

News from the Brexit Cliff Edge

28th Mar 2019

News Highlights

Welcome to the Brexit Cliff Edge

UK Daffodil business mired in uncertainty

- A drop in seasonal workers driven by Brexit fears, has left daffodil growers struggling to harvest their fields, amid warnings that crops will 'almost certainly' be lost as the year progresses. Uncertainty over the value of the pound, and a drop off in foreign pickers coming to the UK, will hit this £45m a year industry hard, says the NFU

Retail sales fell sharply in March

- UK retail sales fell in March, at the fastest rate for more than a year, as the UK's mounting Brexit crisis weighed on consumers' willingness to spend, according to a survey of major retailers. The CBI said retail sales slid by the most since October 2017. Its retail sales index fell to -18%, from a level of zero in February, meaning more retailers saw a slump in sales than reported an increase

Councils told hate crimes may spike again

- Local councils are being put on notice that there is likely to be a spike in hate crimes when the UK leaves the EU

Travel chaos expected on Kent's roads

- Kent County Council's Brexit coordinator said 'parts of Kent could be cut off by traffic jams, after the UK leaves the EU. The Isle of Thanet was one of the areas where delivery of supplies, movement of emergency vehicles and essential travel could become difficult'

Office space and apartment costs rise sharply in Amsterdam - as companies leave

- Due to dozens of companies relocating offices from the UK to Amsterdam, the city is seeing a sharp spike in apartment and office space prices, due to a lack of availability

Watch out for currency fluctuation in freight handling

- The freight distribution trade press reported that although many companies had prepared for Brexit, one unexpected area that could hit them hard is unpredictable currency fluctuation

May flies, indicative votes fall

- After taking a day to debate eight alternative Brexit proposals, the House of Commons voted on them. None of the eight won a majority
- The two 'most popular' new proposals were: Customs Union (264 votes but lost by 8 votes) and Confirmatory Vote (268 votes but lost by 27). There is now an additional day to debate the 'winners' next Monday. It is not clear as yet how matters will proceed that day

- There was still a push by the government to get a 3rd Meaningful Vote on Theresa May's withdrawal agreement past the House of Commons. Ministers and officials were busy seeking support from ERG waverers and the DUP
- These efforts to seek support for a new vote, led to Theresa May telling the Conservative Party 1922 Committee that she would be prepared to step down as Prime Minister, were her Withdrawal Agreement passed in a 3rd Meaningful Vote.
- Theresa May's offer to stand down has been one of the demands of her own European Research Group, hardcore Eurosceptics, many of whom have voted against her deal twice. Her news triggered renewed speculation on a would be successor and increased the group's willingness to back her deal
- The deal needs the support of the DUP. It said on Wednesday it will vote against her deal. It believes the changes that are needed to the deal with regard to the Irish backstop have not happened. So, in their opinion. 'they cannot sign up to something that would damage the union'
- The Sun's political commentator, Tom Newton Dunn, commented caustically: 'still 36 hours to go to MV3 on Friday - time for the DUP to screw billions from the Treasury in return for votes'
- House of Commons speaker John Bercow reiterated that any 3rd Meaningful Vote motion in the Commons had to be materially different from the previous two the House defeated, or he would block it
- So, if the Theresa May deal does make it to a vote on Friday, there are some obstacles remaining. There is a hardcore inside the ERG who are unlikely to budge, without a large enough incentive (perhaps). Then comes Monday
- ITV's Robert Peston reported that the Cabinet Secretary and the Attorney General have told the Cabinet that, if at the end of the Letwin Amendment process on Monday, the House of Commons passes a motion mandating the PM to pursue a new route through the Brexit mess, the PM and government would be in breach of ministerial code and the law if they fail to follow these instructions
- One of the architects of the 2016 Brexit vote Dominic Cummings, has been found in contempt of Parliament
- The Scottish Parliament voted for Brexit to be cancelled if the UK faces the prospect of leaving the EU without a deal
- Scottish First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, also raised the spectre that Theresa May's departure could make the Brexit debacle worse. There would be a Tory leadership election in the midst of the crisis, followed by a political lurch further to the right, as any candidate would need to earn ERG support to become party leader

Go visit our site for this and previous newsletters

https://www.nfind.uk/brexit_cliff_edge/

Jobs at Risk

Daffodil and coffee worker shortages amid Brexit uncertainty

Brexit has been holding back recruitment, with curbs on EU immigration likely to damage the farming industry's growth, union bosses have said. A drop in seasonal workers driven by Brexit has left daffodil growers struggling to harvest their fields amid warnings that crops will "almost certainly" be lost as the year progresses. The daffodil season, which lasts from January to April, contributes about £45m a year to the UK's economy. The National Farmers Union (NFU) said uncertainty over the value of the pound and the future ability of staff to work in the UK after Brexit has resulted in a significant drop in pickers choosing to come to the UK.

<https://news.sky.com/story/daffodil-and-coffee-worker-shortages-amid-brexit-uncertainty-11676588>

Economic Impact

Retail sales fall as Brexit uncertainty weighs on consumers

UK retail sales fell in March at the fastest rate for more than a year, as Britain's mounting political crisis over Brexit weighed on consumers' willingness to spend, according to a survey of major retailers. The latest figures from the Confederation of British Industry, covering high street firms responsible for a third of employment in retailing, showed that retail sales slid in March by the most since October 2017. The business lobby group's monthly retail sales index plunged to -18% in March from a level of 0% in February - meaning more retailers reported a slump in sales than reported an increase. City economists had expected a reading of +5%.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/mar/27/retail-sales-fall-as-brexit-uncertainty-weighs-on-consumers>

Administrative Fall Out

Kent plans for areas 'cut off' by Brexit traffic jams

Parts of Kent might become "cut off" by traffic jams following the UK's departure from the EU and might need special help to receive basic supplies, according to the county council expected to be the worst hit in the event of post-Brexit travel and trade disruption. Fiona Gaffney, the council's Brexit co-ordinator, said the Isle of Thanet on the northeastern tip of Kent was among the areas where delivery of supplies, movement of emergency vehicles and other essential travel could become particularly difficult.

<https://www.ft.com/content/f0e90216-4fe6-11e9-b401-8d9ef1626294>

Councils warned to prepare for potential hate crime increase after Brexit

Local councils are being warned to brace for an increase in community tension and localised 'trigger events' as the UK leaves the EU. In the latest of a series of updates sent by the Government, Nottinghamshire County and Nottingham City councils have been advised there could be increased community concerns about hate crime after Brexit.

<https://www.nottinghampost.com/news/nottingham-news/councils-warned-prepare-potential-hate-2687521>

Brexit Is Making Life Tough for Amsterdam Homebuyers

Dozens of companies have added Amsterdam offices as a result of the U.K.'s impending departure from the European Union, and some 2,400 jobs have been created in the Netherlands, with officials predicting many more will come. Real estate agents say they speak English with half the buyers or renters who show up for home viewings, and lender ABN Amro Group NV has stationed a Brexit team of 10 people at Amsterdam's airport to offer mortgages to potential homebuyers flying in from London.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-03-27/brexit-is-making-life-tough-for-amsterdam-homebuyers>

I'm glad I left Brexit Britain. My EU friends who didn't are stuck in limbo

Surprise, surprise: your rights will likely not be protected as the government once promised. For the very few who still had hope that Brexit would not affect them this may come as a shock and cause serious concern about their future in the UK. For me, it is reassurance that I did the right thing in leaving the UK last September.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/mar/27/brexit-britain-eu-citizens-rights>

How disties are reacting to the new Brexit deadlines

Border blockages and price cutting may not even be the biggest threats to the channel in the event of a no-deal Brexit. Dave Stevinson, MD of QBS Software, warned that changes to currency rates could have the biggest effect on pricing. "Changes in currency are a bigger risk than excess inventory, which would probably be covered by price protection or contracts between the vendor

and distributor," he explained. "My advice to resellers and disties is to have a strong look at their foreign exchange policy in the next few weeks and months - a big swing can wipe out all the profit."

<https://www.channelweb.co.uk/crn-uk/news/3073273/how-disties-are-reacting-to-the-new-brexit-deadlines>

Political Shenanigans

Parliament Has Rejected Every Single Brexit Plan

The alternative plan which secured the most votes in favour was a motion calling for a second referendum, which lost by 295 to 268 — ironically, the same 52% to 48% margin as in the 2016 referendum. In second place was a motion calling for a permanent customs union to be added to the withdrawal agreement, tabled by former Conservative cabinet minister Ken Clarke, which was beaten by 272 to 264. Other motions were even less successful. Two proposals put forward by Brexiteers calling for a no-deal Brexit and the so-called 'Malthouse plan' garnered only 160 and 139 votes respectively. A cross-party proposal for a Norway-style softer Brexit, dubbed Common Market 2.0, also performed poorly, losing by 283-188. Nonetheless, several of the options fared better than that May's deal at the second meaningful vote earlier in March, which was crushed by 391 votes to 242.

<https://www.buzzfeed.com/alexwickham/parliament-rejected-every-single-brexit-plan>

Brexit: No majority for any options after MPs' votes

None of MPs' eight proposed Brexit options have secured clear backing in a series of votes in the Commons. The options - which included a customs union with the EU and a referendum on any deal - were supposed to help find a consensus over how to leave the EU. Brexit Secretary Stephen Barclay said the results strengthened ministers' view their deal was "the best option". The results capped a day of drama in which Theresa May promised to stand down as PM if her deal was passed. The prime minister told a meeting of Tory MPs she would leave office earlier than planned if it guaranteed Parliament's backing for her withdrawal agreement with the EU.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-47728333>

Additional sources: (Daily Telegraph) (The Daily Telegraph) (BBC News) (Politico) (Daily Mail)

Oliver Letwin: The 'jobbing prime minister' whose amendment seized control of the Brexit process

The architect of these events is Sir Oliver Letwin, a Tory MP and former minister. His intervention has led some to refer to him as a "jobbing Prime Minister". On Monday night, MPs voted to hold a series of votes to establish the most popular way forward on Brexit. The decision showed MPs were unhappy with Theresa May's negotiations and confirmed they were resoundingly against her Withdrawal Agreement.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/brexit/oliver-letwin-amendment-brexit-mp-west-dorset-prime-minister/>

Additional sources: (MSN.co.uk)

Brexit: Theresa May's withdrawal deal in disarray as DUP vows to vote against it after she offers to resign

Theresa May's plan to secure Tory MPs' backing for her Brexit deal by promising to resign has been blown apart after her DUP partners in government vowed to block it in a new vote. Ms May announced she will resign within weeks if Tory rebels desperate to see the back of her, allow the Brexit deal she struck with Brussels to pass through the House of Commons. The move did see Boris Johnson and other rebels finally fall into line, but within hours the boost was wiped out when DUP leader Arlene Foster branded the prime minister's Brexit plan an "unacceptable threat" to the UK's integrity.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-latest-theresa-may-resign-deal-meaningful-vote-dup-a8843061.html>

People's Vote wins over most number of MPs in House of Commons

A series of indicative votes in the House of Commons has found that no alternative to Theresa May's Brexit plan has been found, but a second vote won over the most MPs. A total of 268 MPs voted for a confirmatory second referendum, with 295 voting against, giving it the most support in the House of Commons out of all of the options. It narrowly beat the option of a Customs Union which received 264 votes with 272 MPs voting against. Both options were more popular than Theresa May's Brexit deal which won over just 242 MPs in the second meaningful vote. Labour's alternative Brexit plan was the third most popular option with 237 votes (with 307 votes against), Common Market 2.0 had 188 votes (with 283 votes against), and revocation of Article 50 had 184 votes (with 293 votes against). A no-deal Brexit had just 160 votes (with 400 votes against) and the Malthouse Plan B gained just 139 votes (with 422 votes against).

<https://www.theneweuropean.co.uk/top-stories/results-of-indicative-votes-on-brexit-alternatives-revealed-1-5963517>

Indicative votes: A People's Vote just became much more likely

The instant reaction, in the Commons Chamber and online, was exasperation. None of the eight ideas about Brexit put to MPs this afternoon commanded a majority. It was easy to paint it as a typically shambolic bit of parliamentary chaos. But the truth was completely different. The fact there was no clear winner was as expected. Once the dust settled and you could take a hard look at the numbers, something was clear: This was a very good night for the People's Vote campaign. We always knew it would go like this. It had been plain for a long time that there was no majority for any one option in the Commons. When Oliver Letwin was arguing for his system on Monday, before MPs voted to support it, he made it clear that it would be a multi-stage process.

<http://www.politics.co.uk/blogs/2019/03/27/indicative-votes-a-people-s-vote-just-became-much-more-likel>

Brexit: Theresa May vows to stand down if deal is passed

Theresa May has promised Tory MPs she will quit if they back her Brexit deal. She told backbench Tories: "I am prepared to leave this job earlier than I intended in order to do what is right for our country and our party." The PM said she knew that Tory MPs did not want her to lead the next phase of Brexit negotiations "and I won't stand in the way of that". But the DUP said it had not changed its position and would still vote against the deal. The BBC's Laura Kuenssberg said the DUP's refusal to back the deal at this stage was a "huge blow" for Number 10.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-47725529>

Brexit: Theresa May plays her final card

If the deal doesn't go through then it's not quite clear that Mrs May's offer to go still applies, although it is almost impossible, whether it stands or falls, that she would be able to stay. The prime minister hopes that by offering to leave Number 10, she'll take the country out of the EU with her, smoothly, without more political turmoil. And that order, of a sort, will be restored and the uncertainty for all of us will end. If that happens, we'll see a new leader in Downing Street by mid-July. But that is still a gamble.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-47727432>

Revoke Article 50 option rejected by MPs in Brexit vote

MPs have this evening voted against revoking Article 50 in a series of votes in the House of Commons. The amendment was voted down with 184 aye votes and 293 no votes. The motion, tabled by the SNP's Joanna Cherry, was signed by 33 MPs including Conservative former attorney general Dominic Grieve, Liberal Democrat leader Sir Vince Cable, Labour's Ben Bradshaw and all 11 members of The Independent Group. The votes MPs took part in were indicative, meaning the Prime Minister is not bound by the result, but will give her guidance over what MPs are thinking.

<https://metro.co.uk/2019/03/27/revoke-article-50-option-rejected-mps-brexit-vote-9036977/>

UK Conservative MP Letwin says will back PM May's deal

British Conservative Party lawmaker Oliver Letwin, the architect of a series of votes on alternatives to Prime Minister Theresa May's Brexit plan, said on Wednesday he would continue to vote for her deal. "I still hope even at this last moment ... that those of my colleagues who have not been backing the prime minister .. may change their minds and the prime minister might get a deal over the line on Thursday or Friday. If she does, no one would be happier than I am," Letwin told BBC radio. Ahead of lawmakers holding so-called indicative votes on a variety of possible Brexit outcomes later on Wednesday, Letwin said he did not expect the process to deliver an immediate majority view on the way forward. "If we do go forward to Monday, and if on Monday one or more propositions get a majority backing in the House of Commons, then we will have to work with the government to get the government to implement them. There is nobody else other than the government to implement them," he said.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-europe-letwin/uk-conservative-mp-letwin-says-will-back-pm-mays-deal-idUKKCN1R80K5>

Scottish independence campaigners face perils of People's Vote hypocrisy

The sight of First Minister Nicola Sturgeon sharing a platform with Alastair Campbell and Michael Heseltine at the People's Vote Rally in London did not upset me as much as it did others but it was symbolic of the times. The Letwin amendment, which has temporarily given Parliament a greater degree of control over Brexit proceedings, was drafted by the chief architect of Thatcher's poll tax, yet in the "national interest" the SNP supported the legislative tweak. That would be fine if not for the fact that the SNP tore into Labour for years for sharing a platform with the Conservatives at the 2014 referendum. But now, apparently, it's OK.

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/scottish-independence-campaigners-face-perils-14195336>

@TNewtondunn Still 36 hours to go to MV3 on Friday - time to screw more billions from HMT, and too early for them to give in politically.

Will the DUP really not vote for the deal? Cabinet ministers still think they will at last minute. Still 36 hours to go to MV3 on Friday - time to screw more billions from HMT, and too early for them to give in politically.

<https://twitter.com/tnewtondunn/status/1111010310553518081>

Brexit: DUP confirms it will not back withdrawal deal

The DUP has confirmed it will not back Theresa May's Brexit deal despite the prime minister's promise to step down if MPs backed it. The party said that if the changes it wants to see to the backstop have not been achieved. Theresa May told Tory MPs that she would stand down if they voted for her withdrawal deal. DUP leader Arlene Foster said that the party "cannot sign up to something that would damage the union".

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-47718367>

Result of UK parliament votes on Brexit options shows PM May's deal is best: minister

The fact that none of the alternative Brexit options voted on by British lawmakers on Wednesday won the support of a majority shows that Prime Minister Theresa May's deal is the best option, Brexit minister Stephen Barclay said. Lawmakers grabbed control of the Brexit process on Wednesday to try to break the impasse over May's Brexit deal, which has been rejected twice by parliament. "The results of the process this House (of Commons) has gone through today strengthens our view that the deal the government has negotiated is the best option," Barclay told parliament.

https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-eu-barclay-idUSKCN1R82M2?utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_content=5c9c203700bd4700014fe5a5&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter

Scottish Parliament votes to revoke Article 50 and cancel Brexit

Holyrood has called for Brexit to be scrapped if another referendum cannot take place. MSPs backed a motion lodged by Scottish Greens co-convener Patrick Harvie, insisting the UK should revoke

Article 50 in the absence of an extension allowing for a People's Vote. In a largely symbolic move, the motion passed by 89 votes to 28, with the Scottish Tories voting against. It came ahead of MPs voting on a series of alternative Brexit options at Westminster.

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/17531340.scottish-parliament-votes-to-revoke-article-50-and-cancel-brexit/>

Bercow issues fresh warning over third vote on May's Brexit deal

Theresa May's hopes of putting her Brexit deal to a third meaningful vote have hit another obstacle after John Bercow said parliamentary procedures could not be used to present it unchanged, even as more senior Eurosceptics seem to be getting behind the agreement. Amid speculation the prime minister is making a private pact to set a date to stand down when the deal goes through, more than 20 Conservative Eurosceptics have publicly suggested they will change their minds because they do not want a softer Brexit.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/27/andrea-leadsom-government-intends-to-revive-theresa-may-brexit-deal-this-week>

Brexit extension could be until 31 March 2020, EU documents reveal

The EU has pencilled in April Fools' Day 2020 as a leading option for Britain's first day outside the bloc, should the UK government ask Brussels for a lengthy extension of article 50 in three weeks' time, it can be revealed. The date was to be offered at the leaders' summit last week if Theresa May had followed through on her promise to request a short extension in the event of passing her Brexit deal, and a longer one should it be rejected again by the House of Commons. Such was the disapproval of her cabinet, the prime minister only sought a short delay until 30 June in her formal letter. She was subsequently given an unconditional extension until 12 April, or a longer one to 22 May in the unlikely event of the withdrawal agreement being ratified this week.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/27/brexit-extension-could-last-until-31-march-2020-eu-documents-reveal>

To defeat an insurgent far-right, Labour must resist Brexit with all its force

The left must fight for the softest possible form of exit and then unleash a counter-attack in the form of a second referendum.

<https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2019/03/defeat-insurgent-far-right-labour-must-resist-brexit-all-its-force>

Tusk urges EU not to ignore Britons who no longer want Brexit

Mr Tusk called April 12th the "new cliff-edge date" and that Britain still had a choice between a deal, no deal, a long extension or the revoking of Article 50, Britain's notification that it plans to leave the European Union. "You cannot betray the six million people who signed the petition to revoke Article 50, the one million people who marched for a People's Vote, or the increasing majority of people who want to remain in the European Union," said Donald Tusk, who chairs summits of EU leaders, told the parliament.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/tusk-urges-eu-not-to-ignore-britons-who-no-longer-want-brexit-1.3840103>

Palace 'bricking it over Brexit as Queen could get dragged into political chaos'

Brexit is apparently getting the Queen as stressed as the rest of us. The Queen's main concern is thought to be the 2011 Fixed Term Parliament Act's no confidence procedure. This would be triggered following a vote of no confidence in the Prime Minister. As a result MPs would be given two weeks to form a new Government dragging her in to controversy potentially

<https://metro.co.uk/2019/03/27/palace-bricking-brexit-queen-get-dragged-political-chaos-9037158/>

Brexit voting: MPs reject Customs Union by just 8 votes - how every MP voted

MPs voted against every single one of the indicative votes intended to find where a majority in Parliament was to be found. The closest a motion came to passing was tabled by Ken Clarke, the veteran Conservative, and Father of the House. However, it was still defeated by 8 votes. 33

Conservatives voted for the motion, as well as a few Independent MPs. Almost all of Labour also voted for it, with just 12 electing to vote against it.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/brexit/brexit-voting-customs-union-reject-by-just-8-votes/>

Tory Eurosceptics signal shift toward Theresa May's Brexit deal

Several Tory arch-Eurosceptic MPs have signaled a shift toward U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May's Withdrawal Agreement ahead of Wednesday's House of Commons votes on a series of alternative Brexit plans. European Research Group leader Jacob Rees-Mogg issued a front-page apology for his U-turn in the Daily Mail, confirming he will vote for May's deal if the Democratic Unionist Party also comes on board.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/tory-euroskeptics-signal-shift-towards-theresa-mays-brexit-deal-european-research-group-leader-jacob-rees-mogg-boris-johnson/>

Additional sources: (The Independent)

MPs fail to reach agreement on a Brexit plan B

MPs voted for a soft Brexit and a second referendum in significant numbers on Wednesday, but no single option for leaving the EU secured majority support in the House of Commons. A cross-party group of backbench MPs succeeded in taking control of the Commons agenda and organising a series of so-called indicative votes on alternative plans to Theresa May's Brexit deal after it was emphatically rejected twice. Most of the plans were put forward by backbenchers, in an effort to forge a consensus on a different option to the prime minister's deal.

<https://www.ft.com/content/c0b90936-50d8-11e9-9c76-bf4a0ce37d49>

Letter from Westminster: What does Oliver Letwin's constitutional revolution mean?

The constitutional revolution devised by Oliver Letwin, Yvette Cooper, Dominic Grieve, Nick Boles and Hilary Benn has finally broken through the last defences and an ingenious group of backbench MPs have devised a way to take over the functions of the government temporarily

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editors-letter/letwin-indicative-votes-commons-control-parliament-timetable-a8840611.html>

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/>

To avert this Brexit disaster, MPs must smash the party system

Brexit has changed the political map and the old structures can no longer contain the crisis, says Guardian columnist Rafael Behr.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/mar/26/brexit-mps-party-system>

Political Setbacks

How Theresa May Finally Set Her Resignation Timetable To Get Brexit 'Over The Line'

Her voice cracking at one point, May was heard in silence as she finally uttered the words her Brexiteer backbenchers had been waiting for. "I know there is a desire for a new approach - and new leadership - in the second phase of the Brexit negotiations - and I won't stand in the way of that." The reaction was one of relief, both for her and her party. The very first response came from veteran backbencher Richard Bacon, a doughty eurosceptic who announced he would now back the PM's deal. James Gray and Robert Courts said they too would now switch and dump their opposition. Backbencher Bob Seely asked May just how close she was to getting the DUP on board. She

sidestepped the question.

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/how-theresa-may-finally-set-her-resignation-timetable-to-get-brex-it-over-the-line_uk_5c9c3408e4b072a7f6049586?j88

Theresa May promises to quit if Brexit deal passes

Theresa May has promised she will quit as prime minister once her Brexit deal is voted through. Mrs May made the promise in an address to Conservative MPs in parliament. Her move is a last-gasp attempt to persuade her own party to back her EU withdrawal agreement, which has already been twice heavily defeated in the House of Commons. Mrs May told a gathering of the Tories' 1922 committee: "I am prepared to leave this job earlier than I intended in order to do what is right for our country and our party." "I ask everyone in this room to back the deal so we can complete our historic duty - to deliver on the decision of the British people and leave the European Union with a smooth and orderly exit."

<https://news.sky.com/story/theresa-may-agrees-to-quit-once-brex-it-deal-is-delivered-sky-sources-11676664>

Additional sources: (The Sun)

The hardliners are fearing defeat — and Remainer MPs can take advantage

Where are the self-styled Brexiteer "grand wizards" who converged on Chequers last Sunday to deliver a scary ultimatum to May? They have been replaced, it seems, by a huddle of meek and supplicant smurfs, worried that Brexit might not happen at all. We know that May is going sooner rather than later, that she has already agreed not to lead her party into the next general election, and that the battery of her political authority is now completely drained. To present her imminent departure as a famous victory for the European Research Group is truly pathetic. No, what has spooked the Brexiteers is the sudden scent in the air of total defeat. On Saturday, hundreds of thousands marched through London demanding a People's Vote .

<https://www.standard.co.uk/comment/comment/the-hardliners-are-fearing-defeat-and-remainer-mps-can-take-advantage-a4102066.html>

May's exit won't halt Britain's slow drift into a kind of Brexit civil war

Most of the votes that are making this happen are from the opposition benches. Tonight's results had a heavy Labour dimension. But the decisive element in the new situation is the mobilisation of the one-nation Tories. Time and again in the past two years, the pro-Europeans, the modernisers and the liberals on the Tory benches have flattered to deceive, preferring to rally around May when she has been subverted and abandoned by the hard Brexiteers. On Monday, these Tory centrists finally stood up in force, mustering 30 votes behind Letwin; they included three very effective middle-ranking ministers who resigned. Today, on the timetable motion, 33 of them voted against May. This change has been pivotal. They will surely rally around Amber Rudd now.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/mar/27/theresa-may-brex-it-civil-war-crisis-parliament>

Dominic Cummings found in contempt of parliament

MPs had examined correspondence between Cummings and the digital, culture, media and sport (DCMS) committee, which was investigating the proliferation of false news stories during the EU referendum campaign. The privileges committee acknowledged its sanctions were limited to recommending the Commons issue a formal admonishment for Cummings' conduct, raising questions about the committee's enforcement powers. The admonishment would require a resolution of the house, which, if passed, "should be communicated to Mr Cummings by the clerk of the house", the committee said in its report. Damian Collins, the chair of the DCMS committee, said it was clear the powers of the house had been "found wanting"

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/27/commons-report-rules-dominic-cummings-in-contempt-of-parliament>

Online petition system needs overhaul because it leaves public opinion open to

'manipulation' says Conservative MP

A conservative MP has called for an overhaul to the online petition system, saying it leaves public opinion on important issues like Brexit open for “manipulation” from “foreign state aggressors.” During Prime Minister’s Questions on Wednesday, MP Maggie Throup said a “fundamental flaw” of the current system is that it “accepts unverified signatures from across the world.”

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/mp-calls-for-epetition-overhaul-to-stop-public-opinion-manipulation-a4102391.html>

Brexit latest: Theresa May tells MPs there is 'still not sufficient support' to bring back deal for third meaningful vote

Theresa May has told MPs that there is still not "sufficient" support to bring back her Brexit deal to the Commons for a third meaningful vote. But the Prime Minister said she would continue her efforts to build support for the deal - defeated by 230 votes in January and 149 votes in March - and stage a vote before the end of the week.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/brexit-latest-theresa-may-tells-mps-there-is-still-not-sufficient-support-to-bring-back-deal-for-a4100366.html>

Theresa May allows a free vote on Brexit alternatives

Theresa May has avoided a rash of resignations by Europhile ministers by allowing Conservative MPs a free vote on alternatives to her Brexit plans, as the House of Commons seeks to take the initiative from the government on Britain’s departure from the EU. In a move indicating her waning authority, the UK prime minister will not instruct, or “whip”, Tory backbenchers or junior ministers on how to vote when the Commons debates rival plans to her Brexit deal on Wednesday evening — although cabinet members will be ordered to abstain.

<https://www.ft.com/content/ee295b36-506b-11e9-9c76-bf4a0ce37d49>

Efta countries wary of UK's interest in 'Norway' option

Iceland says UK would have to accept free movement of labour, while Norway wants to avoid being seen as interfering in Brexit politics

https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/27/efta-countries-wary-of-commons-interest-in-norway-brexit-option?CMP=share_btn_tw

Welsh Tory Brexit rebels say PM's exit vow has not changed minds

The only course of action for MPs after they rejected a range of alternatives to Theresa May's Brexit deal is to pass the agreement, a Welsh Tory MP said. David Davies said the exercise showed there was no support for other options. On Wednesday night MPs rejected eight proposals, including calls for a customs union with the EU and for a further referendum. The votes came on a day when the PM told Tory MPs she would step down if her deal is backed. Two Welsh Conservative MPs, who have voted against it twice, told BBC Wales that Mrs May's move would still not be enough for them to support the agreement if a third vote is held.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-47727737>

MPs want Brexit à la carte. Let's hope they know the unicorn's off

If parliament spends its day voting on impossible options, no progress will be possible - and the kitchen closes on 12 April

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/mar/27/mps-brexit-unicorns-parliament>

No-deal Brexit 'disadvantage' for NI agri-food - Michael Gove

No-deal Brexit plans could place Northern Ireland's agri-food industry at a "significant disadvantage", the UK's environment secretary has said. The UK plan would mean that food exports from the Republic to NI would face zero tariffs, said Michael Gove. However, goods going the other way from NI to the Republic could face high tariffs. Mr Gove said the impact would depend on what

the Irish government and European Commission choose to do.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-47721777>

A Boycott Is the Underpriced Risk of a Second Brexit Vote

Now that parliament has taken control of the timetable in order to hold indicative votes on various Brexit paths, one option MPs will be asked to reconsider is a second referendum. Talk of a new vote, with a Remain option on the ballot, has grown again following Saturday's mass-scale protest march. But lost amid all the chatter about another vote is the tangible danger to British democracy lurking in such a plan. The risk is that any attempt at what proponents call a people's vote would likely be met with a people's boycott. Regardless of the referendum's final tally, an organized boycott would mean all of Britain loses.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2019-03-27/a-boycott-is-the-underpriced-risk-of-a-second-brexit-vote>

@RobDotHutton Jeremy Corbyn's spokesman explains that the party only supports a referendum on a "damaging Tory Brexit". If Labour takes power, he says, it will negotiate a better Brexit, which won't need a referendum.

LABOUR BREXIT LATEST: Jeremy Corbyn's spokesman explains that the party only supports a referendum on a "damaging Tory Brexit". If Labour takes power, he says, it will negotiate a better Brexit, which won't need a referendum.

<https://twitter.com/RobDotHutton/status/1110895020209516544>

Brexit latest shock: Did SNP just give Norway+ a massive boost in vote tonight?

Mr Blackford, who is also SNP Westminster, said today: "It is becoming increasingly clear that the cost the Prime Minister will pay to force her disastrous deal through is the price of her departure. "Yet again another Tory Prime Minister is willing to ride off into the sunset and saddle us with a crisis in the UK and an extreme right-wing Brexiteer coming into Downing Street. Does the Prime Minister feel no sense of responsibility for what she is about to do?"

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1106188/brexit-news-latest-snp-norway-option-theresa-may-deal-latest-commons-vote>

Sturgeon: PM's plan to quit could make Brexit worse

Theresa May's pledge to stand down if her Brexit deal is approved risks making "an already bad project even worse", Nicola Sturgeon has claimed. Ms Sturgeon said it could see Scotland "shackled to a disastrous Brexit driven by a Tory party lurching even further to the right". She predicted that this would "further reinforce" the case for independence. Ms Sturgeon was speaking after Holyrood voted for Brexit to be cancelled if the UK faces leaving the EU without a deal.

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

Brexit: Second referendum blocked by just a handful of Labour MPs

People's Vote campaigners were left furious tonight after it emerged a second referendum would have got a majority if Labour MPs hadn't voted against it. The Indicative Vote motion on a second referendum was just 27 votes short of a majority - exactly the same number as Labour MPs who voted against it.

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/brexit-second-referendum-blocked-just-14196259>

Five anti-Brexit MPs sent threats and pictures of a crossbow

A man and a woman have been arrested for sending malicious messages to Remain MPs on Twitter. A man and a woman have been arrested for sending malicious messages to Remain MPs on Twitter.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8732353/five-anti-brexit-mps-sent-threats-and-pictures-of-a-crossbow/>

The UK government bought a £12m New York penthouse for a British civil servant to use for post-Brexit trade deals

The Foreign Office has paid \$15.9m for a seven-bedroom luxury penthouse in New York for a senior British civil servant, charged with securing trade post-Brexit, to use at will. According to The Guardian, foreign secretary Jeremy Hunt personally oversaw the purchase of a 5,893 sq ft (574 sq metre) property as the official residence for Antony Phillipson, the UK trade commissioner for North America and consul general in New York.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/world/new-york-penthouse-government-bought-british-civil-servant-antony-phillipson/>

Brexit: UK Government sends official response to Revoke Article 50 petition - here it is in full

The Government emailed people who signed the Revoke Article 50 petition last night with a response. The petition currently stands at 5,819,436 signatures and is scheduled for debate in parliament on 1 April.

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/general-election/brexit-uk-government-sends-official-response-to-revoke-article-50-petition-here-it-is-in-full-1-4896357>

Hardline Brexiteers should think about quitting Tories, says rebel former minister Richard Harrington

Hardline Brexit “irreconcilables” should consider quitting the Conservative party, former business minister Richard Harrington suggested today. He believes that Tories unwilling to accept any type of compromise on Europe would be better off seeking a party more in tune with their views.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/hardline-brexiteers-should-think-about-quitting-tories-says-rebel-former-minister-richard-harrington-a4102131.html>