

## News from the Brexit Cliff Edge

### 18th Apr 2019

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**The Brexit Cliff Edge is taking a short break for the holidays. There will be no newsletter (Friday 19th April or Monday 22nd April). The next newsletter will be Tuesday 23rd April and it will round-up all news from the holiday weekend**

### News Highlights

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## Welcome to the Brexit Cliff Edge

- [Scottish First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon](#), has written a personal letter to more than 200,000 EU citizens living in Scotland telling them not to abandon their lives in the country because of Brexit. In the letter she makes an emotional plea and assures them Scotland is their home
- [The Financial Times points out that the UK government's plans to register every single EU citizen](#) after Brexit and award them settled status, or not, will create a new underclass. It says there are legitimate moral questions around the process of registering people who have lived and worked in Britain for decades, paid taxes and contributed to the economy, the NHS and the education system.
- [Property Reporter touches on one of the complications that EU citizens look set to face](#). Landlords owning property are duty bound to check the immigration status of their prospective tenants under existing legislation. The publication speculates that now EU citizens will also fall into this category, making renting homes for EU citizens much harder
- [The Independent focuses on the rise in sharp rise in hate crimes](#) that followed on from the 2016, with immigrants, EU citizens and LGBTQ people all reporting an increase as more extreme elements of society capitalised on their newly won empowerment
- [A new study from the Fraser Allander Institute](#), part of the University of Strathclyde, predicts a loss of more than £1 in every £20 of output for the Scottish economy if the UK crashes out of the EU with No Deal. This is in line with Bank of England forecasts
- [House prices across Britain increased at their slowest rate for more than six years](#), with London experiencing its biggest slump in a decade as Brexit concerns drag on growth. [Elsewhere, north west UK for instance, house prices appear to be more robust](#), for the moment

## High-tech solution for Northern Ireland border a decade away, Home Office document

- [The memo said 'the cost and complexity of using new technology to remove the need for border checks](#) meant the challenges of this work cannot be underestimated.' There is a plethora of usable technology on offer but it comes with an array of difficulties. The technology would need to accommodate companies uploading data on goods and using blockchain technology, sensors and automated collection to pay tariffs. As yet there is not an integrated, tested, reliable working solution on which to model it
- [The U.S. House of Representatives speaker](#), Nancy Pelosi, and a U.S. delegation, were visiting the UK and the Republic of Ireland on an official visit. Pelosi repeatedly made it clear that there would be no chance whatsoever of a post-Brexit trade deal between the U.S. and the UK if there were any weakening of the Good Friday Peace Agreement

## **Leave.eu covered up its targeting of right-wing extremists**

- [Channel 4 News reported on Leave.eu's efforts to attract a number of far right extremist groups to Arron Banks'](#) campaign to leave the EU in 2016. Leaked emails show that the BBC got a tip off about the story, but Arron Banks stood his ground and lied that the story was nonsense and he threatened to sue them. Channel 4 News goes on to discuss a number of exchanges between Arron Banks and Robbie Gibb, who was then head of BBC Westminster. Channel 4 News reports there was anxiety that the BBC would run the story but then Banks persuaded Gibb to step in and hose down the controversy. The story never ran on the BBC. Gibb has moved on to become Theresa May's head of communications
- [Labour Party deputy leader Tom Watson](#) called for a judicial inquiry into the activities of the Leave.eu campaign and its main backer, Arron Banks, during the 2016 referendum. 'We cannot allow those who cheat and lie to mock and subvert our democracy using millions from who knows where to prevail'
- [Byline Times also reports that Leave.eu](#) ran a number of Facebook adverts directly sourced from Russia Today and Sputnik which made up stories about migrants as sexual predators. One fake video called 'Worrying scenes in Europe' is totally false. It is a video of an assault that took place near Tahir square in Egypt in 2013, but portrayed as happening in Europe that summer

## **Theresa May's job is in the sites of hardline Tory constituency associations**

- [There are more reports that many Conservative Party associations](#) are openly collecting chairmen's signatures calling for a national Conservative Party convention. The goal of this convention is to pass a vote of No Confidence in Theresa May and provoke a leadership election

## **DUP using Facebook to target the Brexit voting elderly in England only**

- [Northern Ireland's DUP is running ads on Facebook](#) to raise money in England, where it fields no candidates, as part of a new fundraising drive on social media. These adverts are targeting people over the age of 55 - an age group strongly pro-Brexit - and only in the UK. The ads started running last Tuesday and had been viewed between 5,000 and 10,000 times in the last couple of days

## **Back a public vote on Brexit or hand European election victory to Nigel Farage**

- [A YouGov survey shows Labour risks losing hundreds](#) of thousands of voters if it campaigns for a customs union Brexit, as is its current policy, before European Elections next month. The survey estimates such a policy would hand Nigel Farage a 10 points margin over Labour
- [A wider pan-European assessment by the European Council on Foreign Relations](#) says the European Election is very much up for grabs, with almost 100 million swing voters across the continent. It also states that the electorate is in a volatile, rather than a polarised state, with swathes of voters moving fluidly between parties of the right and left

## **Economic Impact**

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### **Disorderly Brexit 'risks Scottish recession'**

A disorderly Brexit risks a deep recession in Scotland, according to researchers. The Fraser of Allander Institute (FAI), part of the University of Strathclyde, predicts a loss of more than one £1 in every £20 of output from the economy. It suggests the fall from peak to trough in the economy could be around 5.5% of total output, contracting for two whole years. This is in line with forecasts

made by the Bank of England for the UK economy. The FAI modelled several possible Brexit outcomes and the impact in its latest economic commentary. This included scenarios of a no-deal Brexit with and without policy response.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-business-47954912>

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

### **Brexit panic: Germany urged to take urgent action as economy slows due to UK's EU exit**

The German government has been urged to offer companies incentives in a bid to boost corporate research and development after cutting its forecast for 2019 economic growth for the second time in three months, with Economy Minister Peter Altmaier blaming concerns over Brexit for a slowdown driven by a recession in manufacturing. To counter the slowdown, Finance Minister Olaf Scholz plans to support corporate research and development with incentives worth 1.27 billion euros (\$1.43 billion) annually from 2020, a draft law seen by Reuters showed on Wednesday.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1115565/brexit-news-germany-economy-slowdown-angela-merkel-recession>

### **Britain is more optimistic about Brexit than gloomy forecasts suggest**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is up to its usual tricks. Last week, it predicted a two-year recession in the UK in the event of a no-deal Brexit. In line with the thinking of Project Fear, in the middle of June 2016 the IMF predicted an immediate recession if the UK voted to leave. Exactly the opposite happened. The economy continued to grow, and unemployment to decline. To be fair, this time around there does seem to be evidence of a slow-down. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) suggests only modest growth at an annual rate of around one per cent in the last three months of last year. A recent Deloitte's survey of chief financial officers found only 13 per cent of them more optimistic about prospects than they were three months ago.

<http://www.cityam.com/276387/britain-more-optimistic-brexit-than-gloomy-economic>

### **Survey measures concern about Brexit impact on finances**

A new survey has laid bare the extent to which people here think their financial situation will be impacted by Brexit. It found a quarter think that their personal finances will be majorly influenced by the departure of the UK from the EU. While two out of every five respondents said it would have a moderate effect. The poll was carried out by RED C on behalf of utility switching website bonkers.ie and questioned a representative sample of over 1,000 adults here in the middle of March. The results show that people living in rural areas are more concerned about the impact of Brexit on their pocket, with 32% of rural dwellers saying they are worried. A further 16% said they don't know what Brexit will mean for them, reflecting the uncertainty being felt across the wider economy. A fifth of those questioned, however, were confident that Brexit will only have a minimal impact on their spending choices.

<https://www.rte.ie/news/business/2019/0417/1043175-survey-measures-concern-about-brexit-impact-on-finances/>

## **Administrative Fall Out**

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### **Brexit: Irish government will pay for European health card for citizens in Northern Ireland after EU exit**

Ireland will pay for the European Health Insurance Card for citizens in Northern Ireland after Brexit if necessary, the foreign minister has said. Simon Coveney, who also serves as the country's Tanaiste (deputy to the Taoiseach) said his government will work to ensure that "Irish citizens in Northern Ireland continue to be EU citizens in all circumstances." Speaking in parliament on Tuesday, Mr Coveney said that while Irish citizens in Northern Ireland are EU citizens, they will not be resident in the EU after Brexit, "which obviously poses challenges." He explained: "In terms of the rights of EU citizenship, we are working, and have been working to ensure certain EU programmes and benefits - notably, the EU Health Insurance Card." The free European Health Insurance Card ensures that EU citizens have access to state-provided healthcare during a temporary stay in any EU countries.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/brexit-ireland-ehic-card-pay-insurance-northern-irish-coveney-europe-health-coverage-a8874861.html>

Additional sources: ([Belfast Telegraph](#))

### **Registering EU citizens in the UK will create an underclass**

Under the scheme, Europeans from 26 member states (the Irish have guaranteed rights) must complete an application and provide evidence of residency in the UK for the past five years. There are legitimate moral questions around registration of those who have lived and worked in Britain for decades, contributed to the economy, the National Health Service and the education system. They are part of the rich social and cultural legacy of European migration to Britain. Leaving these considerations aside, the government faces unavoidable questions about what happens to those who fail to register, or are unable to provide evidence of residency.

<https://www.ft.com/content/bc0e26a8-5d46-11e9-840c-530737425559>

### **Nicola Sturgeon pleas for EU citizens not to abandon Scotland**

Nicola Sturgeon has written to more than 200,000 Europeans living in Scotland telling them not to abandon their lives here because of Brexit. The First Minister has made the emotional plea in an open letter in which she assures EU citizens that Scotland “is your home”.

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/nicola-sturgeon-pleas-for-eu-citizens-not-to-abandon-scotland-1-4902315>

### **Brexit - The effects on Landlords**

One of the most controversial aspects of the government’s hostile policy is the right to rent policy that requires landlords to check the immigration status of their prospective tenants. If it doesn’t get struck down or repealed after the recent high court ruling, it could be significantly expanded to include European citizens. Due to the burdens from the government, some landlords were already reluctant to rent to non-EU citizens, and in the post-Brexit world, they may only want to rent to exclusively British tenants because of concerns of falling foul of the government’s rules. The Association of Residential Letting Agents (ARLA) is seeking clarification from the government, and a meeting has been set for the end of April

<https://www.propertyreporter.co.uk/landlords/brexit-the-effects-on-landlords.html>

### **Mirror and Express team up for campaign to bring people together amid Brexit divisions**

The Mirror and Express newspapers have teamed up, despite their “polarised” political views, for a campaign to bring “the nation back together” amid the divisions brought about by the Brexit vote.

<https://www.pressgazette.co.uk/mirror-express-reach-brexit-britain-talks-campaign-regional-newspapers-politics/>

### **No-deal Brexit could harm Aurivo co-op’s milk processing activities**

A no-deal Brexit could hit a significant part of co-op Aurivo’s milk processing business, its chief executive Aaron Forde has warned. Operating profits at Aurivo fell 23 per cent to €3 million last year. Figures released by the north western-based business show sales rose 4 per cent in 2018 to €443.8 million from €426.4 million in 2017. Speaking after the co-op published its results, Mr Forde noted that Brexit posed “considerable challenges” to the co-op, as 16 per cent of the more than 400 million litres of milk it processes a year comes from Northern Ireland. Mr Forde explained that milk from the north would have to be exported again to a non-EU country to avoid tariffs should the UK crash out of the bloc without a deal.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/business/agribusiness-and-food/no-deal-brexit-could-harm-aurivo-co-op-s-milk-processing-activities-1.3863343>

### **Greta Thunberg tells EU to forget Brexit and focus on climate change**

Greta Thunberg, the 16-year-old who inspired thousands of school children to take action on climate change, has told Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to forget Brexit and focus on climate change. The teenage climate activist told off EU leaders for holding three emergency summits on

Brexit and none on the threat posed by climate change.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/47959064>

### **Martin Lewis reveals SIX worrying ways Halloween Brexit will affect every Brit**

Martin Lewis has identified six key ways Brits will be impacted. "If we leave without a negotiated deal, commonly known as a 'no-deal' Brexit – then the landscape will change, and will change rapidly, and you will need to take action." Mr Lewis then identified six things which will happen if the UK left without a negotiated deal. Worryingly, Martin says: House prices could plummet, The European Health Insurance Card may no longer be valid, Travel insurance may not cover you for Brexit disruption, You would need to renew your passport early, EU citizens living in the UK would have to apply to stay here after 2020, Taking pets to Europe could become harder.

<https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/martin-lewis-reveals-six-worrying-16142681>

### **House prices rise at slowest rate in six years as Brexit hits growth**

House prices across Britain have increased at their slowest rate for more than six years, with London experiencing its biggest slump in a decade as Brexit concerns drag on growth. The Office for National Statistics said average house prices in the UK rose by 0.6% in the year to February, the lowest rate of growth since September 2012, and down from 1.7% in January. The price of an average London home fell by 3.8% over the year, the steepest drop since the depths of the last recession in mid-2009, and faster than the 2.2% decline recorded in the year to January. The consumer price index (CPI) measure of inflation unexpectedly remained at 1.9% in March, unchanged from a month earlier, offering some respite for UK households.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/apr/17/house-prices-rise-at-slowest-for-six-years-as-brexit-drag-on-growth>

### **Brexit delay welcomed by leading UK chemists**

Researchers across the UK have breathed a collective sigh of relief following the government's decision to avoid crashing out of the EU on April 12. The EU agreed a Brexit delay of six months, with a date now set for October 31. The UK can exit earlier if Parliament ratifies the withdrawal agreement, but for many in the scientific community the delay rekindles hopes for Brexit to be doused. 'Any form of Brexit would be catastrophic for UK science,' says Fraser Stoddart, 2016 chemistry Nobel prize winner who is now based at Northwestern University in the US. 'Most of the research community in the UK want to see the back of Brexit.' Stoddart is more optimistic about the situation given the extension.

<https://www.chemistryworld.com/news/brexit-delay-welcomed-by-leading-uk-chemists/3010399.article>

### **Brexit panic: Germany urged to take urgent action as economy slows due to UK's EU exit**

The German government has been urged to offer companies incentives in a bid to boost corporate research and development after cutting its forecast for 2019 economic growth for the second time in three months, with Economy Minister Peter Altmaier blaming concerns over Brexit for a slowdown driven by a recession in manufacturing. To counter the slowdown, Finance Minister Olaf Scholz plans to support corporate research and development with incentives worth 1.27 billion euros (\$1.43 billion) annually from 2020, a draft law seen by Reuters showed on Wednesday.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1115565/brexit-news-germany-economy-slowdown-angela-merkel-recession>

### **Brexit was supposed to return control - but for LGBT+ people all it's done is taken it away**

What I want to know, is that if Brexit is meant to "give us back control", then why are LGBTQ+ people, and other marginalised groups feeling like we are losing control when it comes to our safety as a result of the Brexit process? Looking back to 2017, the Home Office released official statistics looking at the increase in hate crimes here within the UK. Looking at the figures from 2012-2013, there had been a recorded rise of reported hate crimes of 123 per cent, and more specifically

looking at 2017, the year after the referendum campaign, a rise of 17 per cent on the year previous.  
<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/brexit-leave-referendum-hate-crime-lgbt-a8874721.html>

### **T-Systems opens new London HQ in post-Brexit support for UK**

German giant T-Systems has opened a new London headquarters in a move which it says demonstrates its post-Brexit support for the UK. The new office - in Rathbone place, Fitzrovia - was opened by T-Systems global CEO Adel A-Saleh.

<https://www.channelweb.co.uk/crn-uk/news/3074258/t-systems-opens-new-london-hq-in-post-brexit-support-for-uk>

## **Political Shenanigans**

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### **Back public vote on Brexit or hand Europe victory to Nigel Farage, voters tell Jeremy Corbyn**

Jeremy Corbyn will haemorrhage support and hand Nigel Farage a huge victory in the European Parliament elections if he refuses to back another public vote on Brexit, a poll suggests today. The YouGov survey shows Labour risks losing hundreds of thousands of voters if it campaigns for a customs union Brexit, similar to its current policy, before elections next month. Mr Farage's Brexit Party would storm to victory by 10 points over Labour, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats, according to the poll findings.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/back-public-vote-on-brexit-or-hand-europe-victory-to-nigel-farage-voters-tell-jeremy-corbyn-a4120156.html>

### **Scotland rejects hostile environment created by Theresa May: Sturgeon**

Scotland's First Minister said one of the most shameful aspects of Brexit has been the treatment of EU citizens. Scotland wants no part of Theresa May's "despicable" hostile environment, Nicola Sturgeon has said, as she urged action against "xenophobia" in politics. Addressing the STUC conference in Dundee, the Scottish First Minister said the treatment of EU citizens in the UK is one of the most "shameful" aspects of Brexit. She warned the damage of any form of Brexit could not be fully mitigated, and said there would be "nothing disorderly" about Scotland leaving the UK following a vote for independence.

<https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/uk-news/2019/04/17/scotland-rejects-hostile-environment-created-by-theresa-may-sturgeon/>

### **EU election still up for grabs, says report**

The European Parliament election is very much up for grabs according to a new report, which claims there are almost 100 million swing voters across the Continent. The report by the European Council on Foreign Relations, a think tank, features data from 14 countries that will take part in May's election and shows, according to the organization's Mark Leonard, that the European electorate is in a "volatile rather than polarised state" with "swathes of voters" moving "fluidly between parties of the right and left."

<https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-election-still-up-for-grabs-says-report/>

### **Let EU citizens vote in UK elections**

Today, 50 years on from the UK extending the vote to 18 year olds, British politics is still blighted by democratic inequality. This is particularly stark in the case of the 3.6 million EU citizens living in the UK. In just under three weeks these nationals will have a vote in local elections, but will continue to be denied doing so in general elections and referendums. Fifty years on from giving more people the vote we still have a long way to go. Liberal Democrats have campaigned for a People's Vote for almost three years. I have been proud to lead a party that has unequivocally stated that Britain is better off in the EU

<https://metro.co.uk/2019/04/17/let-eu-citizens-vote-in-uk-elections-9222519/>

### **Revealed: Brexit group covered up its targeting of right-wing extremists**

Arron Banks repeatedly lied to cover-up his Brexit campaign's effort to attract far-right extremists. Leave.EU paid for Facebook adverts targeted at supporters of the National Front, the BNP, Britain First and the EDL. But when the BBC asked for a response to a story they planned to run, Mr Banks sent a barrage of emails in an attempt to get the story dropped. Leaked emails, seen by Channel 4 News, show Mr Banks insisted the BBC's accusation were "wholly wrong" - despite his own staff telling him the story was true. One Leave.EU employee told him: "Those are our ads, we have targeted those groups since the beginning of the campaign as they gain most traction."

<https://www.channel4.com/news/revealed-brexiteer-group-covered-up-its-targeting-of-right-wing-extremists>

### **SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon says Scottish independence won't be as chaotic as Brexit**

Nicola Sturgeon has insisted there will be "nothing disorderly" about Scottish independence despite the chaos caused by Brexit. The First Minister was branded "deluded" by opponents after pledging a smooth transition to a separate Scottish state just days before she is due to update MSPs about her plans for IndyRef2. Sturgeon was responding to a Fraser of Allander report which warned a "disorderly" Brexit risks a deep recession in Scotland. But asked if this meant the same was true of independence, Sturgeon said: "There will be nothing disorderly about Scottish independence when it happens." The First Minister is expected to push for a second independence referendum when the Scottish Parliament returns from the Easter recess on Tuesday.

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/snp-leader-nicola-sturgeon-says-14388120>

### **Naomi Long: Hold another referendum on Brexit**

A party leader in Northern Ireland has called for another Brexit referendum ahead of an expected run for the European Parliament. Naomi Long said she will confirm her decision within the next two days. She leads the centralist Alliance Party, which garners votes from both communities in Northern Ireland and has been strongly pro-Remain.

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/naomi-long-hold-another-referendum-110817186.html>

### **Anti-Brexit adverts are appearing at bus stops and Tube stations in London**

Adverts calling for an end to Brexit are popping up in parts of London. The ads have appeared in bus stops and on trains in the London underground, but people aren't sure who, or what group is putting them up. On one of the adverts that appeared on a circle line train, read: "Stop Brexit: Defend Free Movement." It had a mock underground map drawn next to it, and labelled: "Possible closure expected". Another advert at a bus stop has the words "Don't throw migrants under the bus" written on it, below which is a photo of a double decker bus.

<https://www.indy100.com/article/brexit-ads-tube-bus-stop-train-remain-free-movement-eu-8874086>

### **Theresa May could put off Queen's speech amid Brexit turmoil**

Some within the government believe May is prepared to ignore demands for a programme of new laws, even though parliament has run out of business to discuss apart from Brexit legislation, which is currently stalled and not bring forward a Queen's Speech, for fear of a vote of confidence on it. A Downing Street source said it would not be fair to say the Queen's Speech was being delayed, because no official date had been set for one. "There's no obligation to have one at a fixed point and there's no immediate plans to bring forward a Queen's speech," the source said.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/apr/17/theresa-may-could-put-off-queens-speech-amid-brexit-turmoil>

### **Brexit LIVE: End of Theresa May - 40-50 Tory chairmen in plot to OUST PM in shock new coup**

Theresa May could be ousted within weeks thanks to a little-known process never before used by the Conservative Party which would allow "angry and frustrated" grassroots Tories to call for a no-confidence vote. Mrs May's days as Prime Minister may abruptly end thanks to a no-confidence vote which could be unexpectedly triggered by the National Conservative Convention, which represents the grassroots movements. Party chairmen are circulating a petition calling for an "extraordinary

general meeting” which will have to be held if signed by more than 65 association chairmen. Between 40 and 50 party chairmen have already signed it. Dinah Glover, the East of London area chairman, has organised the petition addressing Mrs May as no longer the “right person” to lead the country out of the European Union.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1115300/brexit-news-latest-EU-UK-theresa-may-quit>

### **The Leave.EU scandal proves the Brexit vote was rotten - only a second referendum can give us a fair result**

The more we know about the Brexit referendum of 2016 the more it feels like a campaign that crossed a few lines. Legal ones in fact, with successful prosecutions against both Remain and Leave groups. The latest accusations levelled at the Leave.EU campaign are disturbing. Then again you only have to read Arron Banks’s candid memoir *Bad Boys of Brexit* to understand some of the excesses they went in for. We are ready now as we were not in 2016 to make the judgement. We are still divided. We may still vote Leave. But none on either side could say they didn’t know what was at stake. If we do quit, under WTO terms or the May deal then we will do so with our eyes open and our consciences clear. It is the right thing to give people the final say. It is inevitable.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/brexit-leave-eu-video-fake-migrants-arron-banks-second-referendum-a8874051.html>

### **Tom Watson calls for inquiry into Arron Banks and Leave.EU**

Tom Watson has called for a judicial inquiry into the activities ahead of the Brexit referendum of the Leave.EU campaign and its main backer, Arron Banks, after claims the group faked a video and photos connected to migrants. Watson, the deputy Labour leader and shadow culture secretary, said the inquiry should have criminal powers. “We cannot allow those who cheat and lie to mock and subvert our democracy (using millions from who knows where) to prevail,” he said in a tweet. In a joint statement, Banks and his close aide Andy Wigmore, who was head of communications for Leave.EU, said they would welcome such an inquiry.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/apr/17/tom-watson-calls-for-inquiry-into-arron-banks-and-leaveeu>

### **EU elections: Farage will win unless Labour backs remain, says Beckett**

Nigel Farage’s Brexit party, which is currently leading in the polls for the EU elections, will win the contest unless Labour can portray itself as the natural home for remain voters, Margaret Beckett has claimed. Polling commissioned by the People’s Vote campaign suggested the former Ukip leader’s new party was on course for a five-point lead, with remain voters split between Labour, the Liberal Democrats, the Scottish National party, the Green party and Change UK. “These elections have proven to be rich hunting grounds for Nigel Farage’s brand of extreme rightwing politics before and may be again,” Beckett said. “But the message of this poll is loud and clear: it suggests that if anyone can stop Farage winning, it is Labour – and only if we back [a] people’s vote.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/apr/17/labour-giving-farage-eu-election-victory-margaret-beckett-brexit>

### **Key Jeremy Corbyn Ally Katy Clark 'Imposed' As Labour MEP Candidate**

A key ally to Jeremy Corbyn has been “imposed” as a top MEP candidate as a bitter battle between Labour party factions came to a head. Katy Clark, who is ... Panel overruled and leader's ex-political secretary handed coveted place in the European Elections candidate list after battle with Momentum pick

[https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/labour-hands-sitting-meps-first-place-slots-in-euro-elections\\_uk\\_5cb73e35e4b0ec270a4632ba](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/labour-hands-sitting-meps-first-place-slots-in-euro-elections_uk_5cb73e35e4b0ec270a4632ba)

### **Moderate Conservatives eye challenge for party leadership**

Moderate Conservative MPs are planning to endorse a candidate for prime minister in an effort to prevent the party being dominated by Eurosceptic Tories after Theresa May steps down. The One Nation group of Conservatives relaunched last month to provide a counterweight to the pro-Brexit

European Research Group of Tory MPs. Senior Conservatives in the One Nation group include work and pensions secretary Amber Rudd, who said on Tuesday it was “entirely possible” she could run for the party leadership.

<https://www.ft.com/content/e87943d2-6023-11e9-b285-3acd5d43599e>

### **Cameron And Osborne Were 'Geniuses' For Getting Public To Accept Austerity, Says Jeremy Hunt**

Potential Tory leadership candidate Jeremy Hunt has hailed David Cameron and George Osborne’s “genius” for persuading the public to accept austerity without triggering violent protests. The foreign secretary said the former prime minister and ex-chancellor “put the economy back on its feet” despite “the most challenging cuts to public spending in peacetime history”. In an interview with the New Statesman, Hunt also praised his former cabinet colleagues for doing it without provoking the kind of mass riots seen when Margaret Thatcher tried to introduce the poll tax in 1990. Hunt, who is widely expected to launch a bid to succeed May, suggested austerity was necessary but bemoaned the fact that the Tories were not able to persuade the public that they were moderate centrists during a time of such widespread cuts.

[https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/cameron-and-osborne-were-geniuses-for-getting-public-to-accept-austerity-jeremy-hunt-says\\_uk\\_5cb72dd6e4b0ffefe3ba4941](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/cameron-and-osborne-were-geniuses-for-getting-public-to-accept-austerity-jeremy-hunt-says_uk_5cb72dd6e4b0ffefe3ba4941)

### **Political Setbacks**

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#### **DUP targets English voters for funds with pro-Brexit adverts**

Northern Ireland’s pro-Brexit Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) is running ads on Facebook to raise money in England only as part of a new fundraising drive on social media. The party’s “Support Brexit - Support the DUP” ads are being shown mostly to people over the age of 55 - an age group that voted in the majority for Brexit - and only in England where the party has no candidates. Facebook data on the ad, which features photographs of DUP leader Arlene Foster and deputy leader Nigel Dodds, says it was being shown only to people living in England. Some 37 per cent of the people being shown the ad were aged 65 years or older and a further 25 per cent are aged between 55 and 64, according to the data on the ad. The ad had been viewed between 5,000 and 10,000 times since it began running on Tuesday, just weeks ahead of European and local elections.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/dup-targets-english-voters-for-funds-with-pro-brexit-adverts-1.3863858>

#### **Britain cannot be treated as a second class citizen while it lingers in EU before Brexit says Tusk**

The European Council president attacked 'fear and scaremongering' over UK exit. He dismissed the idea that UK might 'disrupt' activities while still a member. The German foreign minister Heiko Maas said UK had to decide future by October. He attacked idea that the UK could spend years working out how to leave. Jean-Claude Juncker said that the EU was now on a break from Brexit. EC chief said EU was 'ready' for a no-deal Brexit but had 'nothing to gain'

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6927051/Britain-treated-second-class-citizen-lingers-EU-Brexit-says-Tusk.html>

#### **How Brexit may harm the new EU parliament**

Should the UK not succeed to do so by 22 May, it will have to hold EU elections to elect its own representatives in the new European Parliament. Far from being a punishment, this is a necessity to preserve EU citizens living in the UK, as well as the integrity of the European Parliament as a whole (what if the UK should eventually stay in the EU?). Yet this could irremediably do exactly the opposite. Holding EU elections in the UK is set to fatally affect the good functioning of the next European Parliament - as well as the entire Union - for the five years to come. The British participation in the elections is set to distort the new political balance emerging within the next

parliament (the 73 UK MEPs are set to leave the assembly upon Brexit), but also to irremediably tarnish the validity of the parliament's future decisions.

<https://euobserver.com/opinion/144683>

### **End of EU: Shock study says 54% of voters have no faith in Brussels - 'Systems failure'**

A think tank has collected data, alongside pollsters YouGov, from 46,000 participants across 14 member states, between January and February 2019 which make up 80 percent of the European Parliament's seats, finding that 57 percent of participants are unlikely to cast their vote. The study's authors have created four potential groups of voters that MEPs will have to target if they are to be successful in the ballot – the pro-EU “system believers”, the sceptical “Gilet Jaunes”, the “pro-European left behinds” and the anti-Brussels “nationalist eurosceptics”. Both the “Gilet Jaunes” and “Nationalist eurosceptics” equate to 54 percent of voters, according to the think tank's publication.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1115494/EU-Parliament-election-news-latest-study-eurosceptic-France-Spain-poll-vote>

### **Concern over councils' ability to cope with polls**

Council chiefs have raised concerns with Government about the sector's capacity to run EU elections so close on the heels of local polls. Local authorities have said there remain 'immediate concerns' around complex cost and capacity issues related to the elections next month, with 'urgent responses needed' from Whitehall. On top of this, senior Local Government Association (LGA) officials have warned that councils could be open to legal challenge from EU citizens who decide to vote in the UK but are then disenfranchised if the elections are cancelled. The Cabinet Office has suggested that EU citizens in the UK should register in their member state of citizenship as the 'most certain option to ensure they can cast their vote' but the LGA wants the Government to issue national legal advice on the subject.

<https://www.localgov.co.uk/Concern-over-councils-ability-to-cope-with-polls/47268>

### **Scotland rejects hostile environment created by Theresa May: Sturgeon**

Scotland's First Minister said one of the most shameful aspects of Brexit has been the treatment of EU citizens. Scotland wants no part of Theresa May's “despicable” hostile environment, Nicola Sturgeon has said, as she urged action against “xenophobia” in politics. Addressing the STUC conference in Dundee, the Scottish First Minister said the treatment of EU citizens in the UK is one of the most “shameful” aspects of Brexit. She warned the damage of any form of Brexit could not be fully mitigated, and said there would be “nothing disorderly” about Scotland leaving the UK following a vote for independence.

<https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/uk-news/2019/04/17/scotland-rejects-hostile-environment-created-by-theresa-may-sturgeon/>

### **The Ukip-shaped challenge facing Nigel Farage and his new Brexit Party**

Stephen Bush discusses the threat to Nigel Farage's nascent Brexit Party posed by his old one, UKIP now run by Gerard Batten

<https://www.newstatesman.com/brexit-party-nigel-farage-ukip-problem-european-election-gerard-batten>

### **Brexit news: Theresa May facing grassroots no-confidence vote as Farage's new Brexit Party takes commanding poll lead**

Theresa May could face an unprecedented no-confidence vote among grassroots Tories, as the prospect of a crushing defeat in European elections looms. Local party chairs have been circulating a petition that is on course to force the National Conservative Convention to hold an extraordinary general meeting where members could pressure the prime minister to resign. The plot emerged as a poll showed Nigel Farage's new Brexit Party had stormed into the lead ahead of EU parliament elections next month. A YouGov poll, commissioned by the People's Vote campaign, puts the Brexit Party on 27 per cent, ahead of Labour on 22 per cent with the Conservatives trailing on 15 per cent.

It follows the burst of publicity the Brexit Party received with the launch last week of its election campaign, when it was announced that Annunziata Rees-Mogg – the sister of the leading Tory Brexiteer Jacob Rees-Mogg – would be among its candidates. It will reinforce fears among ministers the Conservatives are heading for a crushing defeat if the poll on 23 May goes ahead as planned – a result which would almost certainly see fresh calls for Ms May to quit.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-news-live-theresa-may-vote-no-confidence-deal-eu-latest-a8873591.html>

*Additional sources: (The Sun) (Daily Mirror) (The Scotsman) (Reuters)*

### **Brexit news latest: Guy Verhofstadt blasts MPs for dithering over EU withdrawal**

Speaking at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, Guy Verhofstadt said he fears that the delay to Brexit will “continue the uncertainty. I fear it will prolong the indecision.” He told MEPs: “And I fear most of all that it will import the Brexit mess into the European Union. And moreover, that it will poison the upcoming European election.” The Brexit co-ordinator also said that he fears the decision to extend the Article 50 deadline to October 31 will mean the “pressure to come to a cross-party agreement disappears.”

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/world/brexit-news-latest-guy-verhofstadt-blasts-mps-for-dithering-over-eu-withdrawal-a4119831.html>

*Additional sources: (Sky News)*

### **May's Brexit strategy has put MPs in danger and wasted billions - Britain deserves a real leader**

When the prime minister applied for and got a second extension to the Article 50 period, she did so because she wanted to save the country from the disastrous consequences of leaving the EU without a deal. She did the right thing, putting the country first. Theresa May has known about the consequences of a no-deal Brexit for years. Paper after paper has crossed her desk, warning her what it would mean. Most recently the cabinet secretary – the most senior civil servant in the country – laid these consequences out before cabinet: food price rises, shortages of some foods, chaos at the ports, the need to stockpile medicines, direct rule for Northern Ireland and, most dangerous of all, a weakening of our national security. No deal would not only leave our country poorer, but it would also weaken us. No responsible prime minister could embrace such an outcome. No leader could will these consequences on their own country. But how did we get here? Why was the application for an extension and the rejection of no deal seen as such a betrayal, not only by Brexiteer Conservative MPs, but by a significant proportion of the population?

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/brexit-deal-strategy-theresa-may-mps-britain-leader-pm-a8872841.html>

### **Liberal Democrats attack other anti-Brexit parties for refusing to fight on joint ticket for European elections**

The Liberal Democrats have accused other anti-Brexit parties of damaging the chances of success in the European elections by refusing to fight on a joint ticket. Vince Cable lashed out at The Independent Group and the Greens for rejecting his pleas to stand joint candidates on 23 May, to boost the number of MEPs demanding a second referendum. The Lib Dem leader revealed that his party proposed fighting together – a move that one election expert has predicted could have delivered an extra six seats in Brussels. Frustrated campaigners for a Final Say public vote also believe a unified campaign would have excited voters and delivered an even greater reward. Sir Vince said voters would be forced to choose between “a variety of different parties offering the same message”, under a proportional voting system.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/eu-elections-brexit-lib-dems-greens-change-uk-european-parliament-a8873731.html>

### **North Of London, Brexit Supporters Gather To 'Feel Proud And Unashamed'**

Reading says that she keeps her pro-Brexit views mostly to herself. She's worried if she speaks up at her workplace, she will be ostracized. She can't remember a time when her country was this divided. At the Leavers for Lincolnshire gathering, she found the evening with fellow Brexiteers relaxing and comforting. "We didn't know anybody ... and we started to talk and we all felt the same," said Reading. "That was absolutely great. We can breathe."

<https://www.npr.org/2019/04/17/713542783/north-of-london-brexit-supporters-gather-to-feel-proud-and-unashamed>

### **Revealed: Brexit group covered up its targeting of right-wing extremists**

Arron Banks repeatedly lied to cover-up his Brexit campaign's effort to attract far-right extremists. Leave.EU paid for Facebook adverts targeted at supporters of the National Front, the BNP, Britain First and the EDL. But when the BBC asked for a response to a story they planned to run, Mr Banks sent a barrage of emails in an attempt to get the story dropped. Leaked emails, seen by Channel 4 News, show Mr Banks insisted the BBC's accusation were "wholly wrong" - despite his own staff telling him the story was true. One Leave.EU employee told him: "Those are our ads, we have targeted those groups since the beginning of the campaign as they gain most traction." Another Leave.EU staffer proposed telling the BBC: "We pay for target ads for all political parties, not just right wing." But Mr Banks replied: "Not the right answer." Instead, Mr Banks told the BBC: "It's wholly wrong to say we have targeted extreme right parties... your report needs to reflect this or it will be biased and if we have to we will take whatever legal action we need." Andy Wigmore, Leave.EU's Head of Communications, even appealed to the head of BBC Westminster, Robbie Gibb, in a further attempt to prevent the story from being run. Mr Gibb is now Theresa May's head of communications

<https://www.channel4.com/news/revealed-brexit-group-covered-up-its-targeting-of-right-wing-extremists>

### **How Farage's Campaign colluded with Putin to Weaponise hate and Islamophobia**

By the time of the EU referendum, Russian news agencies like RT and Sputnik were clearly pushing a pro-Brexit agenda, particularly focusing on (mainly false) allegations of rape and criminality by asylum seekers and migrants. One of Leave EU's most popular videos was mainly sourced from Russian propaganda and deliberately portrayed foreign migrants as sexual predators. Four weeks before the referendum vote in June 2016, Leave EU created a video called 'Worrying Scenes in Europe', mainly based on clips from RT. One disturbing sequence in the video is all Leave EU's creation. It apparently shows sexual assault by dozens of men (alleged to be refugees). But, the clip is actually of an assault that took place in Tahrir Square in Egypt in 2013.

<https://bylinetimes.com/2019/04/17/how-farages-campaign-colluded-with-putin-to-weaponise-hate-and-islamophobia/>

### **More than half of Britons think Labour has 'serious antisemitism problem', poll reveals**

More than half of people believe Labour has a "serious antisemitism problem", a new poll has revealed. The ComRes survey, on behalf of the Jewish News newspaper, showed 51% think the party has a problem with anti-Jewish hate, up from 34% in July last year. A similar proportion of respondents, 55%, agreed that Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn's "failure to tackle antisemitism within his own party shows he is unfit to be prime minister". Labour's long-running antisemitism row resurfaced at the weekend when the Sunday Times reported Mr Corbyn, in a leaked recording, said that evidence of antisemitism in the party has been "mislaid or ignored".

<https://news.sky.com/story/more-than-half-of-britons-think-labour-has-serious-antisemitism-problem-poll-reveals-11696752>

### **May to go down in history as 'monumental failure' - a 'massive contrast with Thatcher!'**

A former aide to Margaret Thatcher has said Prime Minister Theresa May will go down in British history as a "monumental failure" after she was unable to get enough support for her Brexit deal in order for Britain to have left the European Union within the two-year Article 50 deadline. Last week the EU agreed to extend Britain's departure from the bloc until the end of October 31 after Theresa

May pleaded for a delay. Mr Gardiner told Express.co.uk: "As someone who led Britain at a critically important time in history but who did not have the vision or the guts and the courage to do what was necessary.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1115552/Brexit-news-Theresa-May-UK-EU-latest-deal-vote-Prime-Minister-Nile-Gardiner-today>

### **Corbyn's polling lead is a national emergency. The Tories must have a proper vision to defeat him**

Thanks to the Prime Minister's staggering incompetence, we face a real risk of a double whammy of no Brexit and a Jeremy Corbyn government, propped up by Scottish Nationalists. Opinion polls should be taken with a bucket of salt. But the past half a dozen tell an eerily similar story: Tory support has fallen off a cliff, especially since voters realised that we weren't actually going to leave the EU on March 29, as promised. Labour is also down, albeit by less. As a result, Mr Corbyn leads by several percentage points; a uniform swing in a general election today would cost the Tories 60 seats, make Labour the biggest party and allow it to govern with other Left-wing groups.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/04/17/corbyns-polling-lead-national-emergency-tories-must-have-proper/>

### **Nick Boles suggests he will not stand at the next election**

Newly independent MP Nick Boles has suggested he will not stand at the next general election, saying he is on his "way out" of frontline politics. In an interview with The House magazine, the former Conservative minister said he was in his "swansong" after deciding to quit his party over Brexit earlier this month. Though Mr Boles backed Ruth Davidson as the "perfect candidate" to become the next Prime Minister, he said it was "very unlikely" that a new Tory leader could bring him back to the fold. He also said it was "reasonable" to question whether it would have been better if the Tories lost the 2015 election and accused Theresa May of making a "moral error" in trying to be more "Brexit-y than Brexiters" after entering No10. Mr Boles spectacularly resigned the Conservative whip in the Commons after accusing his party of intransigence and refusing to compromise during the Brexit debate. It came after a fractious period with his own constituency party in Grantham and Stamford, which had earlier backed a no-confidence vote against him. Mr Boles fell out of favour over his support for a Norway-style Brexit and opposition to leaving the EU without a deal.

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/conservative-party/news/103249/excl-nick-boles-suggests-he-will-not-stand>

## **Trade Deals/Negotiations**

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### **Brexit: High-tech solution to avoid hard Northern Ireland border 'decade away', leaked Home Office document says**

Any hi-tech solution to the problem of how to keep the Northern Ireland border open after Brexit is at least ten years away, a leaked Home Office document has said. The memo said the cost and complexity of using new technology to remove the need for border checks meant "the challenges of this work cannot be underestimated". The finding will come as a blow to Eurosceptic Conservative MPs, who have repeatedly insisted that technology could be used to keep the border open in the event of a no-deal Brexit, removing the need for the controversial Northern Ireland backstop. The memo, seen by Sky News, was drawn up by the Home Office's Policy Unit and sent to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and the Treasury. It says there could be a possible technological solution but that it would come with a huge array of difficulties. The solution would involve companies uploading data on goods and using blockchain technology, sensors and automated collection to pay tariffs.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-northern-ireland-border-high-tech-solution-home-office-leak-backstop-a8875171.html>

### **US Speaker Nancy Pelosi warns against weakening peace deal**

US Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi has begun an official visit to the Republic of Ireland. Speaking on the eve of her visit, she said there would be "no chance whatsoever" of a post-Brexit trade deal between the US and UK if there were any weakening of the Good Friday Agreement. Ms Pelosi is expected to meet Taoiseach (Irish Prime Minister) Leo Varadkar on Tuesday evening. It is understood Brexit will be one of the main topics of discussion. She will be accompanied by a delegation of Democrat and Republican congressmen and women. The delegation is expected to visit Northern Ireland later this week.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-47936624>

*Additional sources: ([Reuters](#)) ([Independent.ie](#)) ([The Irish Times](#)) ([Huffington Post UK](#)) ([Daily Mail](#)) ([@Channel4News](#))*

### **Brexit: No deal means hard Irish border, says Selmayr**

One of the European Commission's most powerful officials has said that a no-deal Brexit would mean a hard Irish border. The comments from Martin Selmayr feature in a documentary made by ARTE, the Franco-German broadcaster. The secretary-general of the European Commission was filmed in a meeting with senior MEPs in late 2018. "Let's be very clear - if there is no withdrawal agreement there will be a hard border," he told them. "The worst of all scenarios."

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-47966180>