

# News from the Brexit Cliff Edge

## 8th May 2019

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### News Highlights

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## Welcome to the Brexit Cliff Edge

### Brexit-induced NHS staff crisis

- [The Oxford Mail spoke](#) about EU staff leaving Oxford hospitals in droves, thereby, deepening the NHS staffing crisis
- [The Guardian said 'almost 5,000 nurses and midwives](#) from EU27 countries have quit the NHS in the past two years, with many identifying Brexit as the trigger. The referendum result has made many EU nationals feel unwelcome in Britain. It is no surprise nurses and midwives believe they will be better-off elsewhere' said Sara Gorton, the head of health at the trade union Unison

### Hotel industry facing staff shortages thanks to Brexit

- [The Travelodge budget hotel chain said its aiming to recruit 3,000 students](#) this summer with contracts that allow them to fit work around their studies, as the industry faces a Brexit-fuelled labour shortage

### Brexit is a bigger blow to Britain than Suez

- [Sir Simon Fraser, who was a top mandarin at the Foreign Office](#) for five years, described Brexit as a bigger blow than the 1956 Suez crisis, which became an emblem of British foreign policy humiliation. The UK's credibility as a country that pragmatically conducts its affairs has been badly damaged by the fallout from quitting the EU. He said the country's pivotal link between the USA and Europe has been hit and our national security diminished

### UK reputation tarnished

- [May formally recognises the inevitable](#) and accepts the UK will take part in the European Parliamentary elections

### Theresa May's team gloomy about the chances of a Labour Brexit deal

- [The beleaguered PM's cabinet concluded that cross-party talks are stalling](#) and unlikely to deliver an agreement on a way forward. The government now has to decide what happens next and how to put a Plan B to Parliament
- [BBC thinks a Brexit breakthrough is possible](#), but not this week
- [Labour accused the government of not](#) being willing to compromise in any way. This prevented negotiations moving along. A spokesperson added 'it is difficult to see how any deal can be reached'
- [The Guardian's Jessica Elgot believes Labour](#) is ready to do a deal and then promise to whip its backbenchers in favour of a Kyle-Wilson amendment on a second referendum - as a way to show they serious about a fresh poll and, winking at Labour Eurosceptics at the same time

## **Theresa May cannot ignore her party forever**

- [Theresa May wants to stick around until the Conservative Party](#) conference in the autumn, according to her close colleagues. Robert Peston writes that 'no senior Tory will permit her to do this' and the chair of the 1922 Committee, Sir Graham Brady, is to meet May again and ask her for a specific resignation timetable. If she does not do so, he'll step up the pressure on her by pushing the Tory party emerging conference which will introduce rule changes to permit a new vote of no confidence in her within weeks. May has until the end of the day to provide a resignation timetable
- [The Evening Standard reported that Theresa May's allies](#) have warned Tory rebels that any attempt to alter the rules of the Conservative Party would be subject to a legal challenge from Theresa May, or a group of Tories acting on her behalf
- [Corbyn staring at a possible Labour Party rebellion](#) of his own, if he stitches up a deal with the Tories

## **The EU's chief Brexit negotiators pulled no punches in their behind the scenes comments about Theresa May and Brexit**

- [A BBC fly-on-the-wall documentary team has followed](#) the European Parliament's Brexit coordinating team around, led by Guy Verhofstadt, and in the broadcast (due to be later this week) Theresa May is described as 'insane' and 'pathetic' by the EU's chief Brexit negotiators

## **Cost of staging the European Election rises by £50m**

- [The extra costs, which is 50% higher than originally thought,](#) includes millions of pounds in contingency costs in case parties have to be reimbursed for the cost of candidates who never get to take up their seats

## **Boris Johnson to face a private prosecution over his Brexit campaign claims**

- [Private prosecutor Marcus Ball alleges that the former](#) foreign secretary committed three offences of misconduct in public office by endorsing and making statements which he knew to be false at a time when he was mayor of London and an MP (one of these is the £350m a week claim - found to be misleading by the UK Statistics Authority)

## **The Brexit Party and UKIP**

- [Police are investigating comments by UKIP candidate](#) Carl Benjamin, in which he said 'I wouldn't even rape you' to Labour MP Jess Phillips
- [Nigel Farage is claiming that former](#) Conservative Party donors are ready to provide 'big bucks' for his new party to fight a General Election
- [Nigel Farage denied he was a conspiract theorist](#) and refuted comments about his appearances on the Alex Jones Infowars show. He denied repeating vile and sickening antisemitic tropes such as 'Jewish bankers are plotting to replace nation states with a global government'
- [Cambridge UKIP election candidate](#) Peter Burkinshaw called for rough sleepers to be rounded up and put into camps

## **Economic Impact**

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### **Banks lose appetite for new Brexit fight**

While Britain debates the merits of a second Brexit referendum, London's financial centre is steering clear of the argument, resigned to the need to shift some business elsewhere. Burned by backing the ill-fated Remain campaign three years ago, major global and British banks told Reuters they would shy away from taking a similar position in a new vote, preferring to spend time and money on

“future-proofing” their business, including tackling outdated technology and moving into new markets. A Reuters survey of leadership attitudes at 17 British and global banks found just six of the 11 institutions who responded to the survey backed the idea of a People’s Vote to break a parliamentary impasse on a proposed exit deal. Four banks said they opposed another vote while one bank said it would remain agnostic on all Brexit scenarios and would let the political process - now stretching towards its third year - run its course.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-britain-eu-banks/banks-lose-appetite-for-new-brexite-fight-idUKKCN1SD1ZO>

## **Administrative Fall Out**

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### **EU staff leave Oxford hospitals in droves over Brexit anxiety**

The UK’s decision to quit the EU continues to deepen the NHS staffing crisis with local hospitals reporting a ‘significant’ and ‘unexpected’ increase in the number of EU nurses leaving their posts in March. According to Oxfordshire hospital chiefs, the rise is largely down to an increase in Spanish nurses quitting the country because potential changes to rules in Spain threaten to render their work experience in the UK worthless after Brexit. Currently, Spanish nurses can build up points by working in the UK and other EU countries which can be used to improve their job prospects and salaries if they want to work in hospitals in Spain.

<https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/17622068.eu-staff-leave-oxford-hospitals-in-droves-over-brexite-anxiety/>

### **NHS nursing crisis worsened by Brexit exodus**

Almost 5,000 nurses and midwives from EU27 countries have quit the NHS in the past two years, with many of those identifying Brexit as the trigger. The number of EU-trained nurses and midwives working in the NHS across the UK fell from a record high of 38,024 in March 2017 to 33,035 in March this year, a drop of 4,989, according to figures from the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), which regulates both professions. The 13% fall prompted renewed warnings that Britain’s decision to leave the EU was exacerbating the NHS’s growing staffing crisis. “The referendum result has made many EU nationals feel unwelcome. It’s no surprise nurses and midwives think they’ll be better off elsewhere,” said Sara Gorton, the head of health at the union Unison.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/may/08/nhs-nursing-crisis-worsened-by-brexite-exodus>

### **'A bigger blow than the 1956 Suez Crisis': Former top foreign office mandarin gives stark Brexit warning**

Sir Simon Fraser, who was top mandarin at the Foreign Office for five years, described Brexit as a bigger blow than the 1956 Suez Crisis, which became an emblem of British foreign policy humiliation. The UK’s credibility as a country that “pragmatically conducts affairs” had been “badly damaged” by the fallout from quitting the EU, he said, adding that the country’s “pivotal” role as a link between the US and Europe had been hit. Sir Simon said he also believes the nation’s security will be diminished.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/brexite-news-latest-britain-will-lose-global-influence-unless-it-can-shape-a-new-role-on-the-world-a4135891.html>

### **Travelodge seeks 3,000 students as it faces Brexit staff shortage**

Travelodge is aiming to recruit 3,000 students this summer with contracts that allow them to fit work around their studies, as the hospitality industry faces a Brexit-fuelled labour shortage. The budget hotel chain said its student recruitment drive was part of its plans to be “Brexit ready” and it is looking to fill roles across its existing 560 UK hotels, with 2,200 of the student jobs to be filled on a permanent basis, and 800 positions to be offered over the busy summer season. The jobs are in addition to the 3,000 roles Travelodge is planning to create over the next five years as it opens another 100 hotels. The company has already announced plans to try to fill some of those roles by tempting unemployed parents back into the workforce with flexible hours that fit around the school run.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/may/07/travelodge-seeks-3000-students-as-it-faces-brexit-staff-shortage>

## **Political Shenanigans**

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### **The UK will take part in European Parliament elections, May's government confirms**

The European Parliament elections will take place in the United Kingdom later this month, the government has confirmed. Theresa May's deputy David Lidington said on Tuesday there was no longer enough time to pass a Brexit deal through the UK House of Commons in order to prevent the elections going ahead. Lidington said in a statement that it was "not going to be possible to finish that process" before the date of the elections.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/uk-will-take-part-in-european-parliament-elections-government-confirms-2019-5>

*Additional sources: ([Huffington Post UK](#)) ([Huffington Post UK](#)) ([BBC News](#)) ([Reuters UK](#)) ([Politics Home](#)) ([The Independent](#))*

### **Whose side is Twitter on: misogynists or women in public life?**

Away from Twitter, in real life, meanwhile, we have a Ukip candidate, the odious Carl Benjamin, who released a video suggesting he "might cave" and rape Jess Phillips. After he had previously written on social media "he wouldn't even rape her", his party leader defended him. You cannot stand for elected office if you are subject to bankruptcy proceedings. But somehow you can publicly discuss the rape of a female MP and it's fine?

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/may/07/twitter-misogynists-women-public-life-social-media-abuse>

### **Theresa May's Team Gloomy About Chances of Labour Brexit Deal, Sources Say**

The U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May will face lawmakers in Parliament on Wednesday after another day of inconclusive talks with the opposition Labour Party further dented her hopes of reaching a Brexit deal. Already under pressure after a disastrous set of results for her Conservative Party in local elections last week, the beleaguered premier's cabinet concluded on Tuesday that cross-party talks are stalling and unlikely to deliver an agreement on the way forward, according to people familiar with the matter. That means the government's focus is likely to turn to what happens next, and how to offer Parliament a range of Plan B options to choose from, said the people, who asked not to be named discussing confidential issues.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-05-07/may-s-team-said-to-be-gloomy-about-chances-of-labour-brexit-deal>

### **Jean-Claude Juncker says it was a 'mistake' for EU to stay silent during Brexit referendum 'lies'**

The president of the EU Commission has said he regrets not intervening in the UK's Brexit referendum to correct "lies" about the bloc during the campaign. Speaking at a press conference on Tuesday, Jean-Claude Juncker said it was a "big mistake" to listen to David Cameron, who he said had asked Brussels to "stay silent". "The mistake I made was to listen too carefully to the British government - Cameron, because the then prime minister asked me not to interfere, not to intervene in the referendum campaign.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-news-juncker-vote-leave-boris-johnson-nhs-campaign-eu-a8902931.html>

### **Downing Street admits new UK MEPs may have to take their seats in Brussels**

Britain's new MEPs may end up having to take their seats in the European Parliament after all, Downing Street has admitted. David Lidington, Theresa May's de facto deputy, had already confirmed that the UK will have to take part in the EU elections on 23 May because of the Government's failure to deliver Brexit. However, the Government had hoped that the UK would have left the bloc by 30 June, meaning the 73 successful candidates would not have to travel to Brussels

when the new parliamentary session begins on 1 July.

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/foreign-affairs/brexit/news/103725/downing-street-admits-new-uk-meps-may-have-take-their>

### **Brexit: Will a cross-party deal happen?**

Inside both leaders' camps, there is a genuine desire, more intense since they both had a bad night at the polls on Thursday, to see if they can sketch out a joint escape route from the mess of Brexit. But the historically awful result for the prime minister does not seem to have shocked her into ditching her red lines - at least not yet. One former minister, experienced and not prone to make wild prediction, told me Number 10 was in "la la land" if they believed that could happen. About half an hour later, another former and experienced minister told me they believe, in fact, it will fly and perhaps by the end of this month. Whoever you ask, it is clear it is not straightforward. So when the two teams sit down again on Wednesday afternoon, whether it is "constructive" or "robust", there's still an awful lot to do.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48195463>

### **BBC BIAS: Farage confronts BBC on lack of coverage - 'we haven't seen you at any rallies'**

Brexit Party leader Nigel Farage took a swipe at the BBC during a press conference on Tuesday. The Brexit Party has said it will contest all 650 seats at a future general election as leader Nigel Farage said the party would have to fight to leave the EU beyond the upcoming European elections at the end of this month. Jessica Parker, a BBC News political journalist, asked Mr Farage about the role the Brexit Party would like to play in future negotiations, and if the UK was to seek a WTO Brexit, how much negotiating would be needed. Mr Farage replied: "Well, it is very very nice to see the BBC here, I must say, no it really is. "I have been all over the country speaking at big rallies with a couple of thousand people at most of them, we haven't seen the BBC at any of them. So it is jolly nice that you have made the effort to come." The quick remark prompted some jeers from audience members as Mr Farage continued. He said: "I also notice that on no single major current affairs debate or news programme has a single person from the Brexit Party appeared.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1123793/BBC-News-UK-Brexit-Party-Nigel-Farage-EU-European-elections-general-election-Theresa-May>

### **British government source sees Brexit breakthrough but not this week - BBC political editor**

A Brexit breakthrough in talks between Prime Minister Theresa May's government and the opposition Labour Party is possible but unlikely this week, the BBC's political editor cited an unidentified senior government source as saying. "Senior govt source says it IS possible though to see a way to a deal, but unlikely to be resolved this week," the BBC's Laura Kuenssberg said on Twitter. The aim is "to set out a path to get the Withdrawal Bill to Commons with a fair wind," she said.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-deal/british-government-source-sees-brexit-breakthrough-but-not-this-week-bbc-political-editor-idUKKCN1SD0LC?feedType=RSS&feedName=domesticNews>

### **Jeremy Hunt says voters are 'very, very angry' Brexit hasn't been delivered - so Tories must reach compromise with Labour**

Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt suggested he would reluctantly accept a Customs Union with the European Union in a compromise agreement with the Labour Party, saying "angry" voters want Brexit to be delivered. The Conservative frontbencher told the BBC's Radio 4 Today programme that while he did not want a Customs Union with the EU, the drubbing his party had received in last week's local elections meant a compromise needed to be reached.

<https://inews.co.uk/news/uk/brexit-jeremy-hunt-customs-union-conservatives-labour-bbc-radio-4-today/>

### **Labour accuses government of refusing to compromise as Brexit deadlock continues**

Labour has accused the Government of not being "willing to compromise" as negotiations on a joint-Brexit deal once again broke up without agreement. Shadow Business Secretary Rebecca Long-Bailey said the Tories were still refusing to move on their red lines and that it was still "difficult to see how any agreement can be reached". Senior frontbenchers from both parties met in the Cabinet Office for nearly three hours as part of their ongoing attempts to thrash out a compromise to put to a Commons vote.

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/labour-party/news/103727/labour-accuses-government-refusing-compromise>

### **Nigel Farage's Brexit Party 'Recruiting Candidates For Next General Election'**

The Brexit Party is recruiting candidates for the next General Election, Nigel Farage has revealed. The former Ukip leader said he was "confident" that his newly-formed party would be ready to fight a General Election by September. "We are, as of today, recruiting candidates to fight the next General Election," Farage told journalists at a press conference on Tuesday. "We are looking for 650 men and women and we want people with real-world experience – people who either in civic life or in business life have got some achievements under their belt," he said. "It will be a very new kind of politics."

[https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/nigel-farage-brexit-party-general-election-candidates\\_uk\\_5cd16b45e4b04e275d500c25](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/nigel-farage-brexit-party-general-election-candidates_uk_5cd16b45e4b04e275d500c25)

### **Jean-Claude Juncker says it was a 'mistake' for EU to stay silent during Brexit referendum 'lies'**

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<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-news-juncker-vote-leave-boris-johnson-nhs-campaign-eu-a8902931.html>

### **Labour Brexit negotiations failing after government concedes UK will take part in EU elections**

Labour's Brexit negotiations with the government appear to be failing, it has been hinted, after the government conceded that the UK will take part in EU elections, despite comments to the contrary. Rebecca Long-Bailey, shadow secretary for business and one of Labour's Brexit negotiators, gave an update on cross-party talks. She said: "Without a government that's willing to compromise it's difficult to see how any agreement can be reached." When quizzed on whether there's any point in continuing with negotiations, Ms Long-Bailey defiantly said "of course there's a point" before admitting there has been no movement or agreement.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2019-05-07/euro-elections-must-go-ahead-on-may-23-government-says/>

### **@JessicaElgot Rumours around Labour backbench circles that the party could do a deal with Tories but then promise to whip in favour Kyle-Wilson amendment on second referendum to show Labour members they are serious about fresh poll. With a nod and wink to Eurosceptic Labour backbenchers...**

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<https://twitter.com/jessicaelgot/status/1125816741945389058>

### **Theresa May cannot ignore her party forever, writes Robert Peston**

Close colleagues of the PM think she wants still to be PM and party leader at party conference, which on her view would be the showcase for the duo of potential leaders picked by MPs, prior to that final vote by members. I can find NO senior Tory who thinks the party will permit her to do that. And we should learn more about when and how she goes in the next 24 hours, because Brady will communicate the PM's response to his executive tomorrow afternoon. And they in turn will have to decide whether she has either given an acceptable resignation timetable, or failing that whether to step up the pressure on her to do so by changing Tory party rules to permit a new vote of no confidence in her within weeks. As I have said before, she remains PM despite her party, not because of it. And although her superpower is to defy political gravity, even she can't ignore her party forever.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2019-05-07/theresa-may-cannot-ignore-her-party-forever-writes-robert-peston/>

### **I Know You've Heard This Before But The Next Few Weeks Could Be Pivotal For Brexit. Here's Why.**

We've entered the stage that Number 10 aides and political journalists are embarrassingly calling the "death zone". That's because the next month is pivotal in deciding what happens next as the UK tries to leave the European Union — and will ultimately decide the fate of Theresa May's premiership. Everything from a deal passing, to May being ousted from Downing Street, to a push for a second referendum, to a further impasse lasting until October are all in play.

<https://www.buzzfeed.com/alexwickham/brexit-back-again>

### **Would MPs back a Corbyn-May pact?**

Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn will this afternoon resume efforts on a cross-party deal that can get Brexit across the line. But as their teams prepare to meet, MPs are asking whether any pact could possibly win majority support in the House of Commons? If Mrs May does a deal with Mr Corbyn, there would inevitably be a hefty Conservative rebellion. Any pact would require the prime minister to make a bolder commitment to membership of Europe's customs union. This would make it very hard for the UK to do trade deals with non-EU states and there would be significant Tory discontent. Nigel Evans, executive secretary of the 1922 Committee of backbench Tories, told the BBC at the weekend (reported in The Times): "If there is a compromise that turns out to be a kind of 'Brexit in name only' involving anything close to a customs union, there would be more than 100 Tory MPs who would never support it."

<https://www.ft.com/content/7f32ce66-70bd-11e9-bf5c-6eeb837566c5>

### **Brexit discussion to be banned from EU leaders' summit this week**

Europe has breathed a collective sigh of relief after EU officials announced that serious discussion of Brexit would be banned at an upcoming leaders' summit. Ahead of Thursday's meeting in the Romanian city of Sibiu, one senior EU official said the summit would be "in principle Brexit-free". For two years now the UK has repeatedly crashed EU meetings about other issues and steered discussions towards Brexit — often to the great annoyance of other countries. But since April, when the leaders agreed to delay the UK's departure until October, the continent has gone on a "Brexit holiday" and is using the time to discuss other issues.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-eu-summit-article-50-delay-theresa-may-juncker-sibiu-a8903126.html>

### **Brexit block: Corbyn facing MAJOR REBELLION from MPs who DEMAND another referendum**

Ardant Remainers within the opposition party are demanding any deal to leave the European Union is sealed with a confirmatory vote by the British people. The Prime Minister and Mr Corbyn have been at logger-heads over any potential cross-party deal with a dispute over a customs arrangement being the main stumbling block for both parties. However, even with a closer alignment to the bloc,

it is feared my Labour parliamentarians will still not vote to back an agreement in the House of Commons. One shadow cabinet minister told the Guardian: "Jeremy cannot be sure he has the numbers - even if he whipped it - so he cannot do a deal without a confirmatory vote." Discussions between the opposition parties will continue this afternoon with ministers set to outline proposals for a 'temporary customs arrangement' with Brussels until the next general election.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1123904/brexit-news-eu-european-union-theresa-may-jeremy-corbyn-brexit-deal>

### **Downing Street admits new UK MEPs may have to take their seats in Brussels**

David Lidington, Theresa May's de facto deputy, had already confirmed that the UK will have to take part in the EU elections on 23 May because of the Government's failure to deliver Brexit. However, the Government had hoped that the UK would have left the bloc by 30 June, meaning the 73 successful candidates would not have to travel to Brussels when the new parliamentary session begins on 1 July. Mr Lidington hinted that the timetable could slip once again when he said hopes to "certainly to get this done and dusted by the summer recess", which will begin at the end of July. The Prime Minister's spokesman later admitted that would push the exit date back to 1 August, meaning the MEPs would have to take their seats for a month. That would be yet another major embarrassment for Theresa May, who has already seen two Brexit deadlines come and go without success.

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/foreign-affairs/brexit/news/103725/downing-street-admits-new-uk-meps-may-have-take-their>

### **Theresa May pushes Brexit deadline back to July**

The European elections will go ahead and MEPs are likely to take their seats it emerged today after No 10 set a new deadline of mid-July to complete Brexit. Senior ministers said the government had abandoned attempts to claim that it may be able to meet a Brexit deadline that stops European elections going ahead on May 23. No 10 has instead set a new deadline of the Commons summer recess, likely to be the end of the third or fourth week of July, to finalise Brexit and pass legislation, suggesting that they expect MEPs are all but certain to take their seats on July 2. This suggests that Mrs May wants to stay until summer recess as prime minister, potentially pushing a leadership contest to the autumn, which could prompt a backlash from restive Tory MPs.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/theresa-may-pushes-brexit-deadline-back-to-july-k0trv653q>

### **@BBCLauraK Cabinet source says 'Cabinet decided it was untenable to pursue no deal in March - they have to decide whether it would be justifiable to the country if we end up in the same position again in October'**

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<https://twitter.com/bbclaurak/status/1125795130735255556>

### **Brexit: Theresa May meets Sir Graham Brady amid calls to resign**

Theresa May has met the chairman of an influential committee of backbench Tory MPs, Sir Graham Brady, amid calls for her to set a firm resignation date. It followed a request from the 1922 Committee for "clarity" on the issue. No 10 insisted the meeting was routine, but pressure is mounting on the PM, with local Tory associations confirming they will hold a vote of confidence in her leadership on 15 June. Meanwhile, cross-party talks to break the Brexit deadlock resumed.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48182976>

*Additional sources: (Daily Telegraph)*

## **Political Setbacks**

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### **Cost of staging European elections rockets by £50m**

The cost of staging this month's European elections has rocketed by £50 million after Theresa May delayed preparations by insisting the poll would not be necessary. The extra cost - which is 50 per cent higher than originally thought - includes millions of pounds in "contingency" costs in case parties have to be reimbursed for the cost of fielding candidates who never get to take up their seats in the European Parliament. Brexit-backing Tory MPs described the cost of the elections as "a complete waste of public money" and said taxpayers would be appalled. The Government is expected to announce later this week that the cost of the elections on May 23 will be £156m, compared to £108.7m when they were held last time

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/05/06/cost-staging-european-elections-rockets-50m/>

*Additional sources: (The Sun) (The Independent)*

### **Police investigate Ukip candidate over Jess Phillips rape comments**

Police are investigating comments by a Ukip candidate in the European elections speculating about whether he would rape the MP Jess Phillips amid growing concern over threats to politicians. Carl Benjamin, Ukip's candidate for South West England, sent a tweet to the MP for Birmingham Yardley in 2016 saying "I wouldn't even rape you." He added to the comments in a recent video saying: "With enough pressure, I might cave." West Midlands police confirmed officers were examining whether an offence had been committed. It comes as fears grow that toxic rows over Brexit in the run-up to European parliamentary elections later this month will further coarsen public debate.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/may/07/police-investigating-ukip-candidate-youtube-carl-benjamin-jess-phillips-comments>

*Additional sources: (Daily Mirror)*

### **Hard-working Conservative councillors have been sacrificed at the altar of May**

The Prime Minister must bear the brunt of the blame for last week's local election wipeout, says Norman Tebbit

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/05/07/hard-working-conservative-councillors-have-sacrificed-altar/>

### **Theresa May branded 'insane' and 'pathetic' by EU's chief Brexit negotiators in shocking BBC documentary**

Theresa May is labelled "insane" and "pathetic" by the EU's chief Brexit negotiators in a damaging BBC fly-on-the-wall film. Brexit: Behind Closed Doors shows members of the European Parliament's Brexit coordinating team, led by Belgian Guy Verhofstadt, mocking Britain and launching foul-mouthed rants at the PM.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/brexit/9024806/theresa-may-insane-brexit-behind-closed-doors/>

### **'A world first' - Boris Johnson to face private prosecution over Brexit campaign claims**

A crowdfunding legal case against Boris Johnson for allegedly abusing public trust during the EU referendum campaign is to receive a hearing in court later this month. Private prosecutor Marcus Ball alleges that the former foreign secretary committed three offences of misconduct in public office by endorsing and making statements which he knew to be false at a time when he was mayor of London and an MP. The allegation relates to the much-trumpeted claim by the Vote Leave campaign that the UK sends £350 million a week to the European Union, which was found to be misleading by the UK Statistics Authority.

<https://www.independent.ie/world-news/europe/britain/a-world-first-boris-johnson-to-face-private-prosecution-over-brexit-campaign-claims-38087479.html>

### **Nigel Farage is betraying his own voters**

Credit where it's due. It had not yet been 24 hours since Nigel Farage had been on the Sunday politics shows, warning of the "final betrayal" that was coming. And here he was, not even waiting for it to come, but delivering it himself. The Brexit Party, the party Farage set up himself to contest

the European elections he so desperately does not want to be contesting, was holding a press conference to announce it was betraying its own voters. Farage was introduced by the Brexit Party chairman, a man called Richard Tice, who is best known, though nevertheless unknown, for appearing at political events in a white open-topped bus with "Leave Means Leave" painted down the side. When it turned up at Tory party conference last year, he promised free non-EU booze to anyone who could spare five minutes to talk to him.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/nigel-farage-brexit-party-richard-tice-theresa-may-latest-a8903581.html>

### **Ex-Conservative donors ready to give 'big bucks' to Brexit Party, claims Nigel Farage**

Former Conservative donors are ready to provide "big bucks" for Nigel Farage's Brexit Party to fight a general election, the anti-EU campaigner has suggested. The Brexit Party has been formed to contest the upcoming European Parliament elections on 23 May, which the government has now confirmed will definitely take place. But Mr Farage used a news conference on Tuesday to set his sights beyond this month. Promising the Brexit Party would "be ready" to fight a general election "that took place any time from September onwards", Mr Farage said: "For us, these European elections on 23 May are but a first step.

<https://news.sky.com/story/ex-conservative-donors-ready-to-give-big-bucks-to-brexit-party-claims-nigel-farage-11713919>

### **Nigel Farage denies being conspiracy theorist after far-right talkshow appearances**

Nigel Farage, the Brexit party leader, has insisted he is not a conspiracy theorist after he repeatedly appeared on a far-right US talkshow and openly discussed ideas about a "new world order" linked to antisemitic tropes. The former Ukip leader distanced himself from Alex Jones, the host of the Infowars website, and claimed his appearances on the programme were infrequent, despite a Guardian investigation finding he gave interviews at least six times on the show. In his appearances on Jones's show, Farage discussed themes commonly associated with an antisemitic conspiracy theory that Jewish financiers are behind a plot to replace nation states with a global government. Jones has been banned from Facebook and is being sued by bereaved parents after claiming a US school shooting was faked.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/may/07/nigel-farage-denies-being-conspiracy-theorist-after-far-right-talks-how-appearances>

### **Brexit: Tory MPs tell Theresa May second referendum becoming 'inevitable' as Labour talks hopes fade**

Conservative MPs on both sides of the Brexit divide are telling Theresa May that a fresh referendum is becoming "inevitable", as talks with Labour to break the impasse looked set to fail. The prime minister faced the warning as she suffered the embarrassment of conceding this month's European elections will go ahead - and as her own deputy suggested the crisis would drag on until July. As cross-party talks entered their sixth week, Labour's Keir Starmer insisted he would force the Tories to end their refusal to contemplate a Final Say referendum as the price of a deal, saying it was "crunch time". Significantly, the attempt to put a public vote centre-stage was bolstered from an unlikely source when Daniel Kawczynski, a Tory Brexiteer, predicted it could become the only option "to break the gridlock".

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-second-referendum-deal-conservative-mps-theresa-may-labour-a8903691.html>

### **Brexiteer MP reveals option if May and Corbyn Brexit talks crumble - will anger Leavers**

The Government has been in Brexit negotiations with the Labour Party since before Easter after the Prime Minister reached out to Jeremy Corbyn to try to secure Britain's departure from the bloc. Tory MP, Daniel Kawczynski, a former member of the Conservative Party's eurosceptic European Research Group, warned the UK could face another referendum if talks fail. Mr Kawczynski claimed

another public vote would become “inevitable” and put the blame of those in the Tory Party and in the ERG “who refuse to compromise”.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1123873/Brexit-news-UK-Theresa-May-Jeremy-Corbyn-Labour-Party-European-Union-referendum>

### **Theresa May’s poisonous immigration legacy**

As Prime minister, Mrs May has proposed limiting immigration to those earning more than £30,000 a year. This has worried employers in fields from agriculture to healthcare. Josh Hardie, deputy director-general of the CBI employers’ group, said: “All skill levels matter to the UK economy.” Mrs May will not be around much longer. She has told her party that she will not contest the next general election, which is due in 2022, but few expect her to last until then. Will her immigration legacy outlast her? It depends on who succeeds her, whether Brexit happens and what form it takes. The UK’s EU residents, who have been promised that they will have a right to stay after Brexit, cannot take much comfort from what has happened to others. Institutional behaviour does not shift quickly. Once officials have been schooled to behave in a certain way, it takes time for them to change, even if the political will for a change exists, which it may not. The hostile environment policy has left a tawdry legacy and, as the immigration figures show, it did not even achieve its own objectives.

<https://www.ft.com/content/fd592a16-6c07-11e9-a9a5-351eeaf6d84>

### **Cambridge UKIP candidate says 'round up rough sleepers and put them in camps'**

A controversial UKIP election candidate has been condemned after calling for rough sleepers in Cambridge to be “rounded up and put in a camp outside the city”. Peter Burkinshaw said rough sleepers “obstruct” the streets and called for a “national solution”. The politician was writing in a local weekly newspaper when he made the controversial statement as part of a policy suggestion.

<https://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/news/cambridge-news/cambridge-ukip-council-candidate-says-16208169>

### **How Tommy Robinson could earn up to £2million in taxpayers' cash as an MEP**

Tommy Robinson could exploit EU rules to access millions of pounds of public money if he is elected in May’s European Parliament elections, a Telegraph investigation has revealed. The far right activist and his cronies could personally benefit to the tune of up to £2 million but he could access even more EU cash, which is paid in part by British taxpayers. Robinson, whose real name is Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, paid his deposit to stand in the elections on Thursday. European elections will be held in Britain unless the Brexit deal is ratified in Westminster before May 23.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/0/tommy-robinson-european-elections-mep/>

### **Tory MPs give Theresa May one day to set out 'roadmap' for her exit**

Theresa May has been given until tea time on Wednesday to come up with a “roadmap” to her resignation as leader of the Tory party - or she will have one forced upon her. Sir Graham Brady, the chairman of the 1922 committee of backbench Conservative MPs, is understood to have made clear backbenchers' frustration at a meeting on Tuesday night. Tory backbench frustration with Mrs May boiled over after David Lidington, her de facto deputy, confirmed that Britain will have to take part in the European Parliament elections in 15 days' time despite months of assurances that this would not happen.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/05/07/tory-mps-give-theresa-may-one-day-set-roadmap-exit/>

### **Brexit news latest: Theresa May's allies in legal threat to rebels who are trying to oust her**

Sir Graham Brady was due to meet Mrs May this afternoon on behalf of the executive to insist she give a firm departure date and timetable for a leadership contest. However, the senior supporter of Mrs May said “any attempt” to alter the rules would be “subject to a legal challenge” meaning that Downing Street or a group of Tories acting on behalf of Mrs May would go to court. The clash was caused by the abortive confidence vote forced last December by members of the European

Research Group, which Mrs May won comfortably. Under party rules, the PM is supposed to have a clear 12 months before any further confidence motion can be put.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/theresa-mays-allies-in-legal-threat-to-rebels-who-are-trying-to-oust-her-a4135801.html>

### **Brexit: The conditions are ripe for the biggest backlash imaginable**

Voters were certain that their wishes in the referendum would be carried out without too much difficulty: I lost count of the numbers of voters who, during the referendum and since, dismissed concerns about our withdrawal, not only from the EU but of its myriad political, economic and social auspices, with a variant of the following reply: "I'm sure they can sort it out." In other words the Brexit vote, as well as a cri de coeur for Westminster to listen, was also an affirmation of faith by the British public in the fundamental competence of the British state to prosecute even the most difficult political outcomes.

<https://news.sky.com/story/trumpism-is-coming-to-britain-and-nigel-farage-is-leading-the-charge-11714025>

### **Labour officials quit their posts with blast at Jeremy Corbyn over Brexit**

Senior Labour officials have quit their posts in disillusion at the party's position on Brexit. Aaron Austin Locke and Robert McIntosh announced their resignation as the top two office bearers in the Brighton Kemptown and Peacehaven constituency Labour party in an email to local members. They said they were unhappy with the party's failure to fully endorse another referendum on any Brexit deal passed by the House of Commons.

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/labour-party/news/103689/excl-labour-officials-quit-their-posts-blast>

### **Senior Tory MP suggests colleagues who failed to back Brexit deal should join other parties**

A senior Conservative MP has blasted colleagues who failed to support Theresa May's Brexit deal and suggested that they should quit and join another party. Charles Walker, who is vice chair of the 1922 Committee of Tory backbenchers hit out at Tory hardliners who he said were to blame for Britain still being in the European Union. The comments come as Nigel Farage's Brexit Party tops the polls for next month's EU elections in a backlash from Leave voters angry at the Government's failure to quit the bloc by the 29 March deadline.

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/conservative-party/news/103697/senior-tory-mp-suggests-colleagues-who>

### **Chipper Nigel Farage grins and barely tries to sound plausible**

It's no deal or nothing for Nige, and his Brexit party is ready to negotiate the non-negotiable. Nige rattled on undeterred. The Brexit party would contest a general election but it wouldn't have any credible policies. But he wouldn't seek to become an MP himself. Far too risky. Seven times bitten, eight times shy. Rather he was far better off showing his MEPs the Brussels ropes. How to fiddle expenses. That sort of thing. And just because he had previous form on antisemitism and Islamophobia didn't make him a racist. After 30 minutes or so, Farage appeared to lose interest. Enough was enough. It had been a decent morning's work. The more useless Westminster politicians appeared to be, the easier his job became. And right now it was something of a doddle. He didn't need to sound even vaguely plausible. All he had to do was stand up and insist he would be different. As long as nobody started to look too closely, all would be well.

[https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/may/07/chipper-nigel-farage-grins-and-barely-tries-to-sound-plausible?CMP=share\\_btn\\_tw](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/may/07/chipper-nigel-farage-grins-and-barely-tries-to-sound-plausible?CMP=share_btn_tw)

### **The only Brexit is a hard-right one. Labour must back another vote**

Whatever assurances May can offer, they will not stop the hard-right Tory Brexiteers in their quest to eradicate solidarity from the UK economy. If we are to avoid the fate of Ramsay Macdonald, then

any deal must be put to a vote of the people. To do otherwise would be to play either the knave or the fool – and gives Theresa May's successor the right to decide which we have been.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/may/07/brexit-right-labour-vote-tory-workers-rights-environment>

**Brexiters are still chasing unicorns rather than facing up to the reality of the backstop**

Brexit is a big deal for Ireland, whatever form it takes it will be bad for Ireland but there is a genuine appetite to minimise the damages of Brexit, allow for the closest possible future relationship and crucially protect the very fragile peace in Northern Ireland. In March, we came the closest so far to a disastrous no deal Brexit, a crash out scenario that would have a devastating economic impact as well as posing a greater risk to the peace process. We cannot let that happen with Conservative Party members suggesting changes on the Irish Border that are unworkable and dangerous and could endanger the peace process

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/05/07/brexiters-still-chasing-unicorns-rather-facing-reality-irish/>