

# News from the Brexit Cliff Edge

## 27th Mar 2019

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### News Highlights

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#### Welcome to the Brexit Cliff Edge

#### Consumers nervous about IT purchases

- Brexit jitters have badly hit UK consumer PC sales which fell by 25% across January and February

#### Companies hiring and investment plans on ice

- The Recruitment and Employment Confederation reported that British companies have sharply scaled back their hiring and investment plans due to the Brexit turmoil

#### Ireland facing an economic hit from No Deal Brexit

- A disorderly Brexit will cost the Irish economy 50,000 jobs and lower its GDP by 2.4% across the next ten years, according to a leading think tank survey

#### Flu takes flight

- Sanofi said it has plans to fly in supplies of flu vaccine if other UK transport routes become too disrupted after the UK leaves the EU

#### Customs checks mean huge lorry tailbacks expected

- Kent Police said they are drafting in an extra 140 officers per day to cope with the long queues of lorries expected on the M20. They have an additional £3.4 to spend on preparations for gridlock and delays around the channel ports

#### NHS is stretched to its limit

- An NHS staffing survey showed GPs are under pressure with 1,500 fewer GPs now than in 2015. Staff sickness levels are up sharply with 40% citing stress, the highest number recorded in 5 years. The service has been heavily dependent on EU staff, many of whom have gone back to their home countries. So there are now shortages of staff at all levels of the NHS

#### Research funding drying up at universities

- Universities are now facing a crunch point on scientific and research funding with EU money about to dry up. They are in the dark as to what will replace it. Many are seeing leading research expertise 'walk' to other universities in mainland Europe where these research grants are secured

#### Theresa May is on the road to nowhere

- Today is the day that MPs run the order paper in the House of Commons and they plan to put

- around '16 Brexit Plans' to MPs for them to vote on
- The idea is for a simple preference selecting vote by all MPs. Then the most popular Brexit proposals make it to a more detailed round of discussion and voting next Monday in Parliament
  - Up to 20 Tory ministers are said to be poised to resign if Theresa May does not allow a free vote on all these indicative proposals.
  - Theresa May's Meaningful Vote 3 appears to be struggling back to life and may be put before Parliament once again. The Tory eurosceptic hardline ERG have been discussing supporting it, with some opting for 'ideological purity over the Irish backstop position' and others, like Jacob Rees Mogg, recognising there is now a risk of losing Brexit completely if they do not support May
  - The DUP votes do not seem to be so certain for the Prime Minister. Talk of the need for Westminster to impose Direct Rule in the event of No Brexit has made discussions uncomfortable, but they are also feeling the pull of voting for May's Deal or they may get No Brexit at all, so their position may soften
  - Talk of Theresa May naming her resignation date in return for ERG/DUP support of her Withdrawal Agreement now seems more pivotal than ever
  - The Times reported that talk of the Cabinet 'gaming general elections' and having Plans to secure a deal are just not true as there is no Plan B, only Theresa's plan A for third time
  - Tories are said to be 'fighting like rats in a sack' on their private WhatsApp group. Many are extremely bitter at the 70 or so Brexit hardliners who blocked May's deal. The unhappiness reflects the fear of some that a hard Brexit was in their grasp and it has now escaped, and Brexit itself could be in jeopardy
  - The government has rejected the petition to Revoke and Remain in the EU, currently signed by more than 5.8m people. A debate on this petition is scheduled for next Monday - April Fools Day
  - Although a General Election is for some a likely way out of the impasse, other wiser heads are pointing out that if Parliament backs an indicative vote proposal the government will be compelled to act as its representative in discussions with Brussels, which is unlikely to be acceptable to Theresa May. Equally, she has committed to not leading the Conservatives into the next General Election. At this point she would have run out of all roads to take except a second referendum - which she clearly loathes and would not seek to take either

## **Jobs at Risk**

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### **Brexit turmoil hits UK firms' hiring plans - REC**

British companies have scaled back sharply their hiring and investment plans amid the growing turmoil around Britain's exit from the European Union, a survey showed on Wednesday. More firms were downbeat about the outlook for jobs and investment than were optimistic for the first time since the Recruitment and Employment Confederation began its surveys in June 2016, the month of the Brexit referendum. Nearly three years on, it remains unclear how, when or even if Brexit will happen.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-economy-jobs/brexit-turmoil-hits-uk-firms-hiring-plans-rec-idUKKCN1R802T?feedType=RSS&feedName=businessNews>

### **Brexit jitters fingered as UK consumer PC sales collapse**

PC and Laptop Sales into the retail market sunk 25% during Jan and Feb... UK PC volumes via distributors fell 7 per cent to 538,000 for January and February: business machines went up 4.5 per cent to 361,000 but those to consumers declined 25 per cent to 176,000.

[https://www.theregister.co.uk/2019/03/26/brexit\\_shakes\\_hit\\_uk\\_pc\\_sales/](https://www.theregister.co.uk/2019/03/26/brexit_shakes_hit_uk_pc_sales/)

## **Economic Impact**

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### **Brexit to hit Ireland's economic growth, according to report**

ESRI report said: "The persistent uncertainties with respect to the form of the UK's withdrawal from the EU, "Under the most severe scenario of a disorderly no-deal, domestic real GDP is estimated to rise by just 1.2% in 2019 and 2.4% in 2020."

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/republic-of-ireland/brexit-to-hit-irelands-economic-growth-according-to-report-37955246.html>

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

### **No-deal Brexit will cost 50,000 jobs, say officials**

A disorderly Brexit would derail the Irish government's efforts to post a budget surplus for the first time since the financial crash a decade ago and shave 50,000 jobs off employment growth over five years, a report suggests. The study, carried out by the Department of Finance and the Economic and Social Research Institute, the country's main think tank, found that if Britain crashed out of the EU Irish GDP growth would be 2.4 per cent lower by the end of 2020. The economy would still grow, but at a much slower pace. Ireland is also projected to post a budget surplus this year for the first time since the economy collapsed in 2008. A disorderly Brexit would lead to a 0.3 per cent deterioration in the finances of the exchequer over the short term and push the budget balance back into the red, the study said.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/ireland/no-deal-brexit-will-cost-50-000-jobs-say-officials-t9pcpjmt>

### **How has Brexit vote affected the UK economy? March verdict**

Brexiters might argue the bad news from the European economy is reason enough for Britain to distance itself from the EU as much as possible. Eurozone GDP is on course to expand by just 0.2% for the first quarter, marginally weaker than the UK. Italy is suffering from its fifth recession in two decades, while Germany only just avoided recession at the end of last year, with growth close to zero. However, the EU accounts for almost half of UK exports, while there has been little adjustment to non-EU trade since the Brexit vote. Bad news for the EU is still bad news for Britain.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/mar/26/how-has-brexit-vote-affected-the-uk-economy-march-verdict>

### **Brexit puzzle forces companies to gamble on pound exposure**

Given that spread of possibilities, some companies are leaving their exposures unhedged, to the greatest extent possible, hoping that the way in which sterling eventually moves will be to their benefit. "Some companies continue to believe that it will all be fine. But . . . going into Brexit naked is very dangerous," says Jonathan Pryor, head of FX sales at Investec.

<https://www.ft.com/content/061ab340-4ed0-11e9-9c76-bf4a0ce37d49>

### **UK economy remains afloat despite the Brexit shenanigans**

Watching Brexit developments from 3,000 miles away in the US has been surreal. Fareed Zakaria, the host of a CNN show, recently wrote in the Washington Post that Britain - "famous for its prudence, propriety and punctuality - is suddenly looking like a banana republic". I never thought I would read anything like this about the country of my birth. Britain's international reputation has been trashed.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/mar/26/uk-economy-remains-afloat-despite-brexit-shenanigans>

### **Pound sterling rises after Jacob Rees-Mogg makes this Brexit claim**

The pound rebounded on Tuesday, supported by comments from Jacob Rees-Mogg indicating that a no-deal Brexit is off the table. In an interview, the chairman of the European Research Group (ERG) said it was difficult to see the UK leaving the EU without a deal, leaving two choices: the Prime Minister's deal or no Brexit. The pound rose following his comments, before pulling back slightly.

<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/news/newsbirmingham/pound-sterling-rises-after-jacob-rees-mogg-makes-this-brexit-claim>

[m/ar-BBVg6fk](https://www.ft.com/content/f02e06f6-4f5e-11e9-b401-8d9ef1626294)

### **Pound regains ground after MPs to vote on alternatives to Brexit**

Sterling remains in thrall to the twists and turns of Westminster's Brexit politics. As the odds on an orderly departure from the EU improve, the pound is rising, as are UK stocks earning revenue at home. The pound turned higher on Tuesday as investors measured the implications of a move by MPs to seize control of the Brexit process, with signals from influential Eurosceptics that they could support Theresa May's Brexit deal.

<https://www.ft.com/content/f02e06f6-4f5e-11e9-b401-8d9ef1626294>

## **Administrative Fall Out**

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### **Brexit: Flu vaccine 'could be airlifted into UK'**

Drugs company Sanofi has plans to fly supplies of flu vaccine into the UK if other transport routes are disrupted after the country leaves the EU. Hugo Fry, the managing director of its UK arm, told BBC Radio 5 live's Wake Up To Money that the flu vaccine was one it was not possible to stockpile. "We prepare in different ways and have prepared many different routes into the UK," he said. "If we have to in the end, we will airlift it in." He added: "We are eating the cost of that but patients and citizens are our primary concern, so we're quite happy to take that cost and make that planning."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-47704164>

### **Brexit: No-deal EU exit could see 140 extra officers sent to Kent**

Up to 140 police officers a day could be drafted into Kent to deal with the impacts of a no-deal Brexit. Police are preparing for gridlock on the roads if anticipated delays at the Port of Dover and Folkestone create long queues of lorries on the M20. Officers are also ready to tackle any protests or disorder that occur, Kent Police Assistant Chief Constable Peter Ayling said. The Home Office has so far given the force £4.3m to pay for preparations. Additional officers could be "mobilised" from other forces in the UK, according to Mr Ayling, a member of emergency planning group the Kent Resilience Forum.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-kent-47713512>

### **GP practices are struggling - and Brexit will only make things worse**

Staff sickness and uncertainty caused by Brexit have worsened NHS staffing shortages. A recent NHS staff survey showed that just under 40% are unwell with stress, the highest that we have seen in five years. And with health and social care relying heavily on staff from the EU, Brexit has the potential to compound our existing recruitment and retention problems. According to a report last week, the shortfall in GPs in England will almost triple from 2,500 to 7,000 by 2023-24. There are already 1,300 fewer family doctors than in 2015.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/mar/26/my-gp-practice-struggling-brexit-worse-staff-shortages>

### **Gender pay gap expert among top professors quitting Brexit Britain**

Across UK's universities it is the same story. Leading EU academics in climate policy and economics and most disciplines are worried about how grant funding from the EU will be replaced. They have had enough of hostility - and in many cases they are off

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/mar/25/gender-pay-gap-expert-among-top-professors-quitting-brexit-britain>

### **No-deal Brexit mitigation plans 'hampered by poor DfT engagement' Select Committee told**

Giving evidence to the Commons Brexit Select Committee, Portsmouth City councillor, Gerald Vernon-Jackson said preparations for a no-deal EU Brexit plan had been "hampered by poor engagement from the DfT" and there'd been "systematic refusal from the DfT to engage in any way".

<https://onthewight.com/no-deal-brexit-mitigation-plans-hampered-by-poor-dft-engagement-select-committee-told/>

### **The myth of British good-humour and resilience was born during World War II and is about to die a Brexit death**

A 1942 report into the UK says "The average European, he writes in an accompanying note, has a "rough and ready perception of the Englishman" who is – among other things – "inclined to lecture other people for not doing things as Englishmen would do them, although quite ignorant of the reasons why others act differently from us". Europeans also perceive a country that cannot be depended on "because we won't say what we really want or what we are going to do".

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/myth-british-good-humour-resilience-094956058.html>

### **Brexit drives warehouse move to jobs black spot**

Logistics and warehousing group Clipper's expansion into Sheffield is an example of how Brexit is impacting on the labour market as labour shortages force companies to change tack and to search for staff to fill the roles previously carried out in many cases by EU migrants

<https://www.ft.com/content/7b13ac3e-3c41-11e9-b72b-2c7f526ca5d0>

### **What a no deal Brexit would mean for British fashion**

Last year the British fashion industry contributed some £32 billion to the British economy. What's more, at last count, it employed some 890,000 people. The last thing that we – that I – want to see, is our industry retract due to Brexit. Rather, we want to see British fashion continue to provide opportunity and engagement, to inspire young people to be creatives and entrepreneurs and for British Fashion to be continued to be recognised as global leaders in creativity, innovation and business.

<https://www.gq-magazine.co.uk/article/no-deal-brexit-british-fashion-impact>

### **First picture of new Brexit driving licence as DVLA steps up preparations for no deal**

The first picture of a new driving licence has been unveiled as the DVLA steps up preparations for the increasing fear of a no deal Brexit.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1105724/brexit-news-driving-licence-european-union-dvla-government-advice>

### **Roaming charges could return in event of No Deal Brexit**

Roaming charges could make an unwelcome return in the wake of a no deal Brexit, with the European Union confirming that rules governing the cost of using smartphones while travelling will not apply in the UK. In new guidance, the EU said, "Companies providing mobile communications services, such as voice calls, text messages or data will no longer be bound by EU roaming rules when operating in the UK.

<https://www.uswitch.com/mobiles/news/2019/03/roaming-charges-could-return-in-event-of-no-deal-brexit/>

## **Political Shenanigans**

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### **Prime minister would 'break the law if she ignores Letwin result'**

I am told that the cabinet secretary Mark Sedwill and the attorney general Geoffrey Cox informed Cabinet that if at the end of the Letwin process MPs pass a motion mandating the PM to pursue a new route through the Brexit mess - perhaps a referendum, or membership of the customs union, or some other softer future relationship with the EU - the PM and government would be in breach of the ministerial code and the law if they fail to follow MP's instructions.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2019-03-26/prime-minister-would-break-the-law-if-she-ignores-letwin-result/>

### **Conservative Party loyalists call on Theresa May suspend all Tory MPs who refuse to vote for her Brexit deal**

Loyalist ministers have urged Theresa May to suspend all Tory MPs who refuse to vote for her Brexit deal in a pre-emptive strike for an upcoming party civil war. Under the nuclear move, the PM would

threaten to withdraw the Conservative whip from any Brexiteers who defy her again.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/brexit/8726925/pm-suspend-mps-refuse-brexit-vote/>

Additional sources: ([The Sun](#)) ([The Guardian](#)) ([The Guardian](#)) ([Politics Home](#)) ([The Independent](#)) ([The Sun](#))

### **DUP prefers one-year delay over May's 'toxic Brexit deal', says Wilson as Rees-Mogg signals shift**

DUP Brexit spokesperson Sammy Wilson has said that his party would rather see a one-year delay to Brexit than support Prime Minister Theresa May's withdrawal deal.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/dup-prefers-oneyear-delay-over-mays-toxic-brexit-deal-says-wilson-as-reesmogg-signals-shift-37952701.html>

Additional sources: ([Evening Standard](#))

### **Jacob Rees-Mogg Suggests He Is Ready To Vote For Theresa May's Brexit Deal**

Jacob Rees-Mogg has indicated he is ready to back Theresa May's Brexit deal after admitting eurosceptic MPs do not have the numbers to secure their perfect exit. In a boost for the prime minister, the head of the European Research Group (ERG) of pro-Brexit Tory MPs said it appeared he would have no choice but to vote for the agreement. "The prime minister will not deliver a no-deal Brexit," he told ConHome's Moggcast podcast on Tuesday. "I have always thought that no-deal is better than Mrs May's deal, but Mrs May's deal is better than not leaving at all."

[https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/jacob-rees-mogg-suggests-he-is-ready-to-vote-for-theresa-mays-brexit-deal\\_u\\_k\\_5c99f730e4b0d42ce36080d4](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/jacob-rees-mogg-suggests-he-is-ready-to-vote-for-theresa-mays-brexit-deal_u_k_5c99f730e4b0d42ce36080d4)

Additional sources: ([Daily Mail](#))

### **Brexit news: Labour's Nick Brown says it would be better to cancel Brexit than to leave with no deal**

Labour chief whip Nick Brown has said it would be better to cancel Brexit than to leave the EU without a withdrawal agreement. It follows warnings that a "no-deal" Brexit would be catastrophic for employers in the North East, particularly manufacturers and exporters.

<https://www.chroniclive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/brexit-news-theresa-may-amendment-16025207>

Additional sources: ([Daily Mirror](#))

### **Boris Johnson admits that he COULD back May's deal 'if there's a path to a Canada-style trade deal'**

Boris Johnson has signalled he could be willing to back Theresa May's Brexit deal, but only if there is a path to then negotiate his preferred 'Super Canada' future trading relationship with the EU. Speaking at an event hosted by the Telegraph, the former Foreign Secretary said he 'was not there yet' on backing May's deal but admitted that there was a risk Britain 'won't leave the EU at all' if MPs voted it down for a third time

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6851149/Mogg-leads-new-Brexiteer-climbdown-late-save-Brexit.html>

### **Brexit latest: How Remain MPs could force through SOFT Brexit in indicative votes**

After months' of threats, MPs finally seized control of the Commons agenda last night enabling them to stage their own debates and votes on Brexit. The constitutionally unprecedented move means MPs have fundamentally taken control over Brexit from Theresa May. Exact rules and parameters for the Commons debates and votes are likely to be outlined today, with the established options to be debated tomorrow with a final decision made on Monday

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1105498/Brexit-latest-soft-Brexit-no-deal-odds-indicative-votes-remain-EU-news>

### **Brexit indicative votes to be held by MPs on alternatives to Theresa May's deal**

Ps will take part in a series of paper ballots on Wednesday in a bid to work out what kind of Brexit has a chance of winning the support of the House of Commons, it has been confirmed. Members

must put forward their preferred options by the end of Tuesday, with Commons Speaker John Bercow selecting those to be put to a series of indicative Yes-or-No votes over the course of half an hour the following evening. Further debate and votes on the most popular alternatives will be staged on Monday to try to whittle the list down.

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/brexit-indicative-votes-held-mps-14189964>

### **Brexit in turmoil as MPs plan to take control of process for a second day**

British lawmakers are preparing to take control of the House of Commons agenda for two days in an unprecedented move that will test support for alternatives to Prime Minister Theresa May's deadlocked Brexit plan. A landmark vote placed Wednesday's parliamentary timetable in the hands of lawmakers, after May's repeated failure to pass her deal raised the chances of Britain crashing out of the EU in chaos. MPs now plan to add a second day of debate on Monday. A motion published by the Labour MP Hilary Benn, one of the MPs leading the charge to seize control of the Brexit process, disclosed that lawmakers will vote simultaneously on a menu of options on Wednesday evening local time. These so-called indicative votes will reveal which of the various alternatives command the most support.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/03/26/uk/brexit-indicative-votes-two-days-gbr-intl/index.html>

### **UK's weakened PM May still hoping to push her Brexit deal through**

British Prime Minister Theresa May will address her Conservative lawmakers on Wednesday, possibly to set out a timetable for her departure in a last throw of the dice to win support for her twice-rejected Brexit deal in parliament.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu/uks-weakened-pm-may-still-hoping-to-push-her-brexit-deal-through-idUKKCN1R70VH>

### **Remainer ringleader MP Nick Boles gloats 'I'm going to wake up with a broad grin on my face' after Brexit-wreckers seize control of Commons**

Squabbling politicians have rushed to carve up Brexit as 16 alternatives to Theresa May's deal were tabled for a historic Commons showdown on our EU divorce. Remainer ringleader MP Nick Boles has gloated "I'm going to wake up with a broad grin on my face" after Brexit-wreckers seized control of Commons. The Tory told The Sun: "It's a great feeling to be finally off to the races and see whether this horse will run."

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/brexit/8727255/remainer-mp-nick-boles-brexit-wreck-commons-control/>

### **No-deal Brexit 'would require direct rule in Northern Ireland'**

The head of the senior civil servants' union has said direct rule will be necessary in Northern Ireland in the event of a no-deal Brexit. Dave Penman, the general secretary of the FDA, said public sector employees in the province could not be expected to make increasingly political decisions with major security and economic implications if the UK crashed out of Europe. His words follow Theresa May's comments on Monday, when she told the House of Commons that "some direct application of powers" might have to be imposed on Northern Ireland in a no-deal scenario.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/mar/26/no-deal-brexit-would-require-direct-rule-in-northern-ireland>

### **The UK government has lost control of Parliament's agenda for the first time in over 100 years. What comes next?**

There were audible gasps in the UK Parliament on Monday night as lawmakers voted to seize control of the Brexit process from embattled Prime Minister Theresa May -- the first time in over a century that MPs have taken over the parliamentary timetable from the government. It was a pivotal moment in what has already been a rollercoaster few weeks in the Brexit process, dealing what could well be the final blow to May's premiership and paving the way for a Brexit lawmakers can at last agree on.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/03/26/uk/brexit-what-happens-next-gbr-intl/index.html>

### **Scottish Parliament to vote for Brexit to be cancelled**

The Scottish Parliament is expected to formally back calls for Brexit to be cancelled in a vote later on Wednesday. MSPs will be asked to support a motion calling for Article 50 to be revoked if it is not possible for another EU referendum to be held.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-47707247>

### **A general election can't solve Brexit - the only way to solve the issue is another referendum**

If we want the public to sort out our political deadlock on Europe, then we need to ask them a question about Europe. We know from the latest polling and analysis by Sir John Curtice that there has been a shift in sentiment. We're on balance pro-Remain now, given the disastrous talks. There is a small switch in opinions, but proportionally more potential Remain voters say they would vote now than was the case back in 2016.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/brexit-general-election-referendum-jeremy-corbyn-theresa-may-a8840131.html>

### **No EU joy as UK parliament gears up for Brexit votes**

EU governments know well enough by now that Wednesday's votes may not end up providing a clear picture of Brexit. Even if they did, European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker will point out that the EU's only "interlocutor" - or opposite number - remains Her Majesty's government, led by Theresa May, and not UK MPs. Would she be willing to shuttle as a go-between on behalf of Parliament, which has chosen to ignore her negotiated Brexit deal? Not likely.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-47708977>

### **@fabianpicardo Alternatively, carve a legit route to remain via the 3Rs: REVOKE, REFERENDUM, REMAIN.**

I agree @Peston. Whichever side of the debate you are on, revoking Art50 is the best way to TAKE BACK CONTROL of #BREXIT. If MPs won't support the WA, revoke then plan to leave in a managed way. Alternatively, carve a legit route to remain via the 3Rs: REVOKE, REFERENDUM, REMAIN.

<https://twitter.com/FabianPicardo/status/1110607729230516224>

### **Brexit options 'narrowing', says health secretary**

The options for Brexit "are narrowing", Health Secretary Matt Hancock has said, after MPs voted to seize control of the parliamentary timetable. The PM was dealt a fresh blow as the government was defeated by 27 votes on Monday, on a plan designed to find out the kind of deal MPs would support. Thirty Conservative MPs rebelled, including three ministers. Mr Hancock said the government would listen to MPs but "can't pre-commit to following whatever they vote for".

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-47704451>

### **Britons backing away from Brexit, but no safe bets - pollster**

British voters appear to be changing their minds about leaving the European Union, Britain's leading polling expert said on Tuesday, but not to a degree that would make a different result in another referendum a safe bet.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-natcen/britons-backing-away-from-brexit-but-no-safe-bets-pollster-idUKKC N1R716B>

### **Labour considers backing 'common market 2.0' soft Brexit**

Shadow minister suggests party will whip along Labour Party policylines ahead of upcoming indicative votes

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/26/labour-considers-backing-common-market-20-soft-brexit>

### **Brexit paralysis pulls Tories towards an early election**

The May administration is disintegrating before us. It looks less like a government than a gruesome reality TV show. Cabinet rows are leaked before the meeting is even over; collective responsibility has collapsed; leadership contenders take public positions to boost their ratings with the party electorate. Welcome to Hate Island: press 1 for Boris Johnson; press 2 for Dominic Raab; press 3 for Jeremy Hunt.

<https://www.ft.com/content/fde0618c-4ee0-11e9-b401-8d9ef1626294>

## **Political Setbacks**

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### **May faces 20 ministerial resignations if they are not allowed free vote on solving Brexit mess**

Theresa May conveyed no ... to find a solution to the Brexit mess. She has been warned by MP Anne Milton that there could be 20 resignations from junior ranks of government to add to the three on Monday, if she does not allow a free vote.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2019-03-26/theresa-may-faces-resignations-brexit-free-vote/>

*Additional sources: ([Express.co.uk](https://www.express.co.uk))*

### **Brexit: There is no secret plan, admits minister**

Nor could other MPs discern a plan. One Conservative MP told The Times about a conversation with their whip. The MP asked the whip what they were voting in this week. "Don't know", they were told. Then they asked if the meaningful vote was coming back. "Don't know," they were told. They asked if the indicative votes would happen and got the same response. The whip then asked, "But will you support the government?"

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/there-is-no-secret-plan-admits-minister-ghvzsb7d>

### **Leader comment: Replacing May will not solve the humiliation of Brexit**

EU leaders were scathing about the Prime Minister, last week, but they were equally angry with the Brexiteers whose campaign led us to this chaotic point. In this climate, do these May-must-go members of cabinet really think that sending someone new to the next summit in Brussels is going to create further concessions in the United Kingdom's favour? If they do then, we fear, they are deluding themselves.

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/leader-comment-replacing-may-will-not-solve-the-humiliation-of-brexit-1-4894890>

### **DUP deal killer blow to Theresa May's plan as they refuse to back her 'toxic' Brexit deal**

As a number of Brexiteers are indicating they could cave and back the deal to avoid no Brexit, the DUP are holding firm. On Tuesday they insisted they still preferred leaving without a deal to Theresa May's deal. But their Brexit spokesman Sammy Wilson went one step further and suggested that an extension was better than the PM's deal. He said: "Even if we are forced into a one-year extension, we at least would have a say on the things which affect us during that time and would have the right to unilaterally decide to leave at the end of that one-year period through the simple decision of not applying for a further extension."

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/breaking-dup-deal-killer-blow-14188730>

### **Tories fight 'like rats in a sack' to hang on to the hard Brexit dream**

"It's like rats in a sack on the WhatsApp group today," says one glum Tory Brexit-backing MP. "Everyone is turning on each other." Another described the mood as "extremely bitter and very depressed" among many more mainstream Eurosceptic Conservative MPs who fear they are on the brink of losing the hard Brexit that was almost in their grasp. Their ire is directed mainly at the 70 pro-Brexit hardliners who refused to back May's deal on the second attempt. The holdouts won approval from their Conservative members who want nothing less than a no-deal Brexit and will be decisive in picking the next party leader.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/26/bitter-tories-fight-like-rats-in-a-sack-to-hang-on-to-hard-brexit>

### **Former minister says others may also resign over Brexit**

Former Foreign Office minister Alistair Burt, who resigned to vote against the government over Brexit, told the BBC's political editor Laura Kuenssberg that he expects more ministers to resign over Mrs May's policy plans for reintroducing her Brexit Withdrawal Agreement

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-politics-47694356/former-minister-says-others-may-also-resign-over-brexit>

### **One True Brexit's standard bearers stand firm in bonkers battle**

The far right Tory Bruges Group regards changing the EU leaving day from the 29th March as moment of national surrender

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/26/one-true-brexit-standard-bearers-stand-firm-in-bonkers-battle>

### **MPs have voted to put Brexit in the hands of Parliament's most blunder-prone Tory buffoon**

Brexit is today in the hands of Parliament's most blunder-prone Tory buffoon. It's hard to imagine how things could get worse. But Oliver Letwin will find a way. MPs voted for this diehard Remainer and Old Etonian twit to take charge of votes on mainly "soft Brexit" alternatives.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8727541/brexit-tory-buffoon-oliver-letwin-opinion/>

### **Pharmacy minister Steve Brine resigns from government over Brexit**

Pharmacy minister Steve Brine resigned from the government last night (March 25) to vote against Theresa May over Brexit.

<https://www.chemistanddruggist.co.uk/news/pharmacy-minister-steve-brine-resigns-government-over-brexit>

### **The Brexit delusion of taking back control**

From Beijing, where I now am, the UK looks small. It also looks as if it has fallen into the hands of lunatics engaged in an astonishing act of national self-harm. But this, Brexiters will say, is an illusion. The UK is going to "take back control". The slogan was brilliant. But it was the biggest delusion of all. Control is different from sovereignty. As I argued during the referendum campaign, the UK was already sovereign: it could, if it wished, vote to leave the EU. It did so, but promptly discovered that, while it was sovereign, it was not very powerful. Yet control is about power.

<https://www.ft.com/content/473bd2ae-4ee5-11e9-b401-8d9ef1626294>

### **The Guardian view on Brexit's revolution: eating its own**

For many Brexiters, the European Union was not an institutional arrangement that eased trade, immigration and political disputes; it was nothing short of a conspiracy to sap money from the United Kingdom to Brussels, construct an EU army, or help spread Islam across the continent. This thinking underlies the political project to leave the EU. As they are not grounded in truth, these narratives have produced Brexit's lengthy saga of political ineptitude.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/mar/26/the-guardian-view-on-brexit-revolution-eating-its-own>

### **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>

## **Government rejects petition to 'cancel Brexit' signed by 5.8 million people**

The British government has rejected a petition calling for Brexit to be stopped, which gathered more than 5.8 million signatures. The petition is due to be debated by MPs on 1 April, after breaking the 100,000 threshold for consideration and becoming the best-supported proposal in the history of the House of Commons and government's e-petitions website. Rejecting the oft-repeated claim that EU withdrawal is the "will of the people", it calls for the revocation of the Article 50 letter informing the European Council of the UK's intention to leave.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/27/government-rejects-petition-to-cancel-brexit-signed-by-58-million-people>

## **Get set for Brexit: Indicative Day - the one where the Grand Wizards turn on each other**

Draw near, true believers, for these are dark days for the ERG Brexit ultras. The Fellowship of the Ringpieces finds itself divided on their next move, and may yet be bitterly sundered as they ponder the big question: could they honestly have played it worse?

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/mar/26/brexit-indicative-votes-grand-wizards-ultras>

## **@Peston Senior ERG Brexiter lawyer MPs, Cash, @SuellaBraverman, Tomlinson and Jones, accuse PM of "unlawful use of Royal Prerogative" in agreeing with EU a postponement of Brexit day without first changing UK law.**

Senior ERG Brexiter lawyer MPs, Cash, @SuellaBraverman, Tomlinson and Jones, accuse PM of "unlawful use of Royal Prerogative" in agreeing with EU a postponement of Brexit day without first changing UK law. It is the symbolism of ERG attacking the PM which matters, because no...

<https://twitter.com/Peston/status/1110594775919534080>

## **Olly Robbins was right about one thing at least; it's either May's deal or a lengthy extension**

For many Brexiteers, Olly Robbins, Theresa May's chief Brexit negotiator, is something of a hate figure. But whatever the rights and wrongs of his Withdrawal Agreement, his analysis of the way events would pan out, as articulated in a Brussels hotel bar, is proving pretty much spot on. When it came down to it, he was overheard saying some months ago, the choice would be between Mrs May's deal and a lengthy extension. Everything else would fall by the wayside. The second of these options is where we now seem to be heading.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2019/03/26/olly-robbins-right-one-thing-least-either-mays-deal-lengthy/>

## **The Government is in crisis, but what makes Parliament think it can do any better?**

It is hard to think of a more humiliating moment for a sitting Prime Minister than what happened in Parliament yesterday. MPs from across the House, including ministers, voted to take matters out of her Government's hands into their own - "taking control" as they put it - because they do not trust Theresa May to get a grip and find a workable response to Brexit.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/03/26/government-crisis-makes-parliament-think-can-do-better/>

## **Why a general election is both necessary and impossible**

Here is the nightmare for Theresa May. If, as seems highly likely, MPs instruct the prime minister to negotiate a Brexit or no-Brexit outcome that conflicts with government policy, she and her ministers would be degraded into ciphers and puppets of MPs. There are two big reasons why it cannot happen. First is that the two main parties are irredeemably split over Brexit. Labour and the Tory Party would find it impossible to craft a manifesto with a policy on leaving or not-leaving the EU for which all their respective MPs could campaign. So an election could not end the torture for the UK and EU of the uncertainty about our Brexit or no-Brexit future. Second, I have not found a single Tory MP who think it would be a good idea for Theresa May to lead her party into another election, such is the degree to which they have lost confidence in her (and she of course has pledged not to do that).

<https://www.itv.com/news/2019-03-26/robert-peston-general-election-brexit/>

