

News from the Brexit Cliff Edge

2nd Apr 2019

News Highlights

Welcome to the Brexit Cliff Edge

Not pulling any punches

[Britain's highest ranking civil servant, Sir Mark Sedwill](#), has issued a letter to ministers outlining a 'doomsday' scenario of how the country would be affected in the event of a No Deal Brexit

- Sedwill's bombshell letter says No Deal will hamper police and security services and lead to the return of direct rule in Northern Ireland.
- There would be a 10% spike in food prices and the collapse of some businesses trading directly with the EU
- The government would come under pressure to bail out companies on the brink
- A recession will hit the UK and the pound's depreciation will be more harmful than it was in 2008
- The UK's legal and judicial system would come under enormous pressure.

UK now a laughing stock

- [Goldman Sachs said the chaotic approach to Brexit](#) since 2016 has cost the UK economy £600m per week, roughly 2.5% of its GDP.
- [The UK CEO of German manufacturing group Siemens](#) urged UK politicians to agree on a customs union and said 'the world used to consider the UK a beacon of stability, now it sees us as a laughing stock'
- [BMW is closing its Mini plant in Britain](#) for four weeks as previously announced, and Peugeot is closing its Vauxhall factory for two weeks. These previously agreed moves are to help these firms cope with any Brexit disruption
- [Easyjet said there was weakening demand](#) for holidays as it enters its busy summer period and it pointed to Brexit uncertainty as a likely cause

The cracks in Parliament exposed

- [Direct action group Extinction Rebellion](#) stripped off during the Brexit debate in the House of Commons to promote their campaign to highlight the urgency needed to tackle climate change
- [Factories are rushing to stockpile goods](#) in anticipation of Brexit. This has led to the Purchasing Manager's Index (PMI) rising for 32 months in a row, and it rose again in March

High Noon showdown in Downing Street

- [Theresa May is to hold a 5 hour cabinet meeting this morning](#). Two meetings: the first will be a political cabinet discussing strategy and party matters without officials. the second will be a conventional cabinet business meeting
- [The Guardian reported there is a desperate mood](#) in No10 today with talk of the Prime Minister calling a snap General Election. Last weekend's polls, though, show Labour jumping ahead of

the Conservatives for the first time in a while.

- [Theresa May has been warned that if she pursues a soft Brexit](#) is could shatter the Tory Party. She was handed a letter with 170 MPs signatures urging her to reject the prospect of asking the EU for a longer delay to the Brexit process. [The MPs urged her to not do this or fight the EU elections](#), indicating that they were leaning towards a No Deal Brexit option
- [The DUP has said in a BBC interview](#) they will not vote for Theresa May's deal a thousand times over and said it places the integrity of the Union over Brexit
- RTE News reported that the EU is actively preparing for No Deal and expect that the UK pays more than 10bn Euros to it. [This money would be used to guarantee](#) grant funding the university research sector among other matters
- It was revealed that one [government department alone had spent £5.5m](#) in a single month on management consultants to help with Brexit policy
- MPs debated four motions that summed up the alternative to Theresa May's deal during the day. In the evening MPs voted against them all. [The two motions with the highest number of votes were the Customs Union](#) which lost by 3 votes and polled 273 in favour. Then the Second Referendum which polled 280 votes and was beaten by 12 votes
- Conservative Party's Nick Boles, [who proposed the Common Market 2.0 option](#) during the indicative vote debate - told the House of Commons that he was resigning the Conservative Party whip and that 'my party refuses to compromise'
- MPs in the [chamber debating the indicative votes came in for stick from the press](#), with Politics.co.uk's Ian Dunt describing the factions favouring each indicative vote motion as experts in forming a circular firing squad
- [The government's chief whip, Julian Smith](#), was critical of Theresa May's post 2017 General Election strategy with regard to Brexit in a BBC documentary on the same theme
- [Theresa May was said to be pondering](#) bringing her Withdrawal Agreement one more time. Hardliners in her own party were also preparing to defeat it once more

Jobs at Risk

Banks keep options open and hold fire on Brexit exodus

The City of London's biggest international banks have moved fewer than 1,500 jobs from the UK in the run-up to Brexit, after slashing their estimates of the staff they need onshore in the EU after Britain leaves the bloc. Financial Times research shows top lenders are preserving as much optionality as possible by moving fewer people from the UK to the 27 other EU countries as they strive to avoid costly actions while grappling with deepening political uncertainty. London's top 15 international banks have collectively cut fewer than 3,500 jobs in the UK capital since the Brexit vote in June 2016, amounting to about 5 per cent of their City headcounts. Fewer than 1,500 of those moves were linked to Brexit, interviews with senior bank executives have revealed.

<https://www.ft.com/content/8eeafb6a-5161-11e9-b401-8d9ef1626294>

Economic Impact

Brexit costs UK £600m per week, says Goldman study

Brexit has cost the UK around £600m every week since the 2016 referendum, according to a report by Goldman Sachs that highlights the economic impact of the uncertainty surrounding Britain's exit from the EU. The investment bank said that Brexit has cost Britain about 2.4 per cent of gross domestic product, compared with a hypothetical "Doppelgänger" economy that did not withstand a Brexit shock. Its estimates suggest that the UK economy has underperformed other advanced economies since mid-2016 as a result.

<https://www.ft.com/content/fb6285a4-5460-11e9-a3db-1fe89bedc16e>

Top mandarin's bombshell No Deal warning: Food up 10%, police unable to protect

public, direct rule in Ulster, worse recession than 2008 says leaked letter

Sir Mark's 14-page letter warns: a) No Deal would result in a 10 per cent spike in food prices and the collapse of some businesses that trade with the EU; b) The Government would come under pressure to bail out companies on the brink; c) It would hamper the ability of the police and security services to keep people safe; d) It would lead to the reintroduction of direct rule in Northern Ireland for the first time since 2007; e) A recession will hit the UK and the pound's depreciation will be 'more harmful' than in 2008; f) Our legal authorities and judicial system would be put under 'enormous pressure'.

https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6875015/Top-mandarins-bombshell-No-Deal-Brexit-warning.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490

Brexit uncertainty has cost Britain £600 million a week - Goldman Sachs

Britain's chaotic exit from the European Union has cost the economy about 600 million pounds per week since the 2016 referendum, Goldman Sachs said on Monday in a report that underscores how Brexit uncertainty has dented investment. The report found that Brexit had cost the world's fifth largest economy nearly 2.5 percent of GDP at the end of last year, compared to its growth path prior to the mid-2016 vote on exiting the bloc. It has also lagged other advanced economies. "Politicians in the UK are still struggling to deliver on that vote," Goldman Sachs economists wrote in a note to clients.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-goldmansachs/brexit-uncertainty-has-cost-britain-600-million-a-week-goldman-sachs-idUKKCN1RD1T8>

Brexit is turning Britain into a laughing stock, says Siemens UK boss

The UK chief executive of the German manufacturing group Siemens has said Brexit is making Britain an international "laughing stock", while urging MPs to pursue a softer withdrawal from the EU. Jürgen Maier said Britain was wrecking its reputation for business stability, putting investment in the country at risk and threatening the economy. A no-deal Brexit would inflict further damage, he said, while urging MPs to reach a consensus and back a customs union with the EU. Writing an open letter to MPs published by the Politico website, he said: "The world is watching, and where the UK used to be beacon for stability, we are now becoming a laughing stock.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/apr/01/brexit-britain-siemens-uk-eu>

BMW, Peugeot go ahead with UK plant shutdowns despite Brexit delay

BMW's Mini plant in Britain closes for four weeks from Monday and Peugeot's Vauxhall car factory shuts for two weeks in moves planned months ago to help the firms deal with any disruption resulting from Brexit, which has since been delayed.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-autos/bmw-peugeot-go-ahead-with-uk-plant-shutdowns-despite-brexit-delay-idUKKCN1RD2M6>

Administrative Fall Out

Protesters strip off in House of Commons during Brexit debate

A group of protesters have been arrested after stripping off in the House of Commons as MPs debated Brexit. Direct action group Extinction Rebellion said semi-naked activists had glued their hands ...

<https://news.sky.com/story/protesters-strip-naked-in-commons-brexit-debate-11681629>

Holiday bookings hit by 'unanswered questions' on Brexit, easyJet warns

EasyJet has warned that "unanswered questions surrounding Brexit" are weakening demand as it heads into its key summer trading period. Shares in the low-cost airline fell 9% after it said it was now "more cautious" about its expected financial performance in the key second half of its financial year from now until the end of September. Chief executive Johan Lundgren said the carrier was

operationally well-prepared for Britain's departure from the European Union but that it was seeing "softness" in the market in both the UK and Europe.

<https://news.sky.com/story/easyjet-warns-brexit-uncertainty-is-hitting-sales-11681146>

For Many British Businesses, Brexit Has Already Happened

For more than three decades, London has attracted global banks, trading operations, hedge funds, asset managers and sovereign wealth funds, becoming a global financial center second to none. Brexit has jeopardized that status.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/01/business/british-business-brexit.html>

Factories rush to stockpile for Brexit

UK factories stockpiled goods for Brexit at an unexpectedly high rate last month, boosting manufacturing growth to a 13-month high, according to a closely watched survey. The research, by IHS Markit/CIPS, found that the rate of increase in stocks hit a survey record high for the third month in a row. The Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for the manufacturing sector rose to 55.1 in March, from 52.1 in February. A figure above 50 indicates expansion. The PMI has remained above that benchmark for 32 months in a row.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-47772782>

Brexit: Will flights be disrupted?

The EU has agreed measures to allow "basic connectivity" for a year, to prevent planes being grounded the day after a no-deal Brexit. UK Aviation Minister Baroness Sugg has confirmed that this will be reciprocated. This doesn't provide the exact same access as before, though. It allows for "point-to-point" trips - from the UK to another EU country and vice versa. But it doesn't cover onward flights to other European countries - or flights by EU carriers between two UK cities.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-47225806>

Political Shenanigans

Brexit: Theresa May calls crunch cabinet talks as UK heads towards election that ministers admit 'nobody actually wants'

It means that on Tuesday the usual 90-minute cabinet meeting will be ditched, with ministers told to clear their diaries for two meetings lasting five hours in total. The first, between 9am and noon, will be a "political cabinet", where top ministers discuss political strategy and party matters without government officials listening in. This will then be followed by the more usual cabinet meeting to discuss government matters, such as no-deal Brexit preparations, with civil servants taking notes. Downing Street insisted on Monday that the prime minister still believed a general election was not in the national interest, despite deputy-Conservative chairman James Cleverly admitting his party was engaged in "sensible and pragmatic" planning for a snap poll.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-theresa-may-cabinet-vote-election-single-market-mps-a8849986.html>

'Desperate mood' in No 10 as insiders considered snap election

Inside the No 10 bunker, there has been heated discussion about whether a snap general election fronted by Theresa May remains a possibility. But with the Conservatives plunging below Labour in the polls this weekend and the party's split over Europe looking increasingly irreconcilable, there are growing warnings from Tory grandees that even entertaining such a course of action is deeply unwise. "It was certainly being tested," said one Downing Street adviser. "Some people weren't exactly arguing in favour, but were saying it could be the least worst option."

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/apr/01/desperate-mood-in-no-10-as-insiders-considered-snap-election>

Tory MPs in revolt as 170 sign letter demanding that Theresa May rejects long Brexit delay

Theresa May is today facing a Tory revolt after 170 of her MPs signed a letter begging her not to agree a long Brexit delay. A letter was sent to No10 which was signed by 170 MPs - more than half their whole number - demanding the UK leaves the EU within the next few months. The letter insists the PM must uphold the Tories' manifesto commitments on Brexit, meaning there must be no long exit delay and no EU elections fought. In a serious challenge to her authority, it was also signed by 10 Cabinet ministers and 20 other members of her Government.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8755181/tory-mps-revolt-demanding-theresa-may-rejects-long-brexit/>

Brexit: DUP 'will oppose PM's deal 1,000 times'

A Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) MP has said the party will not vote for Theresa May's Brexit deal even if she presents it to the House of Commons "a thousand times". The party's Brexit spokesman Sammy Wilson said its position was fixed. He accused former prime minister Sir John Major and Justice Secretary David Gauke of "scare tactics". They said on Sunday that a no-deal Brexit could jeopardise Northern Ireland's place in the UK.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-47767649>

Soft Brexit will shatter Tory party, Theresa May warned

Theresa May was warned last night that she faced resignations and a split in the Conservative Party if she agrees to pursue a "soft" Brexit this week. Ministers including Chris Grayling and Penny Mordaunt have made it clear they would consider resigning if the prime minister bows to the will of the Commons, should it vote for a customs union with the EU tonight.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/soft-brexit-will-shatter-tory-party-may-warned-rl6r8g6sv>

Brexit customs union bad for foreign policy and trade, says Truss

The idea of Brexit based on a customs union is "incredibly problematic", Liz Truss has said, as Theresa May faces increasingly open cabinet splits before a new round of indicative votes which could point the way towards a softer departure. With MPs expected to vote on Monday evening on some of the eight tabled proposals, the chief secretary to the Treasury said she vehemently opposed the idea of the government backing a customs union if MPs voted for the option. The justice secretary, David Gauke, said on Sunday he did not think it would be "sustainable to ignore parliament's position" if MPs ruled out a no-deal Brexit and opted for a customs union.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/apr/01/brexit-customs-union-bad-for-foreign-policy-and-trade-says-truss>

Additional sources: (BBC News)

Labour Must Spread The Truth That Any Brexit Will Screw The Working Class More Than No Brexit At All

Today in the Commons our politicians will try again to cobble together a Brexit of some sort. They hope this in extremis approach will get through Parliament when, so far, our political class has repeatedly failed to agree a plan. May's deal is as dead as a dodo, and political consensus among our rulers about where to go next is yet to emerge.

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/brexit-jeremy-corbyn_uk_5ca202a1e4b0474c08d1c60a

MPs prepare to vote on Brexit options for second time

MPs are getting ready for the second round of so-called "indicative" votes on EU withdrawal options, with cross-party support for softer versions of Brexit.

<https://stv.tv/news/politics/1436737-mps-prepare-to-vote-on-brexit-options-for-second-time/>

Dutch MPs call for ring-fencing of citizens' rights post Brexit

Dutch MPs will on Tuesday vote on a motion to make guaranteeing the rights of British nationals in Europe and Dutch nationals in the UK a separate issue in the event of a no-deal Brexit. The motion was drawn up by CDA MP Pieter Omtzigt and D66 parliamentarian Kees Verhoeven and calls on the Dutch government to lobby Brussels to take the section on citizens' rights out of the withdrawal

agreement and make it a separate matter. The recommendation was included in the duo's last report on the Brexit preparations but generated a 'negative reaction' from the Dutch government, Omtzigt told DutchNews.nl.

<https://www.dutchnews.nl/news/2019/04/dutch-mps-call-for-ring-fencing-of-citizens-rights-post-brexit/>

Theresa May STEPS IN to protect Dominic Grieve after losing no confidence vote over Brexit

The Prime Minister is backing the Tory grandee after party association members in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, voted to see their constituency's MP deselected, Home Office minister Victoria Atkins said. When asked whether Mrs May would step in and help Mr Grieve retaining his seat, Mrs Atkins told Pienaar's Politics on BBC 5 Live: "The Prime Minister's been very clear about this. Dominic has given years and years of service to the parliamentary party, to the country, and the fact is that his Ukip opponent used a meeting on Friday to bring about this debate."

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1108206/brexit-news-dominic-grieve-theresa-may-no-confidence-vote-beaconsfield-victoria-atkins>

Brexit: Parliament again fails to agree on how to leave the E.U., as deadline looms

Britain's Parliament still can't agree on how to move forward on Brexit. Four nonbinding measures that would have outlined a potential way forward on exiting the European Union all failed to gain a majority Monday. The vote came after lawmakers last week rejected a withdrawal agreement proposed by Prime Minister Theresa May for a third time. Two of these votes were the largest and fourth largest losses in parliamentary history. Despite these defeats, May is reportedly considering putting her deal up for yet another vote in Parliament this week.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/brexit-referendum/brexit-parliament-again-set-vote-e-u-divorce-options-n989406>

No-deal Brexit a 'real possibility', says Coveney

Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney has said Ireland needs to prepare for the "worst possible outcome" on Brexit. Mr Coveney said the British political system is "unpredictable and semi-chaotic at the moment". He said with a "deeply divided" parliament Ireland cannot be sure what the outcome of the votes there will be this week. Mr Coveney said a no-deal Brexit has shifted from a "remote possibility" to a "real possibility", but said while he personally does not think it will happen, we cannot be sure.

<https://www.rte.ie/news/brexit/2019/0401/1039925-brexit/>

EU to seek €10bn from UK even if no-deal Brexit

The European Union is expected to seek more than €10bn in UK contributions for this year even in the event of a no-deal scenario on 12 April, RTÉ News understands. In exchange, UK beneficiaries of EU funding would continue to receive grants for the rest of the year. A senior EU source told RTÉ News: "We hope to have it wrapped up this week." The official said there had been "informal" signals from the UK Treasury that Britain would be willing to consider paying the remainder of its budget obligations until the end of the year. This is in order that universities, local communities and any other beneficiaries would not be frozen out of EU structural, regional development and research funding immediately.

<https://www.rte.ie/news/brexit/2019/0401/1039964-eu-budget-uk/>

UK Brexit plan has failed — but a customs union can unite MPs

The U.K. Office for National Statistics on Friday confirmed investment is in its worst slump since the last recession, and we already know 80 percent of businesses say Brexit has damaged investment decisions. Worse, the damage this is doing to the country's hard-won reputation as a serious and stable place to do business is now all too real. The world is watching, and where the U.K. used to be beacon for stability, we are now becoming a laughing stock. I personally can no longer defend the action of our parliament when reporting to my managing board, making it hard to win support for

finely balanced investment decisions that in the end have an impact on U.K. jobs, innovation and the competitiveness of our activities here.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/uk-brexit-plan-has-failed-but-a-customs-union-can-unite-mps/>

The Guardian view on Brexit votes: put nation before party

MPs' failure to come together increases the chance that hard Brexiters will frame the crisis as an opportunity to get people to vote against their economic interests

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/01/the-guardian-view-on-brexit-votes-put-nation-before-party>

It's time for common sense on Brexit - a customs union must prevail

The votes should be free and unwhipped. The Speaker should plead for it. The whips should grant it. The chief government whip, Julian Smith, has admitted an "unprecedented" collapse in discipline, but we are where we are. The nation is screaming for unity and resolution - employers, unions, industries big and small, opinion polls, every non-maverick lobby in the land. The Westminster bubble must burst.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/01/common-sense-customs-union-theresa-may-cross-party>

Ed Vaizey on second referendum: 'I may end up supporting it'

Wantage MP Ed Vaizey has hinted that he is moving towards supporting a second referendum on Brexit. Asked if he would back another vote, the former minister replied: "Still unconvinced but may end up supporting." Mr Vaizey suggested he was unaware of reports this morning claiming he is one of a number of Tories set to back the 'Kyle-Wilson amendment', which would see an approved Brexit deal put to voters.

<https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/17540108.ed-vaizey-on-second-referendum-i-may-end-up-supporting-it/>

Brexit votes: MPs fail to back proposals again

MPs have again failed to agree on proposals for the next steps of Brexit. The Commons voted on four motions for leaving the EU, including a customs union and a Norway-style arrangement - keeping the UK in the single market - but none gained a majority. The votes were not legally binding, so the government would not have been forced to adopt the proposals. Theresa May's plan that she negotiated with the EU has been rejected twice by historic margins in Parliament. The withdrawal agreement section of her deal was voted down again by MPs on Friday. Mrs May now has until 12 April to either seek a longer extension from the EU to take a different course or decide to leave the EU without a deal.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-47781009?ns_source=twitter&ns_campaign=bbc_politics&ns_linkname=news_central&ns_mchannel=social

Cabinet Office spends £5.5m in a month on Brexit consultants

One government department alone spent £5.5m in a single month on management consultants to help with Brexit policy, it has emerged. Labour analysed government data on all spending of £25,000 or more by the Cabinet Office in January, the last month for which figures have been released, and calculated that the amount spent on external consultants for Brexit-related work was £6m. The Cabinet Office said just over £400,000 of this was spent not on consultants but by a media buying company to purchase advertising space for the government's Brexit-related public information campaign. It said the £5.5m, which primarily went to multinational companies including EY, PwC and Bain, covered necessary extra skills for Brexit-related tasks such as operational and project management tasks. The monthly cost was expected to increase as the Brexit process accelerated, the department said.

https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/apr/01/cabinet-office-spent-55m-in-a-month-on-brexit-consultants?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

@Telegraph Indicative vote results in the House

Indicative vote results in the House Customs Union: 273 Ayes - 276 Noes Common Market 2.0: 261 Ayes - 282 Noes Second Referendum: 280 Ayes - 292 Noes Parliamentary Supremacy: 191 Ayes - 292 Noes

<https://twitter.com/Telegraph/status/1112825349358927877>

For the right price, Macron will change his position on extending Article 50

To the delight of ardent Brexiteers, French President Emmanuel Macron has recently indicated that extending the UK's European Union membership past 12 April is by no means certain and that no-deal next week is a real possibility. Is this just theatre, or could he really mean it? There are four key reasons for Macron to make such noises. First, many EU leaders and members of the European Parliament are fed up of Brexit and fed up of Britain. If push comes to shove they will probably agree to Britain staying in the EU until December 2020, the end of the current budgetary framework period.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/04/01/right-price-macron-will-change-position-on-extending-article/?hootPostID=aa7104f0069d099e7528a0988efcc495>

Brussels to send bill for billions of pounds if UK crashes out with no deal

Brussels is demanding Britain pay up billions of pounds even if the UK crashes out of the bloc in a no-deal Brexit on April 12. The EU wants about £5.3 billion from Britain, UK officials said. The figure takes into account deductions from the British rebate and funding already paid back to Britain. The money would guarantee that the EU continues to pay out committed funding to British recipients, such as farmers and university researchers, until the end of 2019. "We hope to have it wrapped up this week," the Irish broadcaster RTE News quoted a senior EU source as saying on Monday.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/04/01/brussels-demand-no-deal-brex-it-bill-worth-billions-pounds/?hootPostID=237800399a4b6e5a3a87dd9d2660a5f8>

Britain staying in customs union is 'best thing' that could happen to EU, says Guy Verhofstadt

Britain staying in a customs union after Brexit would be the "best thing that could happen" to the European Union, Guy Verhofstadt said, as EU sources warned Brussels would dictate trade policy under such an agreement. The UK could leave the EU by May 22, and avoid a Brexit extension of up to two years and the need to hold European elections, if MPs built a cross-party majority behind a customs union, Mr Verhofstadt said. A customs union would help solve the vexed issue of the Irish border but it will prevent Britain from pursuing an independent trade policy, the European Parliament's Brexit coordinator said

https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/04/01/britain-staying-customs-union-best-thing-could-happen-eu-says/?li_source=LI&li_medium=li-recommendation-widget

Only one option remains with Brexit - prorogue Parliament and allow us out of the EU with no-deal

The legal and democratic principles of our constitution now point to one resolution of the EU withdrawal crisis: prorogation of Parliament for two or three weeks, so that ministers can settle down to exercising their abundant statutory and prerogative powers to prepare for the immediate consequences of a no-deal withdrawal on April 12. On that date the European Treaties will cease to apply to this country - the UK will withdraw from the EU - by the automatic effect of Article 50.3 as modified by decision of the European Council, with the United Kingdom's agreement, on March 22.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/04/01/one-option-remains-brex-it-prorogue-parliament-allow-us-eu/>

Labour Breaches Own Manifesto By Backing Plan For Continued Free Movement After Brexit

Corbyn's party will support Common Market 2.0, alongside proposals for a customs union and a second referendum.

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/labour-backs-brexit-plan-which-would-mean-continued-free-movement-of-people_uk_5ca2198de4b0bc0dacabf7f9

What happens in the Brexit process now that MPs have again rejected the alternatives on offer?

MPs have again rejected a series of alternatives to Theresa May's Brexit deal. A call for a customs union after Brexit was defeated by just three votes, a referendum on any deal was rejected by 12 votes, the Common Market 2.0 plan lost by 21 votes and cancelling Brexit to prevent a no-deal scenario was defeated by 101.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2019-04-01/what-happens-in-the-brexit-process-now-that-mps-have-once-again-rejected-the-alternatives-on-offer/>

MPs fail to agree on alternative Brexit option to Theresa May's plan to leave the EU

MPs have rejected all four Brexit alternatives tabled for the second round of the indicative vote process. Moments after the results were announced Conservative former minister Nick Boles quit after he told the Commons he can "no longer sit for this party" .

<https://www.itv.com/news/2019-04-01/mps-brexit-indicative-vote-result/>

Brexit: EU leaders plan for no deal as other options dissolve

EU leaders used to use the threat of a no-deal Brexit as a negotiating tactic (as did the UK). They now believe it to be a very real prospect. That has led to a number of countries - notably France - questioning the logic of delaying Brexit for much longer. They wonder if the UK will ever unite around a Brexit Way Forward - be it a softer Brexit, no deal or no Brexit. Would a Brexit extension, allowing for a general election or a second referendum, really settle the issue, they ask? Or will the EU and UK end up in a no deal scenario anyway, after countless extra months of agonising (and costly) uncertainty?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-47756377>

Political Setbacks

Brexit: MPs AGAIN reject every option for a way forward in indicative votes

Brexit has been thrown into chaos yet again after MPs rejected every single option in a new round of "indicative votes" on the way forward. In a bid to break the impasse, MPs seized control of the Parliamentary timetable to vote on four different options. These included a customs union, a Norway Plus style deal, an extension that could prevent No Deal and a second referendum. But all of the options were voted down. Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn called for fresh votes on the same options on Wednesday. He said: "It's disappointing that no solution has won a majority this evening but I remind the House that the Prime Minister's unacceptable deal has been overwhelmingly rejected three times. "The margin of defeat for one of the options tonight was very narrow indeed and the Prime Minister's deal has been rejected by very large majorities on three occasions.

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/breaking-brexit-mps-vote-against-14221064>

Additional sources: ([The Sun](#)) ([Daily Mail](#)) ([Politico](#)) ([BBC News](#))

Merkel Wants Irish Ready for Painful Choice If Brexit Goes Wrong

If the U.K. tumbles out of the bloc without a deal, the question that has dogged Brexit talks -- how to avoid a hard border on the island of Ireland -- becomes an acute crisis. For Ireland, the dilemma is this: policing the border could endanger the region's peace process. Failing to do so could endanger Ireland's access to the single market.

https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-04-01/merkel-wants-irish-ready-for-painful-choice-if-brexit-goes-wrong?utm_campaign=socialflow-organic&cmpid%3D=socialflow-facebook-brexit&utm_medium=social&utm_content=brexit&utm_source=twitter

If Juncker is tired of Brexit now, a poorly timed British general election will really test his

patience

For Jean-Claude Juncker, Mr Europe himself, to come down with the disease of Brexit exhaustion while on a trip to Rome is testament to the virulence of the disease: "With our British friends we have a lot of patience, but even patience is running out," Juncker said in an interview with Italian public broadcaster RAI. "So far we know what the British parliament says no to, but we don't know what it might say yes to." The treatment? Mr Juncker is happy to write his own prescription: for the British to make a decision about their future relationship with the European Union. Once administered, Brexit fatigue could clear up remarkably swiftly.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/jean-claude-juncker-brexit-patience-european-commission-parliament-a8849561.html>

Lesley Riddoch: Why are bungling Brexit elites escaping public wrath?

Johnson and Rees Mogg, turncoat architects of Brexit, are escaping the wrath of the public, but why, asks Lesley Riddoch Britain is approaching the perfect political storm this week and every new course to avoid a hard Brexit looks hazardous for a captain ...

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/lesley-riddoch-why-are-bungling-brexit-elites-escaping-public-wrath-1-4899083>

Boles quits Conservative Party over Brexit

Conservative lawmaker Nick Boles said on Monday he was resigning from Prime Minister Theresa May's governing party after his attempt to seek an alternative route forward to break the deadlock in parliament over Brexit was rejected. The proposal Boles put forward for a so-called Common Market 2.0, or enhanced Norway-style deal which would include membership of the EU's single market as well as a customs arrangement with the EU, lost by 282 votes to 261. "I have given everything to an attempt to find a compromise that can take this country out of the European Union while maintaining our economic strength and our political cohesion, I accept I have failed," Boles told parliament. "I have failed chiefly because my party refuses to compromise, I regret therefore to announce that I can no longer sit for this party." Boles later said on Twitter he would sit as an "Independent Progressive Conservative."

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/boles-quits-conservative-party-over-brexit-212429055.html>

A government of national unity is another Brexit fantasy

MacDonald's choice offers Tories a clue to what is coming if they do not back her deal — a shattered party or an early election. Mrs May is planning yet another push, incorporating a backbench Labour plan for more parliamentary control over the next stage. With Labour backing every soft Brexit option, only the most obtuse Tory hardliners can believe there is a better option on offer. Too bad it is the most obtuse hardliners she now needs to convince.

<https://www.ft.com/content/cddda1b4-5455-11e9-91f9-b6515a54c5b1>

Brexit protester who disrupted Eurostar admits nuisance charge

The Brexit protester who disrupted services on the Eurostar last week by standing on top of St Pancras station in London has admitted a charge at Westminster magistrates court of causing a public nuisance. Terry Maher, 44, from Camden, north London, climbed on to the roof of the station at 7pm on Friday and remained there until 8am on Saturday. He waved a St George's flag and told arresting officers he was angry at politicians for "fucking up Brexit". Maher's actions took place on the day the UK was supposed to leave the European Union and caused the cancellation of eight Eurostar services and major delays for thousands of passengers.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/apr/01/eurostar-services-brexit-disrupter-admits-public-nuisance-offence>

Brexit: Germany's EU minister blames clueless 'silver spoon' Westminster elite for 'stshow'**

The clueless "silver spoon" elite that dominates British politics is to blame for the current Brexit

crisis in the UK, Germany's Europe minister has said. Speaking in Berlin, Michael Roth said "90 per cent" of Britain's cabinet ministers have "no idea how workers think, live, work and behave" and that their ignorance had led to a "big s**tshow". "Brexit is a big s**tshow, I say that now very undiplomatically," Mr Roth said at a gathering of his Social Democratic Party over the weekend.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/brexit-news-germany-michael-roth-rees-mogg-boris-johnson-a8849271.html>

Additional sources: (Daily Mail) (BBC News)

Brexit: Jacob Rees-Mogg defends tweet of far-right AfD clip

Conservative British MP Jacob Rees-Mogg has defended his tweet of a speech made by the co-leader of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party. The prominent Brexit supporter posted the footage of Alice Weidel speaking in Germany's parliament. In it, she questioned the European Union's (EU) Brexit negotiating strategy and called for EU reform. AfD was formed in 2013 and is Germany's main opposition party, campaigning for tougher immigration laws. The party has provoked outrage in Germany for incendiary remarks from its members on race, religion, and Nazi Germany.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-47770959>

Petitions and jokes will not halt this march into Brexit calamity

In the classic sense of a very modern word, we are being trolled. Yet the outward mood of many people opposed to Brexit remains subdued, weary and fatalistic. As austerity grinds on and the social fabric carries on fraying, the impossibility of leaving the EU without truly dire economic and social damage is self-evident. Boris Johnson, Michael Gove and - no, really - Dominic Raab are jostling to get the keys to 10 Downing Street. Our system of government has creaked to a halt; the official opposition is divided, confused and often mute. Anger might seem like the most apposite response, but what we have mostly seen is a strange passivity.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/01/petitions-jokes-halt-brexit-calamity-brexit-english>

Climate protesters flash MPs during Brexit debate

Police have arrested 12 people on suspicion of outraging public decency after climate change activists stripped off to stage a protest in the House of Commons while MPs debated Brexit. A group of largely-naked Extinction Rebellion protesters with messages painted on their bodies stood up in the public gallery overlooking the debate on Monday night. Some were pressed against the glass which separates the gallery from the chamber, with police who were sent to the scene to negotiate saying one had "super-glued" themselves to the window. MPs were seen taking a glance up at the protest and Speaker John Bercow maintained that the debate on the second stage of the Brexit alternatives would proceed despite the protest.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/04/01/climate-protesters-flash-mps-brexit-debate/>

We are heading for a long Brexit delay - and even ERG MPs are resigned to the fact

The Independent Group of MPs (TIG) will be supporting any measures that provide for a people's vote with Remain on the ballot and, if that not possible, for the revocation of Article 50 if that's what it takes to stop a no-deal Brexit - we certainly will not facilitate Brexit like the main parties. But, whatever gets through, I'm not sure we'd be able to pass all the necessary legislation even by 22 May at this rate, the latest date pencilled in by the European Council for our departure.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/brexit-indicative-votes-customs-unions-erg-referendum-tig-a8848911.html>

WATCH: Baker refuses to name person who gave him advice on overspend

Steve Baker says his "conscience is free of any blemish" - despite sending an email advising Vote Leave could spend as much as it needed.

<https://www.theneweuropean.co.uk/top-stories/steve-baker-on-bbc-politics-live-1-5970810>

Circular firing squad: Puritanism sees Remainers and Soft Brexiters destroy each other

It was like the final scene of Reservoir Dogs. Each of the Brexit political tribes held a gun up to the other and shouted at them, preventing any one idea from securing a majority. They killed everything: a customs union, the single market, a People's Vote and even the ability to keep no-deal off the table. There were four motions put forward in the indicative vote debate tonight - the latest event at which MPs wrestle control of the parliamentary timetable from the government and try to find an alternative to Theresa May's stale plan. If any one of them could secure a majority, it could act as a battering ram forcing the prime minister to give ground.

<http://www.politics.co.uk/blogs/2019/04/01/circular-firing-squad-puritanism-sees-remainers-and-soft-bre>

Jeremy Corbyn needs to get behind the people's vote to fight the far right

For a second vote to stand a chance, it needs the socialist Labour leadership behind it, making it about transformational politics in Britain, rather than a default to a broken economic policy that is breaking people. But regardless of support for another referendum, with the far right permeating our political air supply, the Corbyn left must throw its intellectual, moral, campaigning and policymaking weight behind full-throated anti-racism and support for immigration. This is so long overdue, it's starting to feel as if the left really has conceded defeat.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/01/jeremy-corbyn-labour-peoples-vote-fight-far-right>

Julian Smith: Chief whip attacks cabinet's post-election Brexit strategy

The government should have made clear after the 2017 election that it would "inevitably" have to accept a closer relationship with the EU after Brexit, the Conservative chief whip has said. In a BBC documentary, Julian Smith - who manages party discipline - is also critical of the cabinet's behaviour. The attack comes as the cabinet is split over whether to move to a softer deal that could mean a customs union. No 10 said the prime minister had "never used the term soft Brexit". Several cabinet ministers have said agreeing to a customs union would break promises the Conservatives made at the 2017 election while ex-minister Steve Baker said doing so would "shatter" the party.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-47768884>

Brexit has destroyed the barriers between the centre and far right

"The Brexiteers have trampled down the border between the centre right and far right. In Conservative politics now we have complete freedom of movement"

<https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2019/04/brexit-has-destroyed-the-barriers-between-the-centre-and-far-right/>

Remainers, take note: much of Europe just wants to excise the British cancer

The mood in Brussels is pessimistic. Most of those closely involved in the Brexit talks think the likeliest outcome is for the UK to leave without a deal. There is also tremendous frustration with what EU officials see as the incompetence, ignorance and irresponsibility of swaths of the British political class. Over the past three years much of the goodwill that people held towards the UK has evaporated.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/01/remainers-europe-excise-british-cancer>

Theresa May's Legacy of Chaos

As the Article 50 fuse she so imprudently lit fizzes to its end - she has come to realise that the one shot she has at posterity - is to get her wretched deal through and fulfil the meaningless undertaking that "Brexit meant Brexit". That empty epithet will now be her political epitaph. In some quarters May has gained sympathy for having to handle this thankless political task - but it is entirely unwarranted. David Cameron stupidly and ill-advisedly caused the mess - but May has had opportunity after opportunity to put a halt to it. Instead of being straight with the public - she has appeased the whims of the Europhobic lunatics and let the country get to the dogs.

<https://bylinetimes.com/2019/04/01/theresa-mays-legacy-of-chaos/>

Parliament Has Again Failed To Agree On Any Alternatives To Theresa May's Brexit Plan

After MPs rejected all the alternative proposals for the second time in a week, a leading Conservative MP announced he was quitting the party because it "refuses to compromise". Parliament has again failed to agree on an alternative to Theresa May's Brexit plan, leaving Westminster hopelessly divided with less than two weeks to go before the UK is due to leave the European Union. On Monday night, for the second time in a week, MPs took control of parliamentary business in an attempt to resolve the gridlock by voting on possible Brexit outcomes, but none of the four proposals received the backing of a majority of the House.

https://www.buzzfeed.com/alexspence/parliament-has-again-failed-to-agree-on-any-alternatives-to?utm_source=dynamic&utm_campaign=bfsharetwitter

The Conservatives have only just learned what a customs union is

The clock is ticking down to Brexit, and it can feel like the people in power have no idea about the reality of the situation. Well, in the case of the Tories, that seems to actually be the case. One of the central points of this Brexit process has been membership of the customs union. It has been crucial to discussions all along. Some are in support of being in it, some do not think that should be the case. Today, the Tory MPs FINALLY had their training session on what a customs union is.

<https://www.thenational.scot/news/17543150.the-conservatives-have-only-just-learned-what-a-customs-union-is?ref=twtrrec>

@ExtinctionR Extinction Rebellion activists strip off in House of Commons public gallery to call attention to the 'elephant in the room'

BREAKING: Extinction Rebellion activists strip off in House of Commons public gallery to call attention to the 'elephant in the room' — Climate and Ecological Crisis #ExtinctionRebellion #TellTheTruth @HouseofCommons

<https://twitter.com/ExtinctionR/status/1112756367348154368>

"Not in the public interest": why the Electoral Commission didn't investigate Vote Leave and DUP donation

The UK's election watchdog doesn't think it's worth finding out if the Brexit campaign broke the law more than once. MPs have called on the regulator to look again.

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/dark-money-investigations/not-in-the-public-interest-why-the-electoral-commission-didnt-investigate-vote-leave-and-dup-donation/>

Jacob Rees-Mogg under attack for sharing video of German far-right leader

Tory MP Jacob Rees-Mogg has come under fire for sharing a speech from a controversial far-right German party known for its anti-immigration and anti-Muslim rhetoric. The leading Eurosceptic shared a video of the Alternative for Germany leader Alice Weidel hitting out at Brussels' handling of Brexit. Posted from his Twitter account, the chairman of the European Research Group said: "The AfD leader asks 'Is it any wonder the British see bad faith behind every manoeuvre from Brussels?'"

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/conservative-party/news/102944/jacob-rees-mogg-under-attack-sharing-video>