

News from the Brexit Cliff Edge

26th Mar 2019

News Highlights

Welcome to the Brexit Cliff Edge

Will we reach the end of May?

- Theresa May's government lost a key vote in the House of Commons 329 votes to 302 (with 30 Conservative MPs rebelling, including 3 ministers who resigned: Steve Brine, Alistair Burt and Richard Harrington). The Oliver Letwin cross-party indicative votes plan paves the way for a series of indicative votes on Wednesday.
- The runners and riders for the indicative votes in Parliament on Wednesday are very likely to be in this list: Revoke Article 50; Second Referendum; May Deal Mark 3, Canada-style Free Trade Agreement; Customs Unions; EEA and No Deal Brexit.

Parliament needs to 'curb its enthusiasm'

- Earlier yesterday, Theresa May's Cabinet ministers 'war-gamed' the possibility of calling a General Election, she also made it clear, prior to the Letwin vote, that these votes would be considered to be only advisory by the government and that her plan was the preferred option. Though she refused to rule out a No Deal Brexit at PMQs
- One of the three government ministers who resigned, Richard Hartington, wrote a blistering letter to the PM saying; 'at this critical moment in our country's history, I regret that the government's approach to Brexit is playing roulette with the lives and livelihoods of the vast majority of people in this country who are employed by, or otherwise depend on, businesses for their livelihood'
- When Theresa May fielded questions earlier in the day, one answer indicated that the UK government recognised that Northern Ireland was unprepared for a No Deal Brexit due to its lack of a fully functioning devolved government. This incensed the DUP who took this to be an 'entirely new argument that we're hearing for the first time as a justification to delay Brexit'
- A NatCen Social Research poll showed that a staggering 81% of the country believed ministers had done a bad job in the EU-divorce talks, compared to just 7% of Britons who believed the opposite was true

Wrapped in tape

- Workplace Insight published a survey which showed 58% of all UK business leaders expect their costs to rise after Brexit, even if a deal is struck, and just over a third of them believe access to local business funding and grants will become more challenging post-Brexit

JPMorgan is packing its bags

- JPMorgan sent letters to 300 London-based investment banking staff asking them to sign fresh contracts confirming they'll leave the UK in the event of a No Deal Brexit

Lloyds of London put on a brave face

- Bruce Carnegie-Brown, chairman of Lloyd's of London, told the FT business executives were 'planning for the worst and hoping for the best' and that they've been busy buying and leasing property in continental Europe, applying or upgrading licences in EU countries and transferring and hiring hundreds of staff, transferring business to new legal entities and sending thousands of letters to clients explaining the new arrangements. He said the cost for individual companies has run into the hundreds of millions of pounds

Clothing and accessories sector is stalling

- The BBC reported that Laura Tenison, founder of JoJo Maman Bebe, said orders are a third down on her business, which had been growing by 20% a year and she felt retail business confidence is at an all-time low

CBI/PwC Survey sounds the alarm

- More than half of the financial services businesses surveyed between February and March were less optimistic about their overall business situation. The survey's net score for Optimism dropped to -43%, its lowest reading since 2008. CBI's chief economist, Rain Newton-Smith, said 'the alarm bells are ringing at a deafening level in the financial services sector'

RBS goes Dutch

- The Financial Times reported that RBS is about to start serving clients from its new Dutch business entity as part of its preparation for a hard Brexit

Brussels confirms border checks back under No Deal Brexit

- All British travellers will need a stamp in their passport every time they enter or leave the EU in the event of a No Deal Brexit, the EU Commission confirmed.

In limbo, fearful and facing May's 'hostile Home Office environment'

- Aljazeera reported on the 300,000 Roma in the UK and said that many of them are extremely worried about losing their residency status in the chaotic registration and documentation process May's Home Office seems to be engaged in planning

EU Citizens living in the UK - in the 'hostile environment' firing line

- A study by the joint committee on human rights (JCHR) - whose members come from the Commons and the House of Lords, issued a stern warning that Home Office plans to hastily register 3m EU citizens who have been living here legally, working, with families and paying tax. The JCHR said it cannot be governed by a process reliant on Statutory Instruments approved by ministers at a later date. If a new Windrush scandal is to be avoided it requires primary legislation to govern the whole process

European holidays 'on ice' and Kent on a 'go-slow'

- Data from the Office of National Statistics shows Brits have shunned holidays in the EU in the last few months because of Brexit uncertainty
- The Revoke and Remain petition is still rolling and now stands at 5.6m signatures. It is by far the largest and most popular petition in UK history
- The Road Hauliers Association questioned the wisdom of the government starting its Operation Brock 'lorry stacking measures' in Kent yesterday. Drivers were reportedly

mystified at the appearance of No Deal Brexit speed limits being introduced in Kent and say the whole Operation Brock idea is 'inflexible and outdated'

Jobs at Risk

JPMorgan Said to Push 300 to Leave U.K. in No-Deal Brexit

JPMorgan Chase & Co. is pushing about 300 London-based investment banking staff to sign fresh contracts confirming they'll leave the U.K. in the event of a no-deal Brexit, people familiar with the matter said. The employees, who work in areas such as sales and risk, have been presented with contracts in the last week that demand they relocate to a European Union country such as Germany or France in a no-deal scenario, the people said, declining to be identified as the details are private. A spokesman for JPMorgan in London declined to comment.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-03-25/jpmorgan-said-to-push-300-employees-to-leave-london-after-b-rexit>

JP Morgan asks 300 staff to leave UK in event of a no-deal Brexit

Hundreds of JP Morgan staff have been asked to relocate out of the UK "at fairly short notice" in the event of a no-deal Brexit. Around 300 investment banking staff will have to sign new contracts in the coming weeks confirming whether or not they will relocate abroad. Sources said if they refused, the bank would try to find them an alternative role.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2019/03/25/jp-morgan-asks-300-staff-leave-uk-event-no-deal-brexite/>

Finance sector hopes for smooth Brexit, plans for the worst

Senior executives describe as "planning for the worst, while hoping for the best" — include buying and leasing property in continental Europe, applying for new or upgraded licences in EU countries, transferring and hiring hundreds of staff, transferring business to new legal entities, and sending thousands of letters to clients about new arrangements. Costs for individual companies have run to the hundreds of millions of pounds. "We would say that we are Brexit-ready at Lloyd's, that would [also] be true for the other major cross-border insurance companies," says Bruce Carnegie-Brown, chairman of Lloyd's of London, the specialist insurance market. "We got cracking on this really very quickly after the referendum and began by thinking about where we would need to be domiciled in the EU in the event of a hard Brexit."

<https://www.ft.com/content/c1e46ea8-2ee7-11e9-80d2-7b637a9e1ba1>

Brexit: Jojo Maman Bebe founder says retail confidence hit

A leading Welsh businesswoman has said she is convinced Brexit uncertainty is stalling business growth. Laura Tenison, founder of Jojo Maman Bebe, said consumer confidence was at an all-time low. The clothing and accessories company has been growing at 20% a year and has the capacity to send out 6,000 parcels a day, but is now down to about 2,000 a day. She said it has been "extremely tough" for the retail sector. "Until about six months ago we were doing well, we continued to grow, but recently the lack of consumer confidence is so apparent, people don't know when their job stability is going to be given back to them," she said.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-47668745>

Economic Impact

Brexit is now a national emergency, says CBI's chief economist

Sentiment and volumes are deteriorating sharply in the financial services sector, with a number of indicators at their lowest since the financial crisis of 2008, according to the latest CBI/PwC Financial Services Survey. The quarterly survey of 84 firms found that optimism about the overall business situation in the financial services sector plunged sharply, falling at the quickest pace since December 2008.

<https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/business/markets/brexit-is-now-a-national-emergency-says-cbi-s-chief-economist-1-9669254>

Brexit fears set alarm bells ringing for financial services

Sentiment and business volumes in UK financial services deteriorated sharply at the start of 2019 owing to Brexit uncertainty, raising fresh concerns over the crucial but underperforming sector. More than half the financial services businesses surveyed between February and March by the CBI and the consultancy PwC were less optimistic about their overall business situation. The net score of optimistic minus pessimistic dropped to -43 per cent, the lowest reading since 2008. "The alarm bells ringing at the state of optimism in the financial services sector have now reached a deafening level," said Rain Newton-Smith, chief economist at the CBI.

<https://www.ft.com/content/56398542-4e29-11e9-b401-8d9ef1626294>

The European Union has bigger problems to deal with than Brexit

The eurozone is a half-completed project, lacking the political structure that would give it a chance of working. What's more, if Europe continues to underperform economically, the alternative to closer integration is disintegration. Not immediately, because returning to national currencies or moving to a hard and soft euro, would be fraught with difficulties. Crunch time will only come when the next recession blows in. It might not be all that far away.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/mar/24/the-europe-union-has-bigger-problems-to-deal-with-than-brexit>

Banks ramp up plans for 'hard Brexit'

JPMorgan Chase has sent new EU employment contracts to more than 200 London-based staff in recent days while Royal Bank of Scotland is gearing up to begin serving clients at its new Dutch entity, as banks intensify preparations for a "hard Brexit". Senior executives at several large international banks said that while a postponement of the UK's March 29 departure from the EU would be helpful at the margins, they were powering ahead with final preparations to be ready to cope with any eventuality. In JPMorgan's case, those preparations involved sending new employment contracts to between 200 and 300 staff in the past few days informing them that their employment will switch to new EU entities if a "hard Brexit" occurs, two people familiar with the situation said.

<https://www.ft.com/content/8fc71a98-4ceb-11e9-bbc9-6917dce3dc62>

Administrative Fall Out

Majority of UK business leaders believe costs and red tape will rise after Brexit

Over half (58 percent) of UK business leaders expect costs to rise after Brexit, even if a deal is struck and just over a third (38 percent) believe that access to local business funding and grants will also become more challenging post-Brexit,

<https://workplaceinsight.net/majority-of-uk-business-leaders-believe-costs-and-red-tape-will-rise-after-brexit/>

Warning of legal limbo for 3m EU citizens living in UK after Brexit

EU citizens living in the UK would be stripped of their freedom of movement, housing and social security rights by Home Office legislation introduced to regulate immigration following Brexit, a parliamentary report has warned. Despite repeated government reassurances that their privileges will be protected, a study by the joint committee on human rights (JCHR) concludes that more than 3 million Europeans living in Britain would be left in legal "limbo". The cross-party committee, whose members are drawn from the Commons and the Lords, argues that EU citizens' rights should be protected by primary legislation rather than reliant on statutory instruments approved by ministers at a later date.

https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/26/warning-of-legal-limbo-for-3m-eu-citizens-living-in-uk-after-brexit?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Tweet

Brussels confirms return of border checks under no-deal Brexit

British travellers will get a stamp in their passport every time they enter and leave the European Union in the event of a no-deal Brexit, the European commission has confirmed. The announcement on border checks was revealed days after the British government secured a short extension that shifts the Brexit deadline to 12 April. "The risk of a no-deal scenario is becoming increasingly likely," an EU official said. The EU's Brexit no-deal plans "cannot replicate the benefits of being an EU member" and were not "mini-deals or a negotiated no deal", but unilateral measures to avoid disruption for the EU side, the official said.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/25/brussels-confirms-return-of-border-checks-under-no-deal-brexit>

Europeans living in UK told to secure settled status for Brexit

EU nationals are being encouraged to secure their right to keep living in the UK with just weeks to go until Brexit. Adverts on billboards and at bus stops and railway stations will be rolled out across the country ahead of the full opening of the Home Office's settlement scheme this weekend. Any EU national that has lived continuously in the UK for five years can obtain settled status, meaning they are free to go on living and working in the UK indefinitely.

<https://metro.co.uk/2019/03/25/europeans-living-uk-told-secure-settled-status-brexit-9000607/>

Britain's Roma community fears post-Brexit future

There are 300,000 Roma in Britain, but some members of this already persecuted minority lack documentation and they are extremely worried about losing their residency status after Brexit

<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/britain-roma-community-fears-post-brexit-future-190324212814472.html>

British no more: Why some UK citizens face Brexit dilemma

The number of UK citizens acquiring the nationality of another EU country has shot up since the 2016 Brexit referendum. For many Britons living in Germany, France or Italy, dual nationality solves questions about freedom of movement to work in the EU, pensions and healthcare. But a handful of EU countries, including Austria, do not generally allow dual citizenship. That makes things complicated for people like British opera singer Stephen Chaundy, who has lived in Vienna with his family for many years, but often works in theatres and opera houses in Germany.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-47536982>

Brexit: Queen's University staff paid early due to uncertainty

Staff at Queen's University in Belfast are to be paid their salaries three days early this month due to "ongoing uncertainty relating to Brexit". QUB staff are usually paid on the final working day of every month. However, because of fears about the potential impact of the UK leaving the EU without a deal, this month's payment date was brought forward to Wednesday, 27 March.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-47674143>

'England became smaller and bigger': what 'home' means in Brexit Britain

Headlong theatre company's latest production, Acts of Resistance, plugs into people power in four communities across the country - Plymouth, Kendal, Bristol and Mansfield.

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2019/mar/25/acts-of-resistance-headlong-theatre-company-brexit-bristol-old-vic>

Half a MILLION Britons shun holidays amid Brexit fear - avoiding European destinations

British holidaymakers are shunning trips overseas - with the looming presence of Brexit uncertainty potentially playing a part. The number of trips abroad taken by UK residents has dropped, according to new figures released by the Office of National Statistics (ONS). The data put overseas travel and tourism and trips made in November and December 2018 under the spotlight. The final months of last year marked a period of deep uncertainty amid the UK's Brexit outlook.

<https://www.express.co.uk/travel/articles/1105115/holidays-2019-holiday-uk-brexit-news-latest-travel-britons-ons>

Brexit: Agri-tech company says lack of progress 'frustrating'

Northern Ireland agri-tech company Devenish has said Brexit will cost it approximately £1.7m next year. Chief executive Richard Kennedy told BBC News NI's Inside Business programme that the lack of progress had been frustrating. Headquartered in Belfast, Devenish has manufacturing sites and offices across the world. Mr Kennedy said the rough calculation of costs still stands even in the event of a commercially favourable Brexit.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-47673420>

Yes, there's a petition in favour of a no-deal Brexit

Over five million people have signed a petition to revoke Article 50 and remain in the EU. It's the biggest petition in parliamentary history, and the one with the fastest sign-up. But what about if you're a hard-line Brexiteer and don't want to be left out? Don't worry, there's an alternative petition you can sign.

<https://metro.co.uk/2019/03/25/yes-petition-favour-no-deal-brexit-9004067/>

Revoke Article 50 Brexit petition reaches five million signatures

A petition to stop Brexit now has now surpassed five million signatures - making it the most popular to ever be submitted to the Parliament website. The Revoke Article 50 campaign has now overtaken a 2016 petition calling for a second EU referendum which reached 4.1 million signatures.

<https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/uk-news/article-50-petition-revoke-brexit-16020435>

Lorry drivers 'mystified' at start of no-deal Brexit speed limits

Lorry drivers are "mystified" as to why no-deal Brexit plans have been brought in so early, branding the idea "inflexible" and "outdated". The Road Haulage Association (RHA) made the claim today after the deployment of Operation Brock, which sees lorries heading for Europe driving at 30mph along the coastbound carriage of the M20. All other traffic, including lorries carrying out UK deliveries, must now use a 50mph contraflow of two lanes in each direction on the London-bound side of the road.

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/general-election/lorry-drivers-mystified-at-start-of-no-deal-brexit-speed-limits-1-4895635>

Housebuilders fear Brexit will lead to timber prices rise

Scotland's builders are concerned that Brexit could lead to an increase in timber import prices and see vital funding for major infrastructure projects disappear, according to construction and property consultancy Thomas & Adamson.

<https://scottishconstructionnow.com/article/housebuilders-fear-brexit-will-lead-to-timber-prices-rise>

The show must go on: How Brexit is dominating the British arts world

When Article 50 was triggered in 2017, Sky Arts responded by inviting 50 artists from various disciplines to consider what it means to be British. They have invested £2 million in the project, which begins today with a four-part series, plays and art works across the country. Philip Edgar-Jones, director of Sky Arts and head of entertainment at Sky, hopes to lighten the mood: "We didn't want this series to be dark and brooding. One thing that really does unite us in the UK is humour."

<https://www.standard.co.uk/go/london/arts/brexit-dominating-arts-theatre-music-a4099781.html>

Political Shenanigans

Parliament to vote on three proposed changes to PM May's next steps on Brexit

Those include a proposal to change the rules of parliament on Wednesday in order to provide time for lawmakers to debate and vote on alternative ways forward on Brexit, a process often referred to as 'indicative votes'. The speaker also selected the opposition Labour Party's amendment which calls on the government to give lawmakers time to find a majority for a different approach on Brexit. The third amendment he selected says that if Britain comes within a week of leaving the EU without

a deal, the government should ask parliament whether it would approve a no-deal exit or if it should seek a further delay to Brexit.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-amendments-selected/parliament-to-vote-on-three-proposed-changes-to-p-m-mays-next-steps-on-brexit-idUKKCN1R626L>

Additional sources: ([BBC News](#)) ([Birmingham Mail](#)) ([BuzzFeed News](#))

MPs back indicative vote plan as Oliver Letwin amendment trounces PM

MPs have backed Sir Oliver Letwin's cross-party Brexit indicative votes plan by 329 votes to 302, inflicting a defeat on the government. The success of the Letwin amendment paves the way for a series of "indicative votes" in the Commons on Wednesday, effectively taking control of the Brexit process out of the hands of the Government. The rebellion against the government was helped by the resignations of Foreign Office Minister Alistair Burt and pro-EU business minister Richard Harrington. The vote against Theresa May came after she ruled out a third vote on her Brexit deal on Tuesday.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2019-03-25/may-battles-for-premiership-as-mps-seek-to-seize-control-of-commons-business/>

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

Theresa May loses three ministers as MPs take control of Brexit process

Theresa May has lost three ministers and control of the Brexit process to the House of Commons in further blows to her authority. Richard Harrington quit his position as business minister just moments before he voted against the government, siding with an amendment which will allow MPs to debate alternative Brexit plans on Wednesday. He was joined by Steve Brine and Alistair Burt - who was by Mrs May's side at Chequers just a day before.

<https://news.sky.com/story/theresa-may-loses-three-ministers-as-mps-take-control-of-brexit-process-11675236>

Additional sources: ([Yorkshire Coast Radio](#)) ([@Richard4Watford](#)) ([BBC News](#))

Brexit options: the runners and riders | News

MPs are likely to get the chance this week to vote on a range of Brexit alternatives to see where a consensus lies. Revoke Article 50; Second Referendum; May deal; Canada-style free trade agreement; customs union; EEA and No Deal Brexit

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/brexit-options-the-runners-and-riders-cfhr8m5b7>

Brexit is part of a wider European struggle

The sad truth is that the country's version of the wider European crisis is uniquely self-destructive. That is because Brexit is simultaneously a rupture in the country's legal order, a resignation from the country's most important international alliance and, in all probability, a severe shock to the economy. That is an extraordinary triple blow to the stability of the UK. And while new extremist parties are not on the rise, that is partly because the far left has taken over the leadership of the Labour party, while the nationalist right have formed their own bloc within the governing Conservatives.

<https://www.ft.com/content/c074e980-4ee0-11e9-b401-8d9ef1626294>

Brexit: What is Common Market 2.0?

The MPs promoting it say it would go back to the sort of economic relationship the UK had with the European Economic Community in the 1970s and 80s, without having to be involved with closer political union or the direct involvement of the European Court of Justice. They also say it could be agreed with the EU quickly and that there could be a majority for it in the House of Commons, although that has not been tested. Critics point out that it would still involve freedom of movement, making significant contributions to the EU Budget and following EU regulations without membership of the bodies that create them. It crosses several of Theresa May's red lines.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-47639946>

Esther McVey: “Voting for the Brexit deal is the insurance policy to at least get out”

The calculation is still the same for Esther McVey. Voting for Theresa May’s Brexit deal is the only way she can be sure that the UK will leave the European Union. “What we should be doing is voting for her deal because it is your insurance policy to at least get out,” she explains. The former cabinet minister, who voted against the Withdrawal Agreement twice, doesn’t think another rejection would lead to a no deal Brexit. Does she think the EU is bluffing? “Yes,” she replies. She warns Brexiteers banking on securing no deal that they would probably end up with a “worse” Brexit or Remain. “Look at the votes of the House; the Cabinet’s Remain, the PM’s Remain, the House is Remain 75-25, and the Speaker’s Remain.”

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/foreign-affairs/brexit/house/house-magazine/102735/esther-mcvey-%E2%80%9Cvoting-brexit-deal>

Theresa May Wields Threat of ‘Slow Brexit’ in Final Bid for Support

Theresa May has long threatened members of Parliament with the risk of no-deal, or no Brexit. On Monday she added a new one -- the danger of a “slow Brexit.” May has zigzagged between tactics as she tries to get various factions in the House of Commons to back her deal. With just days to go, she’s now got her eye on pro-Brexit hardliners, and she’s coined a new term to describe a long extension to EU membership slow Brexit

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-03-25/may-wields-threat-of-slow-brexit-in-final-bid-for-support>

UK unlikely to leave the EU without a deal, Credit Suisse says

There’s no appetite among the U.K. lawmakers to leave the European Union without a Brexit deal in place, so, that possibility can be ruled out, according to Andrew Garthwaite, global head of equity strategy at Credit Suisse. EU leaders have warned that the U.K. has one final opportunity to leave the bloc in an orderly fashion, after agreeing to delay the departure date beyond March 29.

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/03/25/credit-suisse-andrew-garthwaite-on-brexit-and-inverted-yield-curve.html>

Brexit hypocrisy highlighted by nationwide billboard campaign

Political billboards have popped up across the UK, from Glasgow to Dover, thanks to anti-Brexit group Led By Donkeys. Each board is emblazoned with a quote from a politician or public figure, taken from past speeches, interviews and social media. The four friends behind the popular campaign “wanted to highlight the hypocrisy” of politicians engaging in the Brexit debate, according to the group’s crowdfunding page. “This Brexit chaos is founded on the forgotten lies of our leaders,” the page says. “Let’s remind the country of them with giant billboards.”

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-billboards-led-by-donkeys-remain-uk-a8837576.html>

Brexit debate: Do petitions ever work?

“Petitions by themselves don’t do anything, but they can be a very valuable tool for change,” says Cristina Leston-Bandeira, a professor of politics at the University of Leeds, who specialises in petitions and public engagement. It all comes down to “how campaigners use the petition to put pressure on their representatives”.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-47693506>

Dominic Grieve: The PM must heed the million marchers and put a brake on Brexit

The rapidity of events over recent days reflects a deepening political crisis. The Prime Minister has been unwilling to put the Brexit deal she has negotiated to the House of Commons as she believes it will be rejected yet again. She has gone to Brussels and secured only a very limited extension to Article 50, displacing the cliff edge to no-deal chaos by only a fortnight. There are clear signs that the EU no longer believes that her deal is deliverable but does not want to be seen to be pushing the UK into no deal against its wishes. The Commons for its part has indicated by a strong majority that a no-deal Brexit must be avoided.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/comment/comment/the-pm-must-heed-the-million-marchers-and-put-a-brake-on-brexit-a>

[4100016.html](#)

Brexit: Cabinet 'war game' to prepare for general election

Cabinet ministers today "war-gamed" how they might call a general election to break the Brexit deadlock. In an emergency meeting this morning ministers debated whether they would have any choice other than to call an election if Britain is forced into a long Brexit delay. The move came as Theresa May admitted to MPs that she still did not have "sufficient support" to bring her vote back before MPs for a third time and pledged not to endorse no-deal without parliament's approval.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/brexit-cabinet-war-game-to-prepare-for-general-election-8nlcgbg5h>

What do voters make of Brexit now?

Does a negative reaction to the Brexit deal mean voters have changed their minds about leaving the EU in the first place? In truth, the polls have for some time been indicating that slightly more people now say they would vote Remain than Leave in another ballot.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-47693645>

Political Setbacks

Minister 'resigns' and says government's Brexit approach is 'playing roulette with lives'

Business minister Richard Harrington has resigned warning that the government's Brexit approach was "playing roulette" with people's lives. The pro-EU MP, who was one of three minister to resign on Monday night said in a letter to the Prime Minister he had quit so he could "do all I can" to prevent a no-deal Brexit. He said in letter to the Prime Minister: "At this critical moment in our country's history, I regret that the government's approach to Brexit is playing roulette with the lives and livelihoods of the vast majority of people in this country who are employed by or otherwise depend on businesses for their livelihood."

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/17526425.minister-resigns-and-says-governments-brexit-approach-is-playing-roulette-with-lives/>

Brexit petition to revoke article 50 exceeds 5m signatures

The petition asking the British government to revoke article 50 and reconsider its plan to exit the European Union has passed the 5m-signature mark, following a massive demonstration in London on Saturday. As of 11pm on Sunday, 5.3m people had signed the petition, making it the most popular to have been submitted to the parliament website. The previous highest total of 4,150,260 was for a 2016 petition calling for a second referendum should the initial poll not provide a definitive enough result. The petition continued to grow following Saturday's march, which organisers claimed saw more than a million people take to the streets of London. The woman behind the petition, Margaret Georgiadou, said on Saturday she had received death threats. Georgiadou tweeted that on Friday night she had received three such threats via telephone.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/24/brexit-petition-to-revoke-article-50-reaches-5m-signatures>

Brexit: PM says NI unable to prepare for no-deal

Speaking in the House of Commons on Monday, Theresa May said she had wanted to deliver Brexit on 29 March. "But, I'm conscious of my duties as prime minister to all parts of our United Kingdom and of the damage to that union leaving without a deal could do, when one part of it is without devolved government and unable therefore to prepare properly," she said. Former Northern Ireland Secretary Owen Paterson said he was surprised to learn that Northern Ireland had not been able to prepare properly. Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) deputy leader Nigel Dodds accused Mrs May of a "fundamental lack of preparation" and said "the government is entirely responsible for that".

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-47694783>

Theresa May dismays the DUP as she blames Northern Ireland for Brexit delay

A decision by Theresa May to blame Northern Ireland for the delay in Brexit has dismayed the DUP,

pushing them further away from the Prime Minister at the point when she needs them most. A change of stance by the weakened Prime Minister today saw her tell MPs that the absence of devolution in Northern Ireland is part of the reason for suddenly asking for a last-minute delay. In a demonstration of the lack of trust between No 10 and the party which keeps Mrs May in office, a bewildered-looking Nigel Dodds said in the Commons that was “an entirely new argument that we’re hearing for the first time” as a justification for delaying Brexit.

<https://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/theresa-may-dismays-the-dup-as-she-blames-northern-ireland-for-brexit-delay-1-8864233>

Brexiters will soon discover that all other deals are worse than Theresa May's

The upshot of the Prime Minister’s statement on Monday afternoon is that the House of Commons will finally get to vote on the alternatives to the Brexit deal they have twice rejected. It is understandable that ministers have long resisted such a moment, for if MPs actually managed to deliver a majority for a specific plan, it would be that much harder to justify yet another attempt to pass the one negotiated by the Government. Furthermore, if that plan is one that a large part of the Cabinet cannot stomach, then the constitutional crisis many of us have long feared would be upon us, and a general election not far away. Holding the “indicative votes” that now appear imminent might open the Pandora’s Box

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/03/25/brexiters-will-soon-discover-deals-worse-theresa-mays/>

Theresa May hints she’ll quit if Brexiters back her deal — but they’re demanding she goes public with the date

Theresa May is locked in a Mexican stand-off with hardline Brexiteer chiefs after she dramatically opened the door to quitting as PM. The Sun can reveal that Mrs May has indicated for the first time that she would consider resigning in exchange for MPs passing her Brexit deal.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/brexit/8718704/theresa-may-quit-brexiters-back-deal/>

Labour’s chief whip defies leader to say he wants to remain

Splits at the top of the Labour Party emerged today as chief whip Nick Brown defied Jeremy Corbyn to say that he wants to stay in the EU. In an email to one of his constituents he disclosed that he is personally in favour of halting Brexit by revoking Article 50 if the only other option is no deal. He wrote he would also back another Brexit vote where “remain in the EU” is an option on the ballot paper. The 2017 Labour Party manifesto endorses Brexit and Mr Corbyn has been criticised heavily by his MPs for not explicitly backing a second referendum and instead saying he favours a Labour-led “jobs first” Brexit or a general election.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/labour-s-chief-whip-defies-leader-to-say-he-wants-to-remain-a4100286.html>

Brexit protesters unfurl giant banner mocking David Davis during Put It To The People March

Protesters demanding a second referendum on Brexit mocked David Davis on Saturday by unfurling a banner emblazoned with one of the former cabinet minister’s old statements. “If a democracy cannot change its mind, it ceases to be a democracy,” was the quote written on the banner. It comes from a speech which Mr Davis, a former Brexit secretary, made in November 2012 about the UK’s relationship with the EU.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/brexit-march-latest-put-it-to-the-people-led-by-donkeys-banner-david-davis-a8837106.html>

81% of Britons think Government has handled Brexit talks badly, damning poll finds

The vast majority of Britain believes the Government has handled Brexit negotiations poorly, a damning poll has found. A staggering 81 per cent of the country thought ministers have so far done a bad job in EU-divorce talks, the study suggested. That’s compared to just 7 per cent of Britons who said the opposite was true, the NatCen Social Research poll showed.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/81-of-britons-think-government-has-handled-brexit-talks-badly-damning-pol-l-shows-a4100656.html>

Theresa May should set out plans to quit in order to get Brexit deal through, says Ribble Valley MP Nigel Evans

Tory backbencher Nigel Evans, a joint executive secretary of the influential Conservative 1922 Committee, said Theresa May should set out her plans to quit in order to get her Brexit deal through. "Clearly a number of people do not want the Prime Minister anywhere near the next phase of negotiations, which is the future trading relationship between ourselves and the EU," he told BBC Radio 4's Today.

<https://www.lep.co.uk/news/politics/theresa-may-should-set-out-plans-to-quit-in-order-to-get-brexit-deal-through-says-ribble-valley-mp-nigel-evans-1-9669917>

Brexit activist slams Irish border question - by defending free movement

Darren Grimes found it was "not beyond the wit of man" to keep a border open, when travelling from Italy to Switzerland. Not realising that they are both in the Schengen region which requires that anyway

<https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/media/2019/03/brexit-activist-slams-irish-border-question-defending-free-movement>

Theresa May can't shirk the blame for a Brexit crisis she created

Her attempt to frighten everyone by talking up no-deal amounts to almost criminal negligence with the economy says The Guardian's William Keegan. So bad has been the impact of the prospect of Brexit on investment that the fall in the exchange rate - which has caused problems for many - has not even improved the trade balance.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/mar/24/brexit-may-shirk-blame-crisis-she-created>

The Conservative Party is assuring its own destruction over Brexit

These are the men whose heady mix of lies, delusion, stupidity, shamelessness, vanity and cowardice have broken their nation. And yet, three years down the line and with the Brexit Domesday Clock at two minutes to midnight, here they are all again, summoned by the prime minister for yet another chance to shape the future of a country they have humiliated in a way it has never been humiliated before.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/brexit-theresa-may-boris-johnson-gove-iain-duncan-smith-chequers-a8838816.html>

Brexit: Corbyn criticises government handling of EU talks

Jeremy Corbyn criticised the "dangerous and irresponsible" comments from Theresa May about the delay to Brexit. He said the government has "no plan" for Brexit, and the prime minister should admit that her deal was "dead" and she should not waste the time of MPs by putting to the Commons for a third time.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-politics-47698291/brexit-corbyn-criticises-government-handling-of-eu-talks>