

News from the Brexit Cliff Edge

26th Apr 2019

News Highlights

Welcome to the Brexit Cliff Edge

Department of Transport sued because of its cross channel No Deal Brexit plans

- [P&O Ferries has begun legal proceedings](#) against the government, after being excluded from the No Deal preparations. The claim involves a £33m payment by the Department of Transport to Eurotunnel to settle claims Eurotunnel had been unfairly excluded from government plans to keep cross-channel routes open during a No Deal Brexit

Business investment plans are plummeting

- [Research by Banco Santander suggests that the proportion of companies](#) planning to invest in business development has fallen to 33%, from 74% six months ago. The survey results back up the British Chambers of Commerce warning, from last month, which said the UK could see the worst business investment climate since 2009

EU scientific research grant agency tightens the screw on the UK

- [An EU funding agency \(European Cooperation in Science and Technology\) COST](#), has changed a policy which directly impacts grants in the UK. COST is demanding that UK grant holders shift administration of the grant facility to an EU-based partner by May 1st. UK grant holders say its premature and disruptive to research and has led to layoffs

MPs warn government post-Brexit environmental plans fall 'woefully short'

- [The MPs report says the UK proposals severely downgrade](#) the environmental principles that currently underpin EU rules. It said the new Office for Environment Protection is too tightly linked to the government and has limited powers

The Japanese are not very happy about Brexit

- [Japanese PM Shinzo Abe said legal stability](#) in the UK, by avoiding a hard Brexit, was vital to Japanese firms investing in Britain. He added that Japanese firms had traditionally seen Britain as 'the gateway to Europe' but a hard Brexit would trash that prosperous trading relationship

The Irish Border Question Looms Large

- [The Shadow Foreign Secretary, Emily Thornberry](#), told the House of Commons to accept a customs union with the EU, as it was a very important step in avoiding a hard Irish border and, thus, preserving peace. The Tories David Lidington rejected the link between border customs arrangements and the recent murder of journalist Lyra McKee

We've got it all wrong on immigration

- [New academic research into the public debate](#) on immigration has evidence which shows the three

most common ideas about immigration are simply not true. Employers do not favour migrants because of cost and superior work ethic. The public is not opposed to all migration except highly skilled migration. Migrants are not people with no aspiration beyond low-skilled work

Fury as Corbyn's European Election draft leaflet suggest Labour backs Brexit

- [The leaflet said the party would press ahead with Brexit](#). There was no mention of the party's push for a second referendum on the leaflets sent out to MEP candidates on Thursday. Pro-EU Labour members are furious arguing that 'standing in the middle' of a highly polarised European election would be a very bad move

Political Shenanigans

- [Sir Graham Brady urges the PM](#) to support a bid to strip the Irish backstop from the Brexit Withdrawal deal

Will she won't she - Is Meaningful Vote 4 on May's Brexit deal imminent?

- [Sky News reported that Theresa May is planning](#) to get MPs to vote on a piece of legislation to take the UK out of the European Union as early as next week.
- [The Financial Times disagrees with Sky](#). It understands that the Withdrawal Agreement has not been included in the House of Commons 'next week's business plan' because it would face certain defeat just days before the local elections across the country

The next Tory leader must 'believe in Brexit' according to Jeremy Hunt

- [The slightly cult-like aura growing round](#) the notion of Brexit inside the Tory Party grows ever more unsettling. Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt went on to say '[No deal Brexit is better than no Brexit at all](#)' as if to underline this point

Scottish independence - the UK government refuses to grant its consent for a 2nd referendum

- [Cabinet Office Minister, David Lidington, said](#) there was no evidence of a surge in support for another vote, adding the 2014 referendum settled the matter for a generation

Nigel Farage says his Brexit Party will stand in the next General Election

- [The Brexit Party is planning to take on the Tories](#) and Labour at the next General Election. In an interview with The Sun, Farage said these European elections are just a springboard to take the party into power inside Westminster

The Guardian comment said there will be no soft Brexit now and the choice is now no deal or another vote

- [With the centre option collapsing as the Conservative-Labour talks](#) on Brexit dissolve, the decision on Brexit returns to its extremes once more: No Deal Brexit or a second vote

May wants the UK out by the end of June

[Theresa May has given up shutting down the European](#) Elections and has now set herself the target of getting a withdrawal agreement agreed by June 30th

Labour's National Policy Forum unanimously backs a campaign for a Brexit referendum

- [Friday's Labour Party Trade Union Liaison Organization](#) is likely to also vote the same as the National Policy Forum. So the emergency NEC meeting, next Tuesday, will see Corbyn coming under enormous pressure from the membership to back a confirmatory referendum with an option to Remain
- [It was confirmed that Lord Andrew Adonis was forced](#) to 'recant his previous opinions' under threat of de-selection as a Labour Party candidate

Candidate with criminal convictions wants to become an MEP

- [The Far Right's Tommy Robinson](#) is running to become an MEP in next month's European Elections

Someone did it Huawei

- [A row broke out over who leaked a report from the UK government's National Security Council](#) to the Daily Telegraph - discussing recommendations for using Huawei Technologies to power the 5G technology roll out in the UK

EU citizens' right to vote under threat

- [European Elections - government could face a legal](#) challenge over its appalling handling of EU citizens and their right to vote in the EU elections

Electoral Commission accuse Theresa May of 'risking the public's faith in politics'

- [The watchdog said May risks undermining](#) the public's faith in politics by going ahead with the European elections, despite publicly seeking she wants to cancel them and stop MEPs taking their seats

Britain's embrace of Huawei is really all about Brexit

- [Bloomberg said the UK needs not to upset China](#) as a potential trading partner, because it urgently seeks post Brexit trade deals. This is one of the reasons behind the UK's surprising move not to ban Huawei Technologies but permit them to be front and centre for the UK's 5G plans

Jobs at Risk

Port Talbot steelworks blasts rock town and injure two as locals report 'huge explosions' at Tata plant

Two people have been injured after a huge blast at Britain's biggest steel plant rocked Port Talbot this morning. Emergency crews rushed to Tata Steelworks in the South Wales town after a deafening explosion shook homes and woke locals at around 3:35am.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8942917/port-talbot-steelworks-blast-tata/>

Economic Impact

Germany knows we're open for post-Brexit business

The serious challenges lie in the long term, where it will be difficult to maintain that status quo, and firms will be operating in an environment with greater uncertainty, higher costs, a larger administrative burden and will have a reduced labour pool.

https://www.scotsman.com/business/comment-germany-knows-we-re-open-for-post-brexit-business-1-4915183?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+google-news-brexit-rss-

Administrative Fall Out

P&O takes legal action over no-deal Brexit preparations

P&O Ferries has begun legal proceedings against the government after being excluded from no-deal Brexit preparations, the latest fallout from Britain's preparations for leaving the EU. The claim revolves around a £33m payment by the Department for Transport to Eurotunnel to settle claims it had been unfairly excluded from plans to keep cross-channel routes open in the event of a disruptive exit from the EU. Eurotunnel was angry that the government had ignored its "Le Shuttle" train service when it promised payments of £89m to two operators, Brittany Ferries and DFDS, to lay on alternative ferry services to prevent congestion at the main Dover-Calais artery.

<https://www.ft.com/content/baa1b578-676e-11e9-a79d-04f350474d62>

EU workers in Britain are the most depressed about Brexit

Gartner, a research company, has conducted weekly polls of around 300 UK-based employees to see how they have been affected. The key week was towards the end of March when the official deadline for Brexit was scheduled (it has since been postponed twice). In that week, more than half of EU workers in Britain experienced disgust, anger and sadness. Those feelings have subsided a little since, but are still running at about 40% of EU workers.

<https://www.economist.com/bartleby/2019/04/25/eu-workers-in-britain-are-the-most-depressed-about-brexite>

Invesco chief counts the cost of uncertainty over Brexit

One of the world's biggest money managers has revealed the damage wrought by Britain's protracted negotiations to exit the EU, saying the outlook should improve only when the terms of Brexit become clearer. Invesco, which manages \$955bn in assets from headquarters in Atlanta, suffered big outflows from its UK business in the first quarter, when UK investors accounted for \$3.9bn of the \$5.4bn drained globally from Invesco portfolios for the period. In the fourth quarter flows from UK portfolios came to \$3.3bn of \$20bn globally, as a bout of market turmoil prompted investors around the world to shift money to safer assets.

<https://www.ft.com/content/007a9eae-676d-11e9-a79d-04f350474d62>

Investment slumps amid Brexit gloom

Almost a quarter of companies are not investing in their business this year due to Brexit uncertainty, a survey reports. Business leaders have been delaying major decisions until clarity emerges about Britain's future trading relationship with the European Union. The proportion of companies planning to invest in development has fallen to 33 per cent from 74 per cent six months ago, research by Santander suggests. The figures come after the British Chambers of Commerce warned last month that business investment would sink this year to its lowest level since the financial crisis. The lobby group said that investment would fall by 1 per cent this year, down from a decline of 0.9 per cent last year. It would be the worst performance since 2009, when investment fell by 16.6 per cent.

https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/investment-slumps-amid-brexite-gloom-l0wf57gzn?mc_cid=f2cb64bb2c&mc_eid=7b5a45611c

Flylolo cancels Southampton Airport summer programme 2019

A flight operator says Brexit is to blame after cancelling its entire service from Southampton Airport this summer. Flylolo, which is based in Bognor Regis, blames the cancellation of 140 flights and 2,000 bookings on uncertainties caused by Brexit. As reported by the Daily Echo, the firm launched non-stop flights to Skiathos in Greece last year, but has now ditched all of its services from Southampton. A statement from the company says: "It is with the greatest regret that I have to advise that we are cancelling our entire Southampton programme for this summer.

<https://www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/news/17597946.flylolo-cancels-southampton-airport-summer-programme-2019/>

Fearing no-deal Brexit, European funder orders U.K. researchers to transfer grants

The prospect of Brexit, the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union, has loomed long and large over researchers, but the effects on funding, so far, have been speculative. Now, a European funding agency has made a pre-emptive strike in advance of Brexit, changing a policy that directly impacts grants in the United Kingdom. The European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) Association, in Brussels, is requiring that U.K. grant holders shift financial administration to a partner in Europe by 1 May. COST says the change will prevent disruption if Brexit occurs without a deal to smooth the transition, and that it does not affect participation by U.K. scientists. But U.K. grant holders say the policy change is premature, disruptive to research—and in at least one case it has led to a staff layoff. “The bureaucratic nightmare of moving these grants is pretty horrendous,” says Nic Walton, an astronomer at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom.

<https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2019/04/fearing-no-deal-brexit-european-funder-orders-uk-researchers-transfer-grants>

MPs warn post-Brexit environment plans fall ‘woefully short’

Proposals to replace the EU's strong environmental protections after Brexit “fall woefully short”, according to a highly critical report from a cross-party committee of MPs. The environment secretary, Michael Gove, said in December that the UK's environmental standards would be enhanced after Brexit. But the MPs' report said the proposals “severely downgrade” the environmental principles that underpin current EU rules. It said the new Office for Environmental Protection (OEP), proposed as a replacement for the EU's enforcement mechanisms, lacks independence from Gove's office and has limited powers. The report from the environmental audit committee also criticises planned exclusions from environmental rules, which one expert called “absurd”.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/apr/25/mps-warn-post-brexit-environment-plans-fall-woefully-short>

Japanese firms could pull out of UK in no deal Brexit - Japan PM in STERN WARNING to UK

Speaking after meeting top EU officials, Mr Abe said it was vital to ensure “legal stability” in the UK by avoiding a hard Brexit. Britain has long acted as a “gateway to Europe” for Japanese firms but a hard Brexit could trash the prosperous trading relationship. Mr Abe made the warning after meeting with EU presidents Donald Tusk and Jean-Claude Juncker in Brussels for the 26th EU-Japan summit.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1118998/Brexit-news-UK-EU-Japan-Shinzo-Abe-no-deal-Brexit-business-latest>

UK law firm Fieldfisher readies for Brexit with Irish merger

UK law firm Fieldfisher is to merge with Irish firm McDowell Purcell, as the legal sector in England and Wales steps up preparations for Brexit. Since the June 2016 referendum, lawyers in England and Wales have rushed to join the Irish Roll of Solicitors in an effort to protect their rights to practice in the EU after the UK leaves the bloc. There were approximately 2,200 such applications from 2016 to 2018, according to the Law Society of Ireland. Of the 18,460 solicitors on the Irish roll, more than one in ten qualified in England and has joined since the Brexit vote. So far, however, few UK firms have established offices in Ireland: Pinsent Masons opened an office in Dublin in late 2017, while DLA Piper, one of the biggest law firms in the world, has announced plans to follow suit.

<https://www.ft.com/content/e2cd1740-671e-11e9-9adc-98bf1d35a056>

Brexit: McKee death 'shows need to solve Irish border issue'

The death of journalist Lyra McKee shows the need to “find an answer” to the Irish border question in the Brexit talks, Emily Thornberry has said. The shadow foreign secretary urged ministers to accept that a customs union with the EU was the way to avoid a hard border and preserve peace. Cabinet Office Minister David Lidington rejected a link between the border or customs arrangements and the murder. Treasury minister Liz Truss said it was “very wrong” to connect the two.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48039941>

Post-Brexit immigration policy that shuts out low-skilled migrants won't suit anyone

The public debate on immigration typically depicts employers as favouring migrants for reasons of cost and superior “work ethic”. The public is usually seen as opposed to all but highly skilled migration, while migrants themselves are viewed as having little aspiration beyond low-skilled work. These three misunderstandings have led to the policy proposals in the recent white paper, which place tight limits on low-skilled migration which could considerably reduce EU migration. The policies will prove particularly problematic for employers in lower-skilled sectors – but evidence also suggests that they aren’t what the public want either.

<http://theconversation.com/post-brexit-immigration-policy-that-shuts-out-low-skilled-migrants-wont-suit-anyone-115680>

Political Shenanigans

Sir Graham Brady urges PM to support bid to strip Irish backstop from Brexit deal

The Tories’ most powerful backbencher has called on Theresa May to support a fresh Commons bid by Brexiteers to strip the Irish backstop from her EU deal. The Sun can reveal that senior Tory Eurosceptics are planning to table an amendment to the Withdrawal Agreement Bill to remove the controversial insurance plan that keeps Britain tied to the EU indefinitely.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/brexit/8941203/brady-urges-pm-strip-backstop-from-eu-deal/>

Fury As Corbyn European Elections Leaflet Suggests Labour Backs Brexit

Jeremy Corbyn is facing a fierce backlash from Labour members after a draft leaflet for the European elections said the party would press ahead with Brexit. The leaflet, passed to HuffPost UK, makes no mention of the party’s policy to push for a second referendum on quitting the EU, was sent out to MEPs on Thursday. One Labour insider said: “MEPs were not given these leaflets to review, they were just told: this is what the party is printing and this is what they would have to put out.” The leaflet claims the party will seek a “better deal with Europe” which ensures the UK has “a say on trade deals”, while also underlining party policy on domestic issues. It has left the party’s pro-EU membership furious and dismayed, with one activist telling HuffPost UK: “In what will be an utterly polarised election, standing in the middle will be a bad move.” HuffPost UK also understands that staunch pro-European former minister Lord Adonis, who is standing for Labour in the South West region, was forced to sign a ‘loyalty’ statement or face being blocked as an MEP candidate.

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/fury-as-corbyn-euro-elections-leaflet-suggests-labour-backs-brexit_uk_5cc1e94be4b031dc07ef6b3a

Government refuses public inquiry into 2016 EU Referendum misconduct

The Government has responded to a petition “To establish a Public Inquiry into the conduct of the 2016 EU Referendum,” insisting there are no plans for an inquiry. The response by the Cabinet Office insists that electoral offences “are investigated thoroughly by the appropriate agencies,” but adds “this Government wrote to every household prior to the referendum, promising that the outcome of the referendum would be implemented... This Government stands by this commitment.”

<https://www.thelondoneconomic.com/news/government-refuses-public-inquiry-into-2016-eu-referendum-misconduct/25/04/>

May plans Withdrawal Agreement Bill vote as early as next week following leadership reprieve

Theresa May is preparing for her next Brexit battle, with a plan to give MPs a vote on the key piece of legislation to take the UK out of the European Union as early as next week. Having just survived another attempted coup on the part of her angry parliamentary party on Wednesday night, the prime minister is now getting ready to ask MPs to ratify her Brexit deal by introducing the Withdrawal Agreement Bill (WAB), which enshrines her Brexit plan into UK law, in the coming days. The move comes amid growing despair over Mrs May's leadership, with the officers of the 1922

committee on Wednesday only narrowly voting against a rule change to allow an early confidence vote in the prime minister.

<https://news.sky.com/story/may-plans-withdrawal-agreement-bill-vote-next-week-following-leadership-relieve-11702900>

Accept the British Empire is dead and Brexit has failed, top MEP tells Farage and Brexiteers

Brexiteers must accept that the British Empire is dead and buried, a leading MEP has said before challenging Nigel Farage and his Brexit party to “bring it on” in May’s European elections. Philippe Lamberts, the leader of the European greens and member of the European Parliament’s six strong and influential Brexit Steering Group, said the Brexit Party would be powerless in Brussels even if it triumphs in May’s elections. He backed a second Brexit referendum but warned putting no deal on the ballot paper would turn Britain into a “rogue state”. He told Brexiteers that they never stood a chance of making Brexit a success before attacking Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn for caring more about their parties than the country

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/04/25/accept-british-empire-dead-brexit-has-failed-top-mep-tells-brexiteers/>

Next Tory Leader Must 'Believe In Brexit', Says Ex-Remainer Jeremy Hunt

Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt has refused to rule himself out as a candidate to be next Tory leader. Asked directly if he would run to replace Theresa May if she stands down, the cabinet minister replied “wait and see”. Hunt, who stepped into the role when Boris Johnson resigned over Brexit, said the next PM must be someone who “believes in Brexit”. While the former health secretary voted Remain in 2016, he has signalled his leadership ambitions by aligning himself with Conservative members and taking a strongly pro-Leave stance. Speaking to journalists in central London on Thursday, he said the next leader should support Brexit “as I do” even if they failed to vote Leave in the past.

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/jeremy-hunt-refuses-to-rule-out-running-to-be-tory-leader-and-pm_uk_5cc1bd2fe4b0ad77ff80dca6

Brexit deadlock: Is there any way out of the logjam before the European Elections?

Westminster is still paralysed by Brexit. Things might be a little less techy now that MPs have been able to have their first proper break since Christmas, but the fundamentals haven’t changed. There are several key reasons for the deadlock and only a few things that might break them. Theresa May just won’t quit This week there was yet another failed attempt to oust Theresa May from Number 10. Brexiteer MPs had hoped to curtail her 12-month amnesty from leadership challenges, but the backbench 1922 Committee voted against the idea.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/04/25/brexit-deadlock-way-logjam-european-elections/>

No-deal better than no Brexit, Jeremy Hunt claims

Pro-Brexit convert Jeremy Hunt has claimed no-deal would be better than no Brexit, as he all but confirmed he will run for Tory leader. In a speech to political journalists in Westminster, the formerly pro-Remain foreign secretary spelled out his new pro-Brexit credentials. Quizzed about the Tory succession, in which he is expected to be a candidate, he said the next leader should support Brexit, “as I do”, even if they failed to vote Leave in the past. “It’s got to be someone who believes in Brexit, because that is the fundamental mission of the government at the moment,” said Mr Hunt.

<https://news.sky.com/story/no-deal-better-than-no-brexit-jeremy-hunt-claims-11703485>

Scottish independence: UK government 'will not grant indyref2 consent'

Theresa May's deputy has said the Scottish Parliament will not be given the power to hold an independence referendum by 2021. Cabinet Office Minister David Lidington said there was “no evidence” of a surge in support for another vote. And he said the referendum in 2014 had settled

matters for a generation. Nicola Sturgeon said on Wednesday she wants a referendum before the next Scottish Parliament election in 2021 if the UK leaves the EU. But the first minister also indicated that Westminster's approval was needed to put the legal status of any vote "beyond doubt". She has not yet made a fresh request to the UK government for this to happen, but told BBC Scotland that Mr Lidington was a member of a UK government that is "clinging to power by its fingertips" and has "zero authority or credibility"

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-48053363>

Additional sources: (Daily Record)

Nigel Farage reveals for the first time his Brexit Party WILL stand in next General Election

The Brexit Party is planning to take on the Tories and Labour in the next General Election, Sun Online can reveal. Nigel Farage has confirmed he wants to run candidates for Parliament in future to stop Remainer MPs blocking Brexit. His new party is on course to come top in next month's EU elections just months after it was founded. And in an interview with The Sun, Mr Farage pledged to use the Brussels poll as a "springboard" to take the party into power in Westminster.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/brexit/8938714/nigel-farage-brexit-party-general-election/>

Additional sources: (Daily Mail) (Evening Standard)

Brexit There will be no soft Brexit now. It's no deal or another vote

The larger Brexit choices of 2019 are starker, too. With the centre option on Brexit collapsing, the decision lies between extremes. We are back to remain or leave, but now in their 2019 versions. The times will inevitably be very divided again. The effective Brexit choice will lie between no deal, promoted by May's successor and much of the Tory party, and a second vote, hopefully but by no means certainly promoted by Corbyn, and by other parties too. But the choice for pro-Europeans has now been clarified, and no pro-European can doubt where they must stand.

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/25/no-soft-brexit-no-deal-revoke-vote?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+google-news-brexit-rss-feed+%28Google+News+Brexit+UK+RSS+Feed%29

Jeremy Hunt: I would choose no-deal over no Brexit

The Foreign Secretary, who voted Remain in the referendum, said he wanted a "clean" Brexit in order to deliver on the result of the 2016 vote. Mr Hunt also said "wait and see" when asked whether he would throw his hat into the ring to be Tory leader when Theresa May stands down.

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/foreign-affairs/news/103450/jeremy-hunt-i-would-choose-no-deal-over-no-brexit>

Would Brussels even allow an independent Scotland to join the EU?

Could the European Union allow a newly independent Scotland to rejoin the bloc after Brexit and what conditions would Brussels demand from Edinburgh? Nicola Sturgeon wants a Scottish independence referendum by 2021 if Brexit happens. "Independence," she said on Wednesday in Holyrood, "would allow us to protect our place in Europe." But as with so much to do with the European Union, things are nowhere near as simple as that. The European Commission today appeared to rule out any preferential treatment for an independent Scotland. It is possible with enough political will from Brussels and across the EU that rules could be bent to ease Scottish membership. But there are significant reasons why that could be tricky to achieve

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/04/25/would-brussels-even-allow-independent-scotland-join-eu/>

May sets new deadline with Britons to vote in EU elections - 'GREAT SHAME'

Government insiders say the Prime Minister given up hope of cancelling UK participation in the European Parliament poll by securing Commons approval for her withdrawal deal within the next three weeks. Instead, she is preparing for a determined push to force crucial withdrawal legislation

through Parliament in time for the country to quit the EU by the end of June. Her new timetable will mean British voters are set to elect a new troop of MEPs next month - likely to include figures from the new Brexit Party including Nigel Farage and former Tory minister Ann Widdecombe - who will have lost their jobs by the time the new European Parliament assembles on July 2. One source said: "The focus now is on hitting the June 30 deadline so the MEPs don't take up their seats." Most Tory MPs expect the party to be hammered in the euro elections scheduled for May 22, with the Brexit Party tipped by many to top the poll.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1119033/brexit-news-latest-theresa-may-deadline-eu-european-elections>

Vince Cable: Liberal Democrat campaign to stop Brexit is like opposition to Iraq war

Sir Vince Cable will liken the Liberal Democrats' campaign to stop Brexit to Charles Kennedy's opposition to the Iraq war as he launches the party's EU election campaign. The Lib Dem leader and Twickenham MP is to say that only his party have the determined army of volunteers standing against the UK's withdrawal from the bloc. He will say it should be remembered that the Lib Dems had been against Brexit from the start, even though they stood alone.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/vince-cable-liberal-democrat-campaign-to-stop-brexit-is-like-opposition-to-iraq-war-a4126856.html>

May drops plan for new Brexit vote before local elections

Theresa May has dropped a plan to try to secure parliamentary approval for her moribund EU withdrawal agreement before next week's local elections, as hopes fade for any cross-party accord with Labour on Brexit. The prime minister wants to ask MPs to vote on legislation to approve Britain's exit from the EU, but the withdrawal agreement bill was not included in next week's business for the House of Commons because of fears it would face certain defeat. Mrs May had been considering holding a vote on the bill ahead of the local elections on Thursday.

<https://www.ft.com/content/3bac82bc-6768-11e9-9adc-98bf1d35a056>

Defence Secretary accuses civil servants of 'leaking details of Huawei's 5G role'

Gavin Williamson has infuriated Whitehall mandarins by accusing them of leaking a secret decision about the Huawei telecoms giant. The Sun can reveal the Defence Secretary pointed the finger of blame at civil servants in the Cabinet Office for the major security breach.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8941084/gavin-williamson-huawei-telecom-5g-network-leak/>

'Hold Wales independence vote if no further Brexit poll'

Wales should hold an independence referendum if Brexit happens without a further EU poll, Plaid Cymru leader Adam Price has said. People could then choose between an independent Wales at Europe's "heart" or a "forgotten second-class region in a dying British state," he said. The independence call goes further than his party conference speech in March. Polling for BBC Wales has put support for independence at less than 10% since 2011. Mr Price said Wales should hold a "new national conversation" about the country's future whatever happens with the UK's departure from the European Union.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-48059170>

Labour's National Policy Forum wants party to campaign for Brexit referendum

The International Commission of Labour's National Policy Forum - which consists of MPs, trade unionists, MEPs, and constituency representatives - has voted unanimously that Labour's manifesto for European elections should pledge to hold a confirmatory referendum on any Brexit deal. My sources say there were no dissenting voices. On Wednesday all Labour MEPs voted in precisely the same unanimous way, for a referendum. Friday's Labour's Trade Union Liaison Organisation is likely to inform the party's ruling NEC that its big union supporters - including Unison, the GMB and USDAW, but obviously not Unite - also want a referendum. So it is increasingly hard to see how Labour's ruling NEC can at its emergency meeting next Tuesday ignore such widespread

membership pressure and do anything but adopt a confirmatory referendum as the foundation of its manifesto.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2019-04-25/labours-national-policy-forum-wants-party-to-campaign-for-brexit-referendum/>

Brexit: Losing Control

Andrew Duff argues that neither the EU nor the UK is now fully in control. Both are being badly destabilised by Brexit. An accidental no deal is a live possibility. Unless the British have made real progress towards the exit by the time of the next EUCO in June, attitudes will harden — including those of Angela Merkel. Talks between pro-European Tory ministers and the Labour frontbench have a 30% chance of success. If they fail, both leaders are expected to commit to more indicative votes in the Commons, this time rather more 'meaningful'. Mr Corbyn may want to delay his agreement until after the UK has been obliged by the EUCO to fight a mock election to the European Parliament. But the June EUCO is the next important deadline if British MEPs are to be stopped from taking their seats. The proposal for a 'confirmatory public vote' to second guess the House of Commons is badly misconceived. It reduces the chance that the Commons can reach a solid majority on anything and would throw the nation into bitter division, enfeebling further the Westminster parliament and parties. Mr Tusk apart, the rest of the EU knows that another referendum will not resolve its British problem.

http://www.epc.eu/pub_details.php?cat_id=17&pub_id=9199

Political Setbacks

How long can Corbyn resist Labour's drift towards a second referendum?

The International Commission of Labour's National Policy Forum – which consists of MPs, trade unionists, MEPs, and constituency representatives – has voted unanimously that Labour's manifesto for European elections should pledge to hold a confirmatory referendum on any Brexit deal. My sources say there were no dissenting voices. On Wednesday, all Labour MEPs voted in precisely the same unanimous way, for a referendum. Friday's Labour's Trade Union Liaison Organisation is likely to inform the party's ruling NEC that its big union supporters – including Unison, the GMB and USDAW, but obviously not Unite – also want a referendum. So it is increasingly hard to see how Labour's ruling NEC can at its emergency meeting next Tuesday ignore such widespread membership pressure and do anything but adopt a confirmatory referendum as the foundation of its manifesto. That said many senior Labour figures tell me they worry Seumas Milne and Jeremy Corbyn will somehow find a way to prevent the party adopting an unambiguous pledge to campaign for a referendum

<https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2019/04/how-long-can-corbyn-resist-labours-drift-towards-a-second-referendum/>

Less than 0.01% of EU citizens' voter forms received due to election 'havoc', say MPs

MPs have called on the government to cut the red tape around EU citizens' registration for the EU elections after it was found that fewer than 300 crucial forms have been returned with 13 days before deadline.

<https://www.theneweuropean.co.uk/top-stories/voter-registration-shambles-for-eu-citizens-1-6016023>

Andrew Adonis shocks Remainers by endorsing Jeremy Corbyn's 'sensible' Brexit plan ahead of EU elections

Former Labour minister Andrew Adonis has been among the most prominent campaigners for a second EU referendum since voters backed leaving in 2016. Last year he told radio station LBC that "if you are a Brexiteer, I hope you won't vote for the Labour party because they're moving increasingly against Brexit". But he has now apologised for the comments from September and called on voters to back Jeremy Corbyn's plan for exit

<https://inews.co.uk/news/brexit/andrew-adonis-brexit-jeremy-corbyn-plan-european-elections-2019/>

Leavers have been insulted and betrayed. I'm standing for the Brexit Party to defend their votes

I've run a national campaign bringing Brexit supporters (and non-Brexit supporters!) together over a pint and a chat for over three years now, travelling up and down the country, from small seaside towns to hilly hamlets. I've met such a depth of vibrant and inspirational characters who have touched me with their stories, histories and aspirations. These are people who are too often reduced to being nothing more than the target of patronising Guardian opinion articles or the butt of mainstream comedians' jokes simply for wanting their voices to be heard and their democratic wishes fulfilled.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/04/25/leavers-have-insulted-betrayed-standing-brexit-party-defend/>

Tory candidates suspended over racist and inflammatory posts

Two Conservative local election candidates and a woman honoured with an MBE are among 40 new self-professed Tory members who have shared or endorsed racist and inflammatory Facebook posts including Islamophobic material, the Guardian has learned. The torrent of racist posts include references to Muslims as "bin bag wearing individuals", calls for the "cult" of Islam to be banned and the Qur'an being branded an "evil book". One female Tory supporter even called for a boycott of Muslim-owned shops and endorsed another comment labelling the religion's followers "sub-human" and "cockroaches".

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/apr/25/tory-candidates-suspended-over-racist-and-inflammatory-posts>

Jacob Rees-Mogg was paid entirely in CHAMPAGNE for an after-dinner speech

Jacob Rees-Mogg was paid in Champagne for giving an after-dinner speech, it has emerged. The Tory Brexiteer was invited to speak at an event hosted by Global Media, which owns a string of radio stations including LBC. It was revealed in the latest update of the Register of MPs Interests, published today. According to the entry, Mr Rees-Mogg was paid for speaking at the dinner on February 6 with 12 bottles of Champagne. In total the posh bubbly came to a value of £323.52 - almost £27 a bottle. It's possible Mr Rees-Mogg was running low on Bolly after Brexit-backing colleagues raided his fridge.

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/jacob-rees-mogg-paid-entirely-14590579>

Tommy Robinson says he is running to be MEP in European elections

Tommy Robinson has announced he is standing to be an MEP in the European elections. He said his 'working class' supporters would send the 'elite' a 'message they'll never forget' if he was elected on May 23. The far-right activist, who co-founded the English Defence League, attacked Nigel Farage and his new Brexit Party as he revealed he will be running in the north west region. Robinson said he 'admires' what Farage has done in the past but called him 'just another millionaire stockbroker who looks down at the middle classes'.

<https://metro.co.uk/2019/04/25/tommy-robinson-says-running-mep-european-elections-9319272/>

Additional sources: ([Huffington Post UK](#))

PM advised to call in MI5 to investigate Huawei leak

Theresa May has "no option" but to call in the security service MI5 to identify the source of a leak from the National Security Council, a founding member has said. Conservative MP Andrew Mitchell told Newsnight MI5 and the cabinet secretary Sir Mark Sedwill may have to interview cabinet ministers who sit on the council. The former international development secretary, who sat on the NSC between 2010-2012, spoke out following a leak from the council earlier this week.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48059333>

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

The Guardian view on the Conservatives: the headless chicken party

Theresa May's government is one of the least successful in our history. This is not merely the view of

its opponents. It is also the view of its own key members. Less than a month ago the Conservative chief whip, Julian Smith, admitted to the BBC that "discipline is not as good as it should be". Brexit, he continued, had generated "the worst example of ill-discipline in cabinet in British political history".

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/25/the-guardian-view-on-the-conservatives-the-headless-chicken-party>

DUP leader Arlene Foster denies Lyra McKee was murdered because of a 'political vacuum'

Arlene Foster today denied Lyra McKee was murdered because of the 'political vacuum' in Northern Ireland - and said her party will not change its mind on gay marriage. The DUP leader looked uncomfortable as a priest delivered a powerful message at the funeral of the murdered journalist in Belfast yesterday when he demanded to know why it had taken the horror of her death to unite politicians. Mrs Foster sat next to Sinn Fein leaders Michelle O'Neill and Mary Lou McDonald at the Protestant St Anne's Cathedral in Belfast, and they were also forced to stand and clap. Father Martin Magill received a spontaneous standing ovation as he called her senseless killing a 'huge injustice' and said he 'dared to hope' something so awful as Lyra's murder could be a 'doorway to a new beginning'. Mrs Foster said today 'I don't accept that the violence that caused Lyra's death was caused by a political vacuum. It was caused by people who wanted to use violence to further their own warped political agenda. That's why Lyra is dead'.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6959021/DUP-leader-Arlene-Foster-denies-Lyra-McKee-murdered-political-vacuum.html>

Additional sources: (Daily Record)

Scottish independence: UK government 'will not grant indyref2 consent'

Theresa May's deputy has said the Scottish Parliament will not be given the power to hold an independence referendum by 2021. Cabinet Office Minister David Lidington said there was "no evidence" of a surge in support for another vote. And he said the referendum in 2014 had settled matters for a generation. Nicola Sturgeon said on Wednesday she wants a referendum before the next Scottish Parliament election in 2021 if the UK leaves the EU. But the first minister also indicated that Westminster's approval was needed to put the legal status of any vote "beyond doubt". She has not yet made a fresh request to the UK government for this to happen, but told BBC Scotland that Mr Lidington was a member of a UK government that is "clinging to power by its fingertips" and has "zero authority or credibility"

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-48053363>

Democracy under attack - was Brexit bought? (German made documentary with English subtitles makes a very strong case that it was)

Democracy under attack - was Brexit bought? (German made documentary with English subtitles makes a very strong case that it was)

<https://www.zdf.de/dokumentation/zdfzoom/videos/zdfzoom-democracy-under-attack-102.html#xtor=CS5-4>

Dear Leavers, Lord Adonis doesn't want your support, but my Brexit Party certainly does

Having been adopted as a Labour candidate in the South West region in next month's EU elections, he published a craven statement apologising for his LBC remarks. In it, he claimed to be in favour of Brexit. "Labour has always been clear it respects the result of the referendum," he wrote desperately. He then lauded his party's "sensible plan" for "a close economic relationship with the EU after Brexit." As handbrake turns go, this one was noisy in the extreme. But it is deeply insulting in its casualness, as well. There is no way this Labour lickspittle would have humiliated himself in such a manner had he not been told to do so by the party's high command. On that basis, I think we all know his "apology" is to be taken with a bucket of salt.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/04/25/dear-leavers-lord-adonis-doesnt-want-support-brex-it-party-certainly/>

@Peston The International Commission of Labour's National Policy Forum - which consists of MPs, trade unionists, MEPs, and constituency representatives - has just voted UNANIMOUSLY that Labour's manifesto for EU elections should pledge to hold a confirmatory referendum...

The International Commission of Labour's National Policy Forum - which consists of MPs, trade unionists, MEPs, and constituency representatives - has just voted UNANIMOUSLY that Labour's manifesto for EU elections should pledge to hold a confirmatory referendum...

<https://twitter.com/Peston/status/1121425028065763328>

@PaulWaugh @Andrew_Adonis mystery finally cleared up: he was told he faced deselection as MEP candidate unless he signed a statement apologising for previous views and stuck to the line on Brexit

Also, @Andrew_Adonis mystery finally cleared up: he was told he faced deselection as MEP candidate unless he signed a statement apologising for previous views and stuck to the line on Brexit

<https://twitter.com/paulwaugh/status/1121505958004498433>

Gavin Esler explains why he has decided to stand as a Change UK MEP candidate

Broadcaster Gavin Esler explains why he has decided to stand as a Change UK MEP candidate - and how New European readers helped convince him to do so. We have three clear objectives: Stop Brexit, fix Britain, reform the EU. The first step is a People's Vote. I want to bring this Brexit nightmare to an end. A confirmatory vote will mean we can move on to the real problems we face.

<https://www.theneweuropean.co.uk/top-stories/gavin-esler-change-uk-mep-candidate-european-elections-1-6015278>

European elections: Government faces legal challenge amid fears millions of EU citizens could lose right to vote

Chaos surrounding the date of the UK's departure from the EU means the form for EU citizens' voting was only sent to 2 million European nationals on the electoral register a few weeks before the deadline - instead of the usual four-month period. A leading organisation, representing EU citizens in the UK, has urged ministers to take immediate action to remedy the situation - or face potential legal action. Roger Casale, secretary general of the New Europeans, said: "Because of the very tight timetable, we would urge the government to allow those EU citizens on the electoral roll, who miss the current 7 May deadline, to fill in the required UC1 declaration forms when they arrive at their local polling stations on 23 May."

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/european-elections-uk-eu-citizens-right-vote-brex-it-parliament-a8886081.html>

Theresa May is risking public's faith in politics, warns poll watchdog

The election watchdog has warned that Theresa May risks undermining public faith in politics by going ahead with European elections that she says she wants to cancel. The Electoral Commission said that it was "unprecedented in a mature democracy" for a country to elect candidates to roles they may never fill. It warned that the polls next month would lead to "questions about the impact on voters now and in the future", adding that it was "vital that our democratic institutions and traditions come through [the elections] intact".

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/theresa-may-is-risking-public-s-faith-in-politics-warns-poll-watchdog-n8r9wn6v2>

Trade Deals/Negotiations

Britain's Embrace of Huawei Is Really About Brexit

The divorce from Europe is on its way, so Britain is under greater pressure to keep China as a trading partner. British Prime Minister Theresa May's decision not to ban Huawei Technologies Co.

outright was the easier choice. That doesn't mean it was the right one. The U.S. has been vociferously pushing for countries to exclude telecommunications equipment made by the Chinese firm, saying it's vulnerable to hacking by state-sponsored actors from its home nation. But Huawei also has some of the most advanced gear for next-generation 5G networks. It's a conundrum.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2019-04-24/britain-s-embrace-of-huawei-is-really-about-brex>