mental-health issues fall flat when an era of cuts and uncertainty sees our mental wellbeing plummet writes Dr Frances Ryan

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/mar/14/austerity-mental-health-brexit>

Tim Martin: 'If there's a no-deal Brexit I'll bring the price of beer down'

Tim Martin says that the company's four non-executive directors differ with him on Brexit: "I don't talk to them much about it because it's too emotional." David Page, an old friend and founder of the Franco Manca pizza chain, who voted Remain, says it is "as personal to him as the pubs. I think he's sad about how divisive it has become but when Tim makes up his mind, it takes an earthquake to change it."

<https://www.ft.com/content/425bf0fe-4457-11e9-a965-23d669740bfb>

Brexit Is Already Affecting UK Businesses – Here's How

According to a survey of over 7000 business leaders in the UK...We find that Brexit has been an important source of uncertainty for many UK businesses. We estimate that this led to a 6% reduction in investment in the first two years after the referendum, with employment also around 1.5% lower. And Brexit is likely to reduce future UK productivity by around half a percentage point via a batting average effect of output being reallocated away from higher productivity firms toward lower productivity ones. The majority of businesses anticipate that Brexit will eventually reduce sales and increase costs.

<https://hbr.org/2019/03/brexit-is-already-affecting-uk-businesses-heres-how>

Brexit: Farmers' Union of Wales and NFU want more time

Farming unions in Wales have called for more time until Brexit to protect the industry. The Farmers' Union of Wales (FUW) urged MPs to reject a no-deal Brexit under all circumstances, while NFU said an extension to leaving the EU needed to be "as long as necessary". There are concerns a no-deal Brexit would have a "devastating impact" on Wales' lamb exports. Concerns have also been expressed within the steel and car industries. Meanwhile, First Minister Mark Drakeford said what was announced under the new tariff regime demonstrated the "catastrophic effect" a no-deal Brexit would have on the Welsh economy. "It exposes us immediately to all sorts of headwinds in terms of international trade that will make the task of securing jobs here in Wales in manufacturing, in agriculture, even more difficult," he said.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-47554092>

Classic car industry fears Trump and Brexit roadblock

The UK's continuing Brexit uncertainty is another factor said to be weighing heavily on the sector. Malcolm Barber, co-chairman of auction house Bonhams, which has its headquarters in London, says Brexit has led to "caution" among UK car collectors "as it has in most industries in Britain".

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-47525435>

What a spike in toilet paper sales says about Brexit

While British lawmakers fumble through Brexit negotiations, sales of two items might hint at how the public is bracing for impact: toilet paper and painkillers. On a recent earnings call, David Potts, chief executive of British supermarket Morrisons, said that the chain had seen a "small amount" of stockpiling and that sales of these two goods had risen more than 7 percent in the past year. "We've seen quite a tick-up in painkillers and toilet rolls [sales]," Potts said, according to reporting from Reuters. "Whether that has any bearing on how people are feeling about Brexit, I don't know."

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2019/03/14/what-spike-toilet-paper-sales-says-about-brexit/>

Brexit: Unexploded bomb found at Chris Grayling's 'no-deal lorry park' airport

Bomb disposal crews have been called to Manston Airport - which the government may need to use

as a lorry park if there's a no deal Brexit in 15 days

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/breaking-brex-it-unexploded-bomb-found-14135815>

Brexit raises food safety concerns

Those arguing that the UK is woefully unprepared for its departure from the EU on 29 March were given further ammunition last week as the House of Lords EU Energy and Environment Sub-Committee took evidence from Public Health Minister Steve Brine MP and Food Standards Agency Chair Heather Hancock. Although major preparations have been made, the Committee heard, significant uncertainty remains concerning the UK's relationship with the EU on food safety issues. Brine said that the FSA would be highlighting to Defra (the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) the importance of continued scientific collaboration with the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), which undertakes food safety risk assessments on behalf of the EU, but admitted the terms were still a matter for negotiation. "We will not be able to contribute to the strategic direction of EFSA," he said. "Access to EFSA's risk assessments – that is a matter for negotiation. Their scientific opinions are made publicly available but the supporting data is not published. So following exit, if we don't have access to the data, we may have to source our own."

http://www.fruitnet.com/fpj/article/178177/brexit-raises-safety-concerns?utm_source=Brexit+raises+food+safety+concerns%3B+UK+tariff+announcement+eases+Spanish+fears%3B+Tech+advances+%E2%80%98will+attract+fresh+talent%E2%80%99&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Brexit+raises+food+safety+concerns%3B+UK+tariff+announcement+eases+Spanish+fears%3B+Tech+advances+%E2%80%98will+attract+fresh+talent%E2%80%99

Political Shenanigans

Theresa May is truly on the ropes. But there may yet be life in her deal

Hammond's very public advocacy of a wholly different Brexit route, delivered with May glowering stony-faced and silent on the benches behind him, showed the shift that was taking place in the government, in the Tory party and in parliament. It announced, in effect, that the national interest matters more than the party interest, because an agreed Brexit deal that passes is a higher priority than May's deal, which has now been twice defeated. It therefore has to imply that Hammond thinks that May may have to go.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/mar/13/theresa-may-deal-vote-mps-brex-it>

Brexit: Does the UK need to hold European elections?

It is becoming a key question in this complex Brexit process. If the UK was to request, or be offered, a lengthy extension of its membership of the European Union (EU), would there be an obligation to take part in May's European elections? Both the UK government and the European Commission (EC) say that there would; but legal opinion is divided, and many lawyers argue that a satisfactory fix could be found. The elections are taking place between 23 and 26 May, although the new parliament will not sit, and new members will not be sworn in, until 2 July. That is why it has been argued that an extension of Article 50 until the end of June would not prove to be a problem.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-47568283>

Brexit Recap: MPs to vote delay Brexit and reject second referendum

Brexit will no longer happen on March 29th after MPs voted to delay it. After a series of votes in the House of Commons, MPs backed an extension to the Article 50 process, which is expected to last at least another three months.

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/brexit-live-mps-decide-delay-14133047>

MPs have voted to delay Brexit - so what might happen now?

The government might need to offer updated legal advice in order to convince both to drop their hostility to the Irish border backstop, while the looming prospect of a long delay to Brexit could also make them reverse their opposition. However, it has been suggested Mrs May might not be able to

bring back her deal - if it's not significantly different - for a third vote under parliamentary convention.

<https://news.sky.com/story/mps-have-voted-to-delay-brexit-so-what-might-happen-now-11665636>

British lawmakers overwhelmingly back Brexit delay

British lawmakers voted overwhelmingly on Thursday to seek a delay in Britain's exit from the European Union, setting the stage for Prime Minister Theresa May to renew efforts to get her divorce deal approved by parliament next week.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu/may-piles-pressure-on-british-lawmakers-to-back-brexit-deal-idUKKCN1QV0Z8?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews&rpc=921>

EU's Tusk floats long Brexit delay before summit

European Union leaders will consider pressing Britain to delay Brexit by at least a year to find a way through its domestic deadlock, the chair of next week's EU summit said on Thursday.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-tusk/eus-tusk-floats-long-brexit-delay-before-summit-idUKKCN1QV14U?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews>

Brexit: Cabinet unity crumbles as eight top ministers refuse to back Theresa May's Article 50 extension

The unity of Theresa May's cabinet has publicly crumbled after eight of her most senior ministers refused to back her plan to delay Brexit by three months. Those who failed to support it included the prime minister's Brexit secretary Stephen Barclay, who was joined by 187 other Conservative MPs and frontbenchers in voting against her approach. None of the ministers opposing Ms May's ultimately successful move to delay Brexit will be sacked, because she allowed a "free vote" on the issue in the face of a mass rebellion.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-latest-theresa-may-article-50-extension-vote-ministers-a8823836.html>

Additional sources: ([Warrington Guardian](#))

Theresa May to hold third 'meaningful vote' on her deal after MPs vote to extend Article 50

Theresa May will hold a third "meaningful vote" on Brexit after MPs authorised her to ask for a lengthy delay if no deal has been agreed by next Wednesday. Huge pressure is now being put on the DUP and Brexiteers to fall in behind the Prime Minister's deal to avoid the risk of Article 50 having to be extended by up to two years. But it emerged on Thursday night that the "star chamber" of legally-trained Brexiteer MPs has already rejected fresh legal advice from Geoffrey Cox, the Attorney General, over the Northern Irish backstop.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/03/14/brexit-vote-latest-news-article-50-extension-delay-result/>

Brexit extension of 21 months 'a possibility' - Coveney

The Taoiseach has welcomed a vote in the House of Commons, which enables the British government to ask the European Union for a delay to Brexit. MPs want to delay the UK leaving the EU until at least the end of June. The motion by the British government was approved by 412 votes to 202. In a statement, Leo Varadkar said that the result of the vote reduces the likelihood of a no-deal Brexit. However, he said that London needs to give details on what purpose an extension would serve, and how long it would last for.

<https://www.rte.ie/news/brexit/2019/0314/1036339-brexit-reaction/>

Brexit: Will the EU accept a delay to Article 50?

Brussels reporter Adam Fleming explains what a potential delay to the triggering of Article 50 would mean. MPs are expected to be given a vote on Thursday on whether they want to seek an extension to the Article 50 negotiation period. The EU have said any extension would need a purpose.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-politics-47561581/brexit-will-the-eu-accept-a-delay-to-article-50>

Tusk pushes EU27 leaders to be open to long Brexit delay

Donald Tusk is pushing the European Union's leaders to consider a long Brexit delay to allow the UK to rethink its goals in the negotiations as the Commons voted in favour of seeking an extension of article 50. In an apparent shift in the EU's red lines, the European council president suggested even before MPs had voted that a lengthy extension beyond 29 March could be granted simply to give Westminster time to recalibrate.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/14/donald-tusk-to-encourage-eu27-to-be-open-to-long-brexit-delay>

Brexit crisis presents opportunity for Theresa May

This is now a crisis - the rules that traditionally have preserved governments are out of the window. The prime minister has been defeated again. Her authority - if not all gone - is in shreds. But for Number 10 there's an opportunity too, because MPs will soon be presented with a new choice - back the PM's deal, which has already been defeated twice, or accept the chance of a delay to Brexit. This isn't the choice of a government that's in control. But the tactic is to make the best of chaos. To use nerves among Brexiteers to shove them towards accepting Theresa May's deal in the absence of another solution with no other agreed alternative - yet.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-47563560>

Donald Trump 'surprised at how badly' Brexit negotiations have gone

Donald Trump has said he is "surprised at how badly" the Brexit negotiations have gone for Britain and claimed that leaving the EU is "tearing the country apart". In an explosive intervention, the US president claimed that Theresa May did not listen to his suggestions on how to handle the negotiations. He also poured scorn on the idea of a second referendum.

<https://news.sky.com/story/donald-trump-surprised-at-how-badly-brexit-negotiations-have-gone-11665325>

Hammond warns Brexiter Tories to back May deal or face softer cross-party plan

Conservative MPs should finally get behind Theresa May's Brexit plan in yet another Commons vote, Philip Hammond has argued, saying the alternatives were either a softer, cross-party Brexit or a long delay to departure. After MPs voted to indefinitely rule out a no-deal Brexit, and ahead of another likely dramatic set of votes on Thursday about extending article 50 and the idea of a second referendum, the chancellor strongly indicated that May would try for a third time to get her deal through parliament. Amid signs the Democratic Unionist party and Tory Brexiteers might finally be starting to back the deal, Hammond used a round of media interviews to warn them of the consequences of it failing yet again.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/14/hammond-warns-brexiter-tories-to-back-may-deal-or-face-softer-cross-party-plan>

Sir Vince Cable to quit as Lib Dem leader in May

Sir Vince Cable has announced he will step down as Liberal Democrat leader after May's English local elections. Sir Vince said he wanted to pave the way for a "new generation". He became party leader without a contest after Tim Farron's resignation in 2017 - but the party has struggled to make an impact in the polls since. The former business secretary said in September he would stand down as party leader "once Brexit is resolved or stopped". But in an interview with the Daily Mail, he said: "It now looks as if it will be a protracted process, and may never happen."

https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-47577739?ns_mchannel=social&ns_campaign=bbc_politics&ns_linkname=news_central&ns_source=twitter

Brexiteers launch Commons bid to kill off 'divisive' second EU referendum

More than 100 MPs have backed an amendment to today's motion on delaying Brexit seeking to stop a so-called "people's vote" from ever taking place. Tabled by Tory eurosceptic Lee Rowley and

backed by DUP deputy leader Nigel Dodds and Labour MPs Gareth Snell and Caroline Flint, it asks the Commons to endorse the view that "the result of the 2016 EU referendum should be respected and that a second EU referendum would be divisive and expensive, and therefore should not take place".

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/foreign-affairs/brexit/news/102516/brexiters-launch-commons-bid-kill-divisive-second-eu>

Theresa May Will Ask The EU To Delay Brexit After MPs Voted To Support An Extension

The UK will ask the European Union to delay Brexit after parliament voted by a majority of 210 to seek an extension to the withdrawal process. On a third consecutive night of drama in Westminster, MPs voted 412 to 202 to ask for more time to resolve the crisis that has bitterly divided the country's political class and gravely undermined Theresa May's government. Only 112 Tory MPs voted to delay Brexit, with 188 voting against. The delay only got through the Commons on Labour votes. Eight cabinet ministers voted against the government's motion, including Steve Barclay, the Brexit secretary who had spoken in favour of it at the despatch box as he closed the debate for the government. He was joined in the Noe lobby by fellow cabinet ministers Penny Mordaunt, Gavin Williamson, Liz Truss, Liam Fox, Alun Cairns, Chris Grayling, and Andrea Leadsom. Julian Smith, the government chief whip, abstained on the government's motion, while Michael Gove, the former chair of Vote Leave, and David Davis, the former Brexit secretary, voted to delay Brexit.

<https://www.buzzfeed.com/alexspence/theresa-may-will-ask-the-eu-to-delay-brexit-after-mps-voted>

A Group Of Hardline Brexiteer MPs Is Threatening To Side With Jeremy Corbyn And Bring Down Theresa May's Government

A core group of around 20 hardline Brexiteers is threatening to vote down Theresa May's deal for a third time next week and bring down her government at a confidence vote called by Jeremy Corbyn. But as Eurosceptic Conservative MPs divide on how to approach the third meaningful vote due next week, a wider group of Brexiteer rebels are now keen to back the deal on the condition that May commits to stepping down as prime minister in the summer. Downing Street remains pessimistic that the PM's deal will pass at the third attempt. A senior government source told BuzzFeed News that they expected a significant number of Brexiteer switchers, but not enough to secure a majority next time round. The source said the government could lose the third meaningful vote by between 20 and 40 votes, and then hope to win with support from Labour backbenchers at a fourth attempt.

<https://www.buzzfeed.com/alexwickham/brexiters-split-may-erg>

Even though they voted against it, MPs know a second referendum is the only way out of this Brexit mess

And I wonder if she ever reflects on the fact that her entire strategy is to keep asking MPs the same question, when nothing has changed, in the hope they change their minds; but it is an affront to democracy that the British people, almost three years on, when so much has changed, and so much more is known about what Brexit actually means, should not be allowed to express a view. As we fight for a people's vote, there are bound to be differences of opinion on tactics about how best to prosecute the case in parliament. Today was not, in my view, the right time to seek parliamentary support, though I share the passion for a people's vote of those who tabled the amendment. But today was about securing the extension to Article 50 and allowing the world to let the chaos in government sink in.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/brexit-article-50-second-referendum-voted-down-theresa-may-commons-a8822696.html>

AMENDMENTS EXPLAINED: Everything MPs will vote on in tonight's crunch Article 50 decision

MPs are due to debate whether the Government should try to push back the UK's exit date beyond

29 March after giving the PM another shot to get her deal through next week. Members are once again hoping to throw a spanner or two in the works. Here are the bids that John Bercow has chosen to be put to a vote.

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/foreign-affairs/brexit/news/102520/amendments-explained-everything-mps-will-vote-tonights>

Brexit: Britain faces TWO YEARS of limbo unless Theresa May wins vote

Donald Tusk today revealed he will urge EU leaders to agree a 'long extension' to Article 50 - delaying Brexit by up to two years to give the UK time to 'rethink' - if Theresa May's deal is voted down a third time next week. The President of the European Council's intervention on Twitter this morning will bolster claims that the UK would not leave the EU until 2021 unless Mrs May can persuade the DUP and Brexiteers to back her divorce deal - because some in the EU want to play 'hardball' and push for a delay of two years. Ireland's Foreign Minister Simon Coveney also said today the EU is likely to offer Britain a 21-month delay to Brexit while Taoiseach Leo Varadkar added that if the UK changes its mind it would be welcomed back 'like the prodigal son'.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6807955/Britain-faces-TWO-YEARS-Brexit-limbo-unless-Theresa-wins-vote.html>

Brexit: Direct rule for Northern Ireland 'real possibility'

Michael Gove has warned re-imposing direct rule for Northern Ireland from Westminster is a "real possibility" if there is a no-deal Brexit. Devolved government in Northern Ireland collapsed in January 2017 after a row between the power-sharing parties. MPs have voted to reject the UK leaving the EU with no deal - but it is not legally binding. The environment secretary said direct rule would be a "grave step" the government would have to consider.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-47548623>

Political Setbacks

Sack Brexit abstaining ministers, says Welsh Tory MP

Tory ministers who abstained on a vote opposing leaving the European Union without a deal should resign or be sacked, a Brexiteer MP has told BBC Wales. Thirteen government ministers defied whips by abstaining on the vote on Wednesday night. David Davies said the MPs should not be in government. MPs rejected leaving the EU without a deal 321 votes to 278, in a further government defeat on Brexit.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-47563144>

Additional sources: ([The Scotsman](#))

Brexit deal latest: Attorney General Geoffrey Cox warned using Vienna Convention to get out of backstop is a 'complete non-starter'

Attorney General Geoffrey Cox was today warned that using a Vienna Convention article to get out of the Brexit backstop was a "complete non-starter". The QC was also told he risked turning his "codpiece into a figleaf" if he changes his legal advice, which had been dubbed a "codpiece", in an eleventh-hour bid by the Government to persuade Tory and DUP MPs to back Theresa May's plans.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/brexit-latest-attorney-general-geoffrey-cox-warned-using-vienna-convention-to-get-out-of-backstop-is-a4091711.html>

Additional sources: ([BBC News](#))

MPs to vote on Article 50 extension as May warns they might be kissing Brexit goodbye

Theresa May is urging MPs to back a three-month Brexit postponement or face the threat of a much longer delay, in a desperate bid to persuade her pro-Leave rebels to back her withdrawal agreement next week. After a cabinet "gang of four" and several more ministers abstained and 17 backbenchers voted against the government in a Commons vote ruling out no deal, the prime

minister has issued an ultimatum to Tory Brexiteers. In what many MPs see as a last roll of the dice for the beleaguered PM and her Brexit deal, she is effectively challenging her rebel MPs who have now defeated her deal twice: Back me or risk losing Brexit altogether.

<https://news.sky.com/story/mps-to-vote-on-article-50-extension-as-may-warns-they-might-be-kissing-brexit-goodbye-11664792>

Who cares about food and medicine? Brexit is the best nightly entertainment show Britain has ever had

Comedian Mark Steel takes apart the absurd farce of the Brexit discussions and votes going on in Parliament at the moment. Every detail seems designed to make Britain look gloriously stupid he says

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/brexit-vote-article-50-delay-theresa-may-jacob-rees-mogg-a8823036.html>

Brexit: MPs' plan to take control from Theresa May fails by just TWO votes

The Commons has voted against an amendment that would have paved the way for 'indicative votes' for MPs to discuss in order to find a new way forward. The amendment was been tabled by the powerful a cross-party coalition of Hilary Benn, Yvette Cooper and Oliver Letwin. It was defeated by 312 votes to 314.

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/breaking-brexit-mps-plan-take-14136387>

Analysis: Why Hammond's Brexit war chest is smaller than it looks

Philip Hammond dangled the prospect of £26.6bn before their eyes, telling Parliament that if they behave themselves and back a Brexit deal the taps can be turned on. The 'end of austerity' can turn from simply an end to restraint into a new age of cash for all. "If we leave the EU with a deal and an orderly transition to a future economic partnership we will see a 'deal dividend,'" Hammond told the Commons in his announcement-light statement. Britain can expect "an economic boost from recovery in business confidence and investment and a fiscal boost..."

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2019/03/14/analysis-hammonds-brexit-war-chest-smaller-looks/>

UK needs to get 'act together' on Brexit deal, says European Commission's vice-president

Frans Timmermans says that the UK parliament need to tell the EU what they want in terms of a deal on Brexit in a video interview with Sky News

<https://news.sky.com/video/uk-needs-to-get-act-together-on-brexit-deal-says-european-commissions-vice-president-11665041>

'It's terrible — the Brits were lied to': Americans give their verdict on Brexit

Brexit faced a crucial week this week as May tried to get her Brexit deal approved by the U.K. Parliament. It failed to win enough support from British lawmakers for a second time but MPs also then voted to reject the option of leaving the EU without a deal. They are next going to vote on whether to delay Brexit altogether.

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/03/14/what-do-americans-think-about-brexit.html>

The UK needs a second Brexit referendum after no-deal exit is rejected, says Scottish lawmaker

As U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May's proposed Brexit deal continues to face a pummeling in Parliament, the only option is to return the matter to the British public for a second referendum, according to Drew Hendry, a U.K. member of parliament from Scotland. Hendry on Wednesday joined the chorus of parliamentarians calling for more time before Britain's looming departure from the European Union. "There needs to be a situation now where there's an extension to Article 50 to allow this to go back to the people," Hendry told CNBC's "Squawk Box" Wednesday. Article 50 refers to the formal two-year process governing the U.K.'s departure from the European Union

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/03/14/uk-needs-a-second-brexit-referendum-after-no-deal-exit-rejected-snp.html>

The Brexit clocks have been reset, but time's running out for the PM

Extraordinary, shambolic chaos in the Commons as the planned prime ministerial free vote on ruling out no deal disintegrated before her eyes, taking ministers with it. The PM ended up effectively voting for no deal, after her motion, only ruling it out for a month, was defeated and replaced with one ruling it out full stop. Humiliatingly she also lost that vote against no deal by an even bigger margin. One of the Labour MPs being wooed to vote for her deal a few months ago, Jess Phillips, called her a "disgrace" to her face in the voting lobby.

<https://news.sky.com/story/the-brexit-clocks-have-been-reset-but-times-running-out-for-the-pm-11664777>

A chaotic Brexit is part of Trump's grand plan for Europe

The Brexit saga isn't just about a negotiation gone awry, nor about the impasse a country finds itself in having fallen prey to a movement based on lies and deception. The wider question is about what kind of world we want to live in. To fully see this, it helps to keep Trump's US in mind, not just the intricacies of British parliamentary arithmetic or Michel Barnier's latest statement. Because Trump's US is intimately intertwined with the Brexiter vision of Britain.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/mar/14/chaotic-brexit-trump-plan-europe-president>

Hypnotised by cake and unicorns, the Brexit perfectionists have blown it

The result of yesterday's meaningful vote in the House of Commons, much like the first in January, was emblematic of a very striking Brexit reality: that the principle barrier to leaving the EU comes from the very people most desperate to see it happen. The Tory right have had two clear chances to push Brexit over the line, two clear chances that were squandered in dogged pursuit of a "perfect" vision of Brexit. What makes their intransigence all the more useless is their collective inability to produce any worthwhile negotiating alternative. What we have witnessed is an exercise in prioritising ideology over what is best for the country.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/mar/13/cake-unicorns-brexit-zealots>

Trump: 'Surprised at bad Brexit negotiations'

US President Donald Trump has been critical of how Theresa May's Brexit negotiations have taken place. Trump told reporters a second vote would be unfair "on the people who won", and that the Irish border issue was one of the most complex Brexit issues.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-47575443/trump-surprised-at-bad-brexit-negotiations>

EU pours cold water on May's Brexit delay win - 'ALL EU27 need to approve'

A European Commission spokesman fired off a quick response moments after a vote to delay Article 50 was won 412/202, with a majority of 210. The ballot will allow Mrs May to iron out a better deal or post-Brexit Britain, though not without their permission the spokesman reminded the Prime Minister. The spokesman said: "We take note of tonight's votes. A request for an extension of Article 50 requires the unanimous agreement of all 27 Member States. "It will be for the European Council (Article 50) to consider such a request, giving priority to the need to ensure the functioning of the EU institutions and taking into account the reasons or and duration of a possible extension."

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1099927/brexit-news-latest-vote-no-deal-article-50-vote-today-UK-EU-theresa-may>

Farage unveils PLOT to secure Brexit on March 29 - 'you have encouraged me'

Nigel Farage was confronted about rumours suggesting he is planning to seek the support of allies in Italy and Poland to ensure requests for a Brexit extension are rejected. Mr Farage was asked to clarify the claims on Wednesday, and he confirmed he has been "thinking very carefully" about reaching out to fellow Eurosceptics to make sure the UK quits the bloc on March 29. Speaking to Euronews, the architect of Brexit said: "Next Thursday night is a major moment because if Mrs May comes and meekly asks for an extension without a plan, and isn't able to offer a second referendum because of the implications for her own party, you may find that there is a veto there with or without

my help.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1099996/Brexit-news-Nigel-Farage-UK-EU-withdrawal-Italy-Poland-no-deal-extension-vote-today-May>

Brexit: Labour will NOT support tonight's vote for a second referendum

The Mirror understands Labour whips will instruct MPs to abstain. Responding to a question from Anna Soubry in the House of Commons he said: "Many colleagues in and out of this place absolutely supportive of the cause she supports - namely a people's vote - vehemently disagree with this amendment being tabled and voted on today." "The People's Vote campaign...have issued a formal statement of their position today in response to amendment H, saying "we have made it clear that we do not regard today as the right time to press the case for the public to be given a final say.

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/breaking-brexit-labour-not-support-14135018>

Brexit: Commons uproar as Jeremy Corbyn defends abstaining on second referendum

Jeremy Corbyn said: "Today I reiterate my conviction that a deal can be agreed based on our alternative plan that can command support across the House. "I also reiterate our support for a People's Vote - not as a political point-scoring exercise but as a realistic option to break the deadlock." But Labour rebel Neil Coyle, who supported a second referendum, told the Mirror: "Labour members are fretting over the party's failure to lead in seeking a new People's Vote. "I am forced to break a whip for something that is supposed to be Labour Party policy but has not been backed today. "There is little time left to win a new public vote. Next week Labour must back it wholeheartedly and with no more reservations."

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/brexit-commons-uproar-jeremy-corbyn-14136788>

Michael Gove's Brexit agony

I feel particularly sorry for Michael Gove, because there is psychological torment here. His understandable reasoning for not resigning over Theresa May's Chequers proposal was that he had been accused first of betraying David Cameron, then of betraying Boris Johnson. He could not face being accused of a third betrayal by walking out on Mrs May. This meant that he unintentionally betrayed the cause of Brexit. He is now the government's media apologist for whatever piece of contortion comes out of Downing Street, and is humiliated when the line he has just peddled collapses a few hours later.

<https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2019/03/michael-gove-is-now-betraying-brexit/>

Theresa May is acting like a 'cruel parent' over Brexit, says Labour peer

Baroness Smith of Basildon, Labour's leader in the Lords, said May did not have the full support of her government or the cabinet. Lady Smith said the May had been "extraordinarily intransigent" in her speech to MPs after the defeat last night on a no-deal Brexit and wanted to "ignore parliament". Lady Smith said the government was spending time, energy and money on preparing for a "no-deal failure" despite the vote to rule it out. She said of reports that Mrs May would make another attempt to get her "twice rejected deal" approved by MPs: "She's acting like a cruel parent who when a child won't eat it's dinner serves up the same plate of cold food day after day until they are forced to accept the unwanted, unpalatable and dangerous."

<https://www.theneweuropean.co.uk/top-stories/theresa-may-is-acting-like-a-cruel-parent-over-brexit-1-5938151>

RESPECT THE RESULT Labour in Brexit chaos again as top Jeremy Corbyn ally says second referendum would be 'disaster'

Angela Rayner, who has said in the past she doesn't want a second vote, thinks it would be a terrible idea to go back to the people - but MPs will vote on it today

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/brexit/8636220/labour-in-brexit-chaos-again-as-top-jeremy-corbyn-ally-says-second-referendum-would-be-disaster/>

Theresa May has finally got the Brexiters where she wants them

It now means the prime minister can stage next Tuesday's vote the way she wants it: as an ultimatum to the ultras of the European Research Group and the Democratic Unionist party. Thanks to another, much more comfortable vote this evening, approving in principle an extension of article 50, those intransigents will now face a sharp dilemma. The ERG and DUP either swallow their objections and vote for May's deal, or they face the prospect of a long delay to Brexit – perhaps for the best part of two years. Given the mayhem on show these past few days, who would bet what might happen to their precious Brexit project between now and 2021? They might lose it altogether.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/mar/14/theresa-may-brexit-article-50-delay>

Labour whip quits as second referendum vote exposes splits

A Labour whip and an aide to deputy Labour leader Tom Watson quit in order to vote against a second Brexit referendum as the party's divisions on the issue were laid bare. Stephanie Peacock resigned from the whips office, saying she wanted to “respect the result of the 2016 vote” and her constituents in Barnsley East would expect her to “honour that promise”. Ruth Smeeth resigned as parliamentary private secretary to Mr Watson, saying she had a duty to “support the will of my constituents” in Leave-supporting Stoke-on-Trent North.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-6811031/Labour-whip-quits-second-referendum-vote-exposes-splits.html>

Additional sources: (Shropshire Star)

May Suffers Mass Tory Revolt As MPs Vote For Three-Month Brexit Delay

Theresa May has suffered a mass Tory revolt by her ministers and MPs as she caved to pressure to delay Brexit by three months. Amid shambolic scenes in Parliament, the prime minister's tattered authority took a fresh blow when more than half her party opposed her government move to postpone exit day from March 29 to June 30. Some seven Cabinet ministers, including her Brexit Secretary Steve Barclay, voted against May's motion, which was aimed at giving her extra time to get her EU-UK divorce deal passed and put on the statute book. Earlier, she had seen off a dramatic attempt by parliament to seize control of the Brexit process.

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/brexit-to-be-delayed-by-three-months-as-mps-give-may-third-chance-to-get-her-eu-deal-passed_uk_5c8a8793e4b038892f4baf18

Brexit: Is the UK actually in a crisis over leaving the EU?

You've probably heard at least one person say the UK is in a Brexit crisis. Politicians from Europe and Britain have said it and it's been in headlines - usually in CAPITAL LETTERS - a lot. But are we being dramatic or is the UK actually in a crisis over leaving the European Union? We spoke to three experts to find out.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-politics-47500166/brexit-is-the-uk-actually-in-a-crisis-over-leaving-the-eu>

EU furious with Theresa May after she calls third Brexit vote on eve of summit

Brussels has reacted furiously after Theresa May announced plans to hold a third meaningful vote on her Brexit deal just one day before an EU summit to approve an extension to the Article 50 negotiations. While EU-27 leaders are divided over the length and conditions for the extension beyond the March 29 deadline, they are united in their irritation that the prime minister will give the bloc very little time to consider their response and prepare a joint position.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/03/14/eu-furious-theresa-may-calls-third-brexit-vote-eve-summit/>

Will Northern Ireland dissidents be able to exploit Brexit chaos?

Brexit is viewed by republican dissidents as an “opportunity” rather than a political end in itself, say politicians and security officials. Yet it would be wrong, says one UK security expert, to expect a sudden upsurge in violence after the UK leaves the EU. But, he adds, the security situation will become harder to manage after Brexit, with even the slightest hardening of the border likely to provide a tempting target for extremists. The idea of border checkpoints enforced by police or

immigration officers remain unlikely but even softer options, such as the addition of automated cameras to check the movement of goods as they cross the border, could be magnets for dissidents looking to send a message

<https://www.ft.com/content/dabcac5c-44df-11e9-b168-96a37d002cd3>

Trade Deals/Negotiations

Brexit: UK's no-deal trade plan - and what it means for Ireland north and south

The new regime would mark a shift in favour of products from non-EU countries. While 82 per cent of imports from the EU would be tariff-free (down from 100 per cent now), 92 per cent of imports from the rest of the world would pay no border duty (up from 56 per cent). :: Are there any special arrangements for Northern Ireland? Yes, the north would be treated differently to Britain for goods originating in the Republic. In special arrangements for Northern Ireland, the UK's temporary import tariffs would not apply to EU goods crossing the border from the Republic. The decision is designed to avoid a hard border in Ireland.

<http://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2019/03/14/news/brexit-uk-s-no-deal-trade-plan-and-what-it-means-for-ireland-north-and-south-1572234/>

Brexit: Switzerland trade deal signed by Liam Fox attacked for leaving out services

Liam Fox's claim to have secured a post-Brexit trade deal with Switzerland of "huge economic importance" has been sharply criticised - because it fails to protect about half of current commerce. The agreement - one of the few successfully 'rolled over', with the scheduled departure from the EU just 16 days away - does not cover services, a committee of peers has warned. "Most trade in services, which make up 52 per cent of all UK-Swiss trade, is not covered by the deal," its report says. Trade with Switzerland, which is outside the EU but participates in its single market, is worth about £31bn a year to the UK economy, making a rollover a key government priority

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-trade-deal-switzerland-liam-fox-exports-economy-uk-a8821526.html>

UK signs post-Brexit trade deal with Fiji and Papua New Guinea

Britain has signed a post-Brexit trade deal with the Pacific islands of Fiji and Papua New Guinea, as the government rushes to sign as many agreements as possible before 29 March. The Department for International Trade said the agreement would maintain access to goods including sugar and fish imported from the islands 10,000 miles away. Total trade between Britain and the region is worth about £369m a year. Signed by the international trade secretary, Liam Fox, the deal eliminates all tariffs on all goods imported from Fiji and Papua New Guinea and will gradually remove around 80% of tariffs on UK exports to these countries.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/mar/14/uk-signs-post-brexit-trade-deal-with-fiji-and-papua-new-guinea>

No-deal tariff regime would be 'sledgehammer' to UK economy, CBI warns

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady accused the Government of showing "reckless disregard for people's jobs", warning the proposed tariff regime would be "a hammer blow to our manufacturing industries and the communities they support". The general secretary of steelworkers' union Community, Roy Rickhuss, said: "The Government's plan for zero tariffs would be a fresh betrayal of British steelworkers, putting further pressure on their jobs at a difficult time for the industry." In special arrangements for Northern Ireland, the UK's temporary import tariffs will not apply to EU goods crossing the border from the Republic. The decision - designed to avoid the need for checkpoints which might revive sectarian tensions - has raised fears of smuggling, as ministers insist there will not be a border down the Irish Sea.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/no-deal-tariff-regime-sledgehammer-084909121.html>

@LiamFox Signed a trade agreement today with Pacific Islands which will avoid around

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<https://twitter.com/LiamFox/status/1106190636850561025>