

News from the Brexit Cliff Edge

10th Apr 2019

News Highlights

Welcome to the Brexit Cliff Edge

IMF says a no deal Brexit means a 2 year UK recession

- [The IMF said 'there were alternative No Deal Brexit scenarios](#) in which the UK would be hit by trade barriers, customs delays, barriers to financial services firms and loss of preferential access to non-EU countries under Brussels negotiated trade deals.' Therefore, it said 'a no deal Brexit risks the UK entering a two-year recession'

No Deal will cause global economic disruption says Trump administration

- [Donald Trump's Treasury Secretary warned](#) the U.S. House Financial Services Committee that a 'hard Brexit' was a realistic outcome, and that with no deal, the UK's disorderly exit from the EU would cause global economic disruption'

Brexit linked to significant medicine shortages faced by pharmacists

- [Medicine supply shortages in UK pharmacies have hit a record high](#). The Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee, which manages the list of in-demand medicines subsidised by the government, said 'the UK's exit from the EU and the manufacturers' view of the UK as a less attractive market is starting to cause significant medicine supply problems'

ATM thefts in Northern Ireland carried out by dissidents boosting their Brexit war chest

- [Gangs have been responsible for around 12 ATM robberies across Northern Ireland](#) and the Republic since the start of October. The ATM thefts have netted £603,000 and security services believe the attacks are Republican dissident related

Brexiters need to recognise the Commonwealth is not coming to save them

- [The New Statesman examines the myth that the UK can simply switch to trading with the Commonwealth](#) to replace lost EU trade. Trade Ministers in places like South Africa acknowledge the interest but say a trade deal with the UK is not their immediate focus, but they'd consider it further down the track

A customs union is not a Brexit panacea either

- [The issue of the ability to sign trade deals](#) with anyone in the world, as opposed to being governed by the trade rules in a customs union, threaten to [trigger more 'hardline' Tories, such as Liam Fox](#), against a new May-Corbyn customs union Brexit deal

The Brexit Cliff Edge is not this Friday

- A consensus is forming among EU leaders around [rejecting Theresa May's request](#) for a short Article 50 extension and insisting on a longer one (up to one year). This [reflects a complete lack of faith in Theresa May's ability to produce a workable plan](#) to pass a Brexit withdrawal agreement in the

UK parliament.

- France is signalling its unhappiness at the UK position. [It picked up on Tory hardliner comments to 'become as difficult as possible inside the EU if an extension is granted,'](#) and threats to 'veto any increase in the budget, obstruct a putative army and block Mr Macron's integrationist schemes,' outlined in Jacob Rees-Mogg tweet
- Emmanuel Macron will insist on conditions being inserted into any UK Article 50 extension which expressly prohibit any action which [impacts on the EU's decision making abilities with regard to the EU budget and the appointment of the next EU Commission president](#), for example. The longer the extension the more conditions will be introduced, according to the FT
- [There is UK nervousness at the stance Emmanuel Macron is taking over the Brexit extension.](#) The Standard reported comments from a number of MP's who feared he was seeking a 'De Gaulle Moment' which could damage relations between the UK and the EU
- [National envoys for the 27 EU states appear to be coalescing around summit chair](#), Donald Tusk's proposal to give the UK up to a year longer to organise its withdrawal. Reuters reported ministers were extremely weary of Brexit, but were just as keen not to be seen as the ones pushing the UK off the Brexit cliff edge
- Any remaining EU summit surprise will be over the length of the Article 50 extension. BuzzFeed News seems convinced that France will insist that Brexit cannot be delayed beyond December 2019. [So this will be the likely Flexextension default position offered to the UK on Wednesday](#)
- [Meanwhile, back in the UK](#), Parliament debated Theresa May's plan to ask the EU for an Article 50 extension, under the new Cooper-Letwin legislation
- [UK Chancellor Philip Hammond appeared to be considering revoking Article 50 as an option](#), were the EU summit to not offer an extension
- [Labour seems to be warming towards the idea of bringing back the withdrawal agreement](#) and testing support for amendments promoting various Brexit options. The Conservative side seems less enthusiastic

Boris for Britain leadership campaign bid

- [The Our Future, Our Choice campaign launched a spoof 'Boris for Britain' leadership campaign video.](#) The fake 'Boris for Britain' site imagines the former foreign secretary's bid to become Prime Minister

Farage's new Brexit Party sent to Coventry

- [Nigel Farage's new Brexit Party plans to formally launch](#) in Coventry this Friday and it will contest every European Election seat on May 23rd

Economic Impact

IMF says no-deal Brexit risks two-year recession for UK

The IMF said there were alternative no-deal scenarios in which the UK would be hit by trade barriers, customs delays, barriers to financial services firms and the loss of preferential access to non-EU countries under trade deals negotiated by Brussels. The impact of these would be enough to cause output to decline in 2019 and 2020. It stressed that "a no-deal Brexit that severely disrupts supply chains and raises trade costs could potentially have large and long-lasting negative impacts on the economies of the United Kingdom and the European Union".

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/apr/09/imf-no-deal-brex-it-risks-two-year-recession-uk-economic>

Mnuchin Says Hard Brexit a 'Realistic Outcome,' Urges Agreement

Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin said the U.S. financial system is preparing for the U.K. to crash out of the European Union without a deal, and warned it would cause global disruptions. "We need

to be prepared for a hard Brexit as a very realistic outcome,” Mnuchin said Tuesday during a hearing before the House Financial Services Committee, adding that the U.S. has encouraged the U.K. and the union to find a suitable resolution. Yet Britain’s exit from the EU looks set to be delayed by as long as a year in a blow for Theresa May that risks a destabilizing backlash at home.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-04-09/mnuchin-says-hard-brexit-a-realistic-outcome-urges-agreement>

Administrative Fall Out

EU doctors’ Brexit dilemma: do we stay or do we go?

They believed they were in a welcoming country. Three hospital consultants discuss how their lives have been upended by Brexit

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/apr/09/eu-doctors-brexit-dilemma-do-we-stay-or-do-we-go>

Brexit linked to 'significant' medicines shortage faced by pharmacists

Brexit has contributed to a shortage of some medicines at pharmacies in England as the number of in-demand drugs subsidised by the Government reached a record high, it is claimed. Supply issues partly blamed on Brexit planning and contingency have caused an official list of “concession” priced medicines to reach its longest since 2014, when it was first introduced. The Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC), which draws up the list, said Britain’s exit from the EU coupled with manufacturers’ views of the country as a “less attractive market” had caused the “significant” problems

<https://www.expressandstar.com/news/uk-news/2019/04/09/brexit-linked-to-significant-medicines-shortage-faced-by-pharmacists/>

ATM thefts 'being carried out by dissidents to fund Brexit war chest'

It is believed the gang responsible for some of the 12 robberies in Northern Ireland and the Republic since October has netted £603000.

<https://www.belfastlive.co.uk/news/belfast-news/atm-thefts-being-carried-out-16100364>

Political Shenanigans

EU ready to grant Brexit delay, length depends on British argument - Barnier

The European Union hopes cross-party talks in London will yield a majority in the House of Commons for the stalled Brexit deal and is willing to grant more time to achieve that, the EU’s chief negotiator Michel Barnier said. On the eve of an EU summit of national leaders due to decide whether to grant Britain another Brexit delay, Barnier stressed that the length of any second postponement beyond the current date of April 12 would depend on the rationale presented by Prime Minister Theresa May. “The duration of an extension - it has got to be in line with the purpose of any such extension,” Barnier told a news conference on Tuesday.

<https://in.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-barnier-idINKCN1RL0ZF>

Michel Barnier urges UK to agree customs union and warns that no deal Brexit will be Britain's fault

Michel Barnier has urged Britain to join a customs union with the EU after Brexit before warning that a no-deal departure would be the UK’s fault alone. He said that Britain could always cancel Brexit by revoking Article 50 to avoid a no-deal and warned that Brussels would not relax any of its red lines, such as freedom of movement, even if the prime minister did. “We are not willing to compromise in any way the very foundations of the EU,” the EU’s chief Brexit negotiator said. Mr Barnier said that if talks between Theresa May and Jeremy Corbyn were successful, the EU would be ready to change the terms of the UK-EU future relationship to allow for closer links with Brussels.

https://www.telegraph.co.uk/content/dam/politics/2019/04/09/TELEMMGLPICT000193763614_trans_NvBQzQNjv4Bqq0QhGUrjBLC1cMijLC7a75zDZoMesSKK_mHY2QV_wnA.jpeg?imwidth=1400

Philip Hammond suggests MPs could revoke Article 50 to prevent no deal sinking the value of pound

Philip Hammond raised the prospect that MPs will revoke Article 50 this week rather than allow Britain to leave without a deal if Brexit talks collapse. The Chancellor warned on Tuesday that the value of the pound could fall significantly if Theresa May fails to reach agreement on a Brexit delay with Brussels. He suggested that the impact of uncertainty on the markets could encourage MPs to vote to reverse Brexit by revoking Article 50. David Lidington, the Minister for the Cabinet Office, is said to have warned that the Government would no longer be in control and that Parliament and the Speaker would determine how to proceed.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/04/09/philip-hammond-suggests-mps-could-revoke-article-50-prevent/>

Theresa May facing prospect of being offered longer Brexit delay at EU summit

Theresa May is facing the prospect of being offered a Brexit delay of up to a year at an emergency EU summit in Brussels. The prime minister has been pushing for a delay to the end of June, with the possibility of Britain leaving at an earlier date if her Brexit deal is approved. But her hopes look set to be dashed, having already been granted one short extension to the process. In a letter to the remaining 27 EU member states, European Council President Donald Tusk said there was "little reason to believe" Mrs May's deal, which has already been defeated three times, could be ratified by the end of June.

<https://news.sky.com/story/theresa-may-facing-prospect-of-longer-brexit-delay-at-eu-summit-11689263>

May considers plan to let MPs thrash out Brexit deal if talks fail

It is understood May and her team have gone cool on the idea of MPs having more indicative votes, which she had suggested would be binding if talks with Labour do not progress. However, Labour is keener on bringing forward the withdrawal agreement bill to test support for amendments on various options. A Labour source said this had been discussed in the Cabinet Office on Tuesday, but ruled out frontbench support for the plan at this stage.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/apr/09/may-considers-plan-to-let-mps-to-thrash-out-brexit-deal-if-talks-fail>

Boris Johnson's remainer father Stanley has applied to stand in EU elections

Boris Johnson's remained father Stanley has applied to stand in the EU elections. Mr Johnson Senior, who appeared on I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here, said he was worried the Tories would not "make the most" of the opportunity. He told LBC Radio: "I think the idea that we should be talking down these Euro elections is absurd. "If we're staying in we may as well do what is required and fight the elections. And if we're going to fight the elections we might as well fight to win, I'm speaking as a Conservative. "And as Conservatives I think we should have a really constructive role to play out there."

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/boris-johnsons-remainer-father-stanley-14271728>

A long Brexit pause makes sense for the EU and the UK

The repeated failure of the British political classes to settle the Brexit question is consuming ever larger amounts of EU time, effort and attention just when European leaders need to focus on other pressing internal and external challenges. There were welcome signs late on Tuesday that EU leaders might be moving towards agreeing a long extension. To let the UK crash out on Friday, or to arrange a very short extension, would be no more in EU interests than in London's. Though frustrated at British behaviour, EU leaders should agree to extend the withdrawal process until at least the end of this year, with appropriate conditions attached.

<https://www.ft.com/content/7e26958e-5abf-11e9-939a-341f5ada9d40>

Emmanuel Macron Doesn't Want Brexit Delayed Beyond December 2019 At The Latest

French president Emmanuel Macron is adamant that Brexit cannot be delayed beyond December 2019, and will ask the other 26 European Union leaders to impose compliance checks on the UK

every three months during any extension, according to diplomatic sources who have been privately briefed on his thinking ahead of this week's emergency European Council summit of EU leaders. As Macron prepares to meet Theresa May in Paris on Tuesday ahead of Wednesday's meeting, the sources told BuzzFeed News it was extremely unlikely that Macron would block an extension outright <https://www.buzzfeed.com/albertonardelli/emmanuel-macron-brexit-delay-december>

A new Brexit extension is the moment for Labour to finally champion Remain

The party can no longer be bound by the referendum of 2016 — it must fight for a transformed Europe from within.

<https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/brexit/2019/04/new-brexit-extension-moment-labour-finally-champion-remain>

MPs vote in favor of Theresa May's plan to delay Brexit until June 30

Members of Parliament back Theresa May's plan to delay Brexit until June 30. The prime minister will now travel to Brussels on Wednesday where she will seek the support of EU leaders for a delay. The European Council will decide on the length and conditions of any extension on Wednesday evening. EU leaders are reportedly in favour of a much longer delay to Brexit of up to one year.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/mps-vote-in-favour-of-theresa-may-request-to-delay-brexit-2019-4>

Anti-Brexit Group Launches Spoof 'Boris For Britain' Leadership Campaign

At first glance, Boris Johnson's campaign website didn't come as that much of a surprise... until you looked closer. Launched by anti-Brexit campaign group Our Future, Our Choice, the fake 'Boris for Britain' site imagines the former foreign secretary's bid for the country's top job.

https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/boris-johnson-spoof-campaign-website_uk_5cac6582e4b02084ce8f77a5

Is Brexit still worth it? Only the public can answer that question

There are worse things that could happen to a democracy than its citizens being given an opportunity to vote. The same goes for a referendum. And the alternative is a duff deal, soaked in panic, nobody's first choice, bundled through parliament by a coalition of demoralised remainers and disingenuous leavers, the former with heads bowed, the latter with fingers crossed. That wouldn't be a durable compromise, or even a truce. It would be MPs bailing themselves out, borrowing a moment of respite for which the country would then pay in years of disappointment and bitterness. Even if a majority could be found for a Brexit settlement, this parliament lacks the authority to validate it as a good deal in the public eye.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/09/brexit-worth-it-public-question-referendum>

Weary EU set to give yet more time for Brexit

Brexit will not be on Friday, EU leaders will confirm when they meet Prime Minister Theresa May at another crisis summit on Wednesday, but diplomats said they are still wrestling on how long it might be delayed and under what conditions. EU diplomats said there was no appetite around the table to drop the axe on Britain just yet. They said that talks, which were to continue among national envoys in Brussels later on Tuesday, were now focused on a proposal from summit chair Donald Tusk to give Britain up to a year longer to organise its withdrawal. "People are tired and fed up - but what to do?" one said. "We won't be the ones pushing the UK off the cliff edge."

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-summit/weary-eu-set-to-give-yet-more-time-for-brexit-idUKKCN1RL22Z>

UK PM May outlines steps to secure 'successful' Brexit with Germany's Merkel

British Prime Minister Theresa May outlined to German Chancellor Angela Merkel the steps she was taking to bring "the Brexit process to a successful conclusion" and on discussions with the opposition Labour Party, a spokeswoman said on Tuesday. May, in Germany as part of her charm offensive to secure a Brexit delay at an EU summit on Wednesday, "updated Chancellor Merkel on the ongoing discussions with the opposition", the spokeswoman said in a statement. "Ahead of EU

Council tomorrow, the leaders discussed the UK's request for an extension of Article 50 to June 30 with the option to bring this forward if a deal is ratified earlier."

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-eu-may-merkel/uk-pm-may-outlines-steps-to-secure-successful-brexite-with-germanys-merkel-idUSKCN1RL1IE>

EU needs to know why Britain wants Brexit extension, what role it will play: France

The European Union must understand what Britain wants to achieve during its requested extension of the Brexit deadline and what role it wants to play in the EU during that time before the EU can grant the delay, French EU minister Amélie de Montchalin said. Montchalin said however, that such an extension would not be automatic. "We want to understand what the UK needs this extension for," she told reporters on entering a meeting of EU ministers in Luxembourg that is to prepare the Brexit summit on Wednesday. "Then come the questions of the conditions: what role the UK wants to play during this extension time, in what kind of decisions it wants to take part," she said.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-eu-france-extension-idUSKCN1RL0P8>

Brexit latest: Minister says it's 'too early to say' if Theresa May has a compromise to offer EU tomorrow

Government Minister David Gauke claimed Theresa May will tell European Union leaders that it is "too early to say" whether she has an agreement with the Labour Party to get a Brexit deal ratified by MPs, despite a looming summit being just one day's time. "There are some areas of common ground, but there are also well-known areas of disagreement. But there's a lot of work that's going on at the moment in terms of identifying perhaps where we can move forward."

<https://inews.co.uk/news/uk/brexit-latest-cabinet-david-gauke-theresa-may-deal-negotiations-compromise-eu-leaders/>

Nigel Farage says his new Brexit Party will unleash political revolution and terrify Tories at the European Elections

Nigel Farage last night claimed his new Brexit Party will spark a political "revolution" at the European Elections - and terrify the Tories. The ex-UKIP chief revealed will formally launch the party in Coventry this Friday and contest every region on May 23 to give voters the chance to "fight back against the betrayal of democracy" by Theresa May.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8828120/nigel-farage-brexit-party-revolution-tories/>

Brexit delay: EU leaders to consider offering UK extension until after Christmas at crunch Brussels summit

EU leaders will consider giving Theresa May a Brexit extension until the end of the year at a crunch summit in Brussels on Wednesday that could delay Britain's departure from the bloc until after Christmas. Ahead of the crucial meeting the prime minister was warned that she needed "a clear plan with credible political backing" if she wanted the delay to avert no deal on Friday, as she met with Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron to try and win their support. But there is still debate among the 27 EU countries about what sort of conditions any extension should come with - with talks between ministers in Luxembourg on Tuesday running over by an hour amid debate among countries.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-delay-christmas-eu-meeting-brussels-a8862141.html>

@Alison1MackITV More from the barnstorming speech at the #PeoplesVote rally by former West Bromwich MP Baroness Betty Boothroyd

More from the barnstorming speech at the #PeoplesVote rally by former West Bromwich MP Baroness Betty Boothroyd. If the politicians can't break the brexit deadlock - leave it to the @peoplesvote_uk @ITVCentral

<https://twitter.com/Alison1mackITV/status/1115633678980460545>

Emmanuel Macron warned he could severely damage French-UK relations with Brexit stance

Emmanuel Macron was today warned he risks blighting Anglo-French relations for years if he is seen to force Britain out of the EU against the wish of Parliament. Senior MPs stressed the danger of seeking “short-term victories” and “playing to a domestic audience ... to unwise lengths” with stances which threaten to be severely damaging to ties between London and Paris. They spoke out after Mr Macron took a hard line against delaying Britain’s departure from the EU, sparking suggestions he wants a “De Gaulle moment” similar to the then French president’s decision in the Sixties to veto the UK joining the European Economic Community.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/emmanuel-macron-warned-he-could-severely-damage-frenchuk-relations-with-brexite-stance-a4112001.html>

Better no deal or a long Article 50 extension than a customs union cooked up with Labour

Mrs May’s new slogan is effectively “no Brexit is better than no deal”. Her difficulty is that this gives her no room to manoeuvre. In order to avoid no deal she must agree to whatever she is offered. She has no leverage at all to negotiate the length of extension she would prefer because she has nothing to threaten the EU with. Equally, she has already committed to accept any Brexit arrangements passed by Parliament in a desperate rush to get this done. No deal or a longer extension are better than agreeing to a customs union.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/2019/04/09/better-no-deal-long-article-50-extension-customs-union-cooked/>

@EUCOPresident There are times when you need to give time time. My letter to EU leaders ahead of tomorrow’s #EUCO: <https://europa.eu/!Wb76Jq> #Brexit

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<https://twitter.com/eucopresident/status/1115660118882947072>

@tamcohen Liam Fox letter to Tory MPs pulverises Labour’s customs union: “we would be stuck in the worst of all worlds”

Liam Fox letter to Tory MPs pulverises Labour’s customs union: “we would be stuck in the worst of all worlds”

<https://twitter.com/tamcohen/status/1115550069632262144>

France signals UK could stay in EU for almost another year

France has signalled the UK could remain in the EU for almost another year but will have to meet strict conditions, as the bloc’s leaders prepare to decide on whether and by how long to delay Brexit. Speaking as Donald Tusk, the president of the European Council of EU member states, called for a long, “flexible extension” of the Brexit deadline, a senior French official said the UK would have to limit its decision-making abilities about issues such as the EU budget and the appointment of the European Commission’s next president. “The longer the period is, the stronger the guarantee needs to be,” the official said, adding that in terms of the extension “a year seems to us too long”. But he indicated that a delay up to March next year could be acceptable — if it was accompanied by conditions.

<https://www.ft.com/content/cb7ad47a-5abb-11e9-9dde-7aedca0a081a?desktop=true&segmentId=d8d3e364-5197-20eb-17cf-2437841d178a>

EU to offer short 'final final' Brexit delay

I was told by those involved in preparations for the emergency Brexit summit on Wednesday that the most likely outcome of the special summit is another kicking of the Brexit can down the road, but only till a bit after the elections for the European Parliament at the end of May. The big problem with a long delay, for France and its President in particular, was that it would give the UK too much power - in their view - to vandalise the EU till EU leaders felt cowed into tearing up the Northern

Ireland backstop (hated by Tory Brexiters and DUP). EU leaders trust Theresa May to abide by the convention that all EU members, including Brexiting ones, should engage with each other in a spirit of "sincere cooperation" - but do not trust she will be PM much longer.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2019-04-09/eu-to-offer-short-final-final-brexite-delay/>

Is cancelling Brexit the Prime Minister's new default?

Is the de facto Brexit default now revoking Article 50 this week rather than a no-deal Brexit on 12 April? I ask because the PM is now explicitly saying the choice is a binary one between some version of her negotiated deal and not leaving at all (that is what she said in her sofa chat on Sunday). The point is that she has no power to prevent a no-deal Brexit on 12 April by delaying Brexit; for a delay, she needs the unanimous agreement of the EU's 27 leaders. But she does have the unilateral power to prevent a no-deal by cancelling Brexit altogether, by revoking the Article 50 application to leave the EU. So, have she and Whitehall, who are persuaded (rightly or wrongly) that no-deal on April 12 would be a catastrophe (especially for the integrity of UK), made a huge emotional leap to prepare for the political (if not economic) explosion of cancelling Brexit this week - in that there remains a serious risk that the EU will not grant the UK an extension or an extension on acceptable terms.

<https://www.itv.com/news/2019-04-08/is-cancelling-brexite-the-prime-ministers-new-default/>

Political Setbacks

Brexit: DUP says PM's 'pleading is humiliating'

It is painful to watch the prime minister "pleading" with EU leaders to grant another extension to the Brexit date, Arlene Foster has said. The DUP leader told the BBC she found it "humiliating that we are having to go and beg so that we can leave". On Wednesday, a special EU summit will take place as leaders consider Theresa May's request. The UK is still scheduled to leave the EU on 12 April, unless a delay is agreed.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-47872685>

Tory MP quits Eurosceptic ERG for 'endangering Brexit'

A Tory MP has quit the Eurosceptic European Research Group, claiming a "hardcore element of 'Unicorn' dreamers" were "endangering Brexit". Daniel Kawczynski voted against Theresa May's Brexit deal twice, before deciding to back her withdrawal agreement last month. The Shropshire MP accused the backbench Conservative group of preventing the deal from passing in the Commons. But the ERG's deputy chairman stood by their opposition to the PM's deal. Mark Francois told BBC Newsnight: "The withdrawal agreement keeps us in the European Union, that's why we've always been so against it."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-47864701>

Unhappiness with politics 'at 15-year high'

The public's dissatisfaction with how government is working is at a 15-year high, an influential study of political engagement suggests. Levels of unhappiness are now greater than in the wake of the MPs' expenses scandal, the Hansard Society found. More than half of the 1,200 people questioned thought the UK was in decline and needed a "strong leader who is willing to break the rules". And more than 40% said they could support new parties with radical ideas. The Hansard Society's 16th Audit of Political Engagement was carried out in early December, before the extent of the current Commons deadlock over Brexit became apparent. But it found that MPs were less trusted to handle Brexit than judges and civil servants, while banks were more trusted to act in the public interest than MPs, ministers or political parties.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-47852394>

Brexit: Huw Merriman MP dares Theresa May to sack him in bombshell interview

A Tory MP has publicly dared Theresa May to sack him from his government role in a bombshell

interview over Brexit . Huw Merriman - who is an aide to the Chancellor - announced he will speak at a rally in support of a second referendum at lunchtime today in Westminster. And he warned Tory chiefs will have to sack him from the government if they don't like it. The Parliamentary Private Secretary said he had backed a so-called People's Vote in a "free vote" last week - only to be told it was not government policy. He told BBC Radio 4's Today programme: "If I can't speak freely and explain how I voted on a free vote...I didn't give up my career to come into Parliament for that - it's absolutely ridiculous.

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/breaking-brexit-huw-merriman-mp-14267300>

Additional sources: (iNews)

EU rejects Theresa May's bid for short delay to Brexit

Theresa May's request for a short Brexit delay has been torn up, putting the EU on track to instead extend Britain's membership until 2020. Despite the prime minister's desperate dash to Paris and Berlin, to convince leaders of her plan to break the Brexit impasse, the European council president, Donald Tusk, signalled EU politicians' lack of faith in her cross-party talks. Against a backdrop of growing support among the EU27 for a lengthy Brexit delay, Tusk picked apart May's appeal for a shorter delay to 30 June in a letter to the leaders inviting them to Wednesday's summit, where they will agree the new end date.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/apr/09/conditions-for-short-brexit-delay-have-not-been-met-says-berlin>

Scapegoating immigrant workers is lowest point in dismal Brexit campaign

The message was pushed despite loud warnings that cutting the number of people coming to Britain will have a major impact on vital public services such as the NHS.

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/scapegoating-immigrant-workers-lowest-point-14266956>

Theresa May must produce a plan within 24 hours if she wants Brexit extension, EU warns

The EU is open to granting Theresa May another delay to Brexit talks, but only if she produces a workable plan in time for a summit on Wednesday evening, EU member states have warned. Ministers from the 27 remaining countries met in Luxembourg on Tuesday morning to lay the groundwork for the leaders' meeting in Brussels the next day. Discussions overran by an hour amid debate between the countries about the way to proceed. "The prolongation of the Article 50 deadline is an instrument and not an objective in itself. The British side must outline a clear plan with credible political backing to justify the decision of the European Council in favour of the extension," George Ciamba, the Romanian EU minister chairing the meeting said at a press conference afterwards.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-delay-theresa-may-article-50-eu-extension-barnier-a8861256.html>

Humiliated Theresa May will be told to 'keep Britain in EU until March 2020' by Brussels as PM seeks Article 50 extension

Theresa May will be told to keep Britain in the EU until March 2020 by Brussels, it was claimed. In a humiliation for the PM, sources confirmed EU leaders will tomorrow demand an extension of up to a year because of her failure to pass a Brexit deal through the Commons.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/brexit/8819834/eu-brexit-delay-2020/>

There's nothing undemocratic about revoking Article 50 - reconsidering Brexit is the only way out of this mess

The prime minister has at last acknowledged that she had no majority for her deal. Her options will have narrowed to two: no deal or revoke - and now she will have to choose

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/brexit-news-article-50-revoke-theresa-may-eu-merkel-deal-a8861191.html>

Boris Johnson savaged for breaching Commons rules in damning watchdog report

Boris Johnson is to be hauled in for a dressing down after he broke rules on financial interests - again. The ex-Foreign Secretary has been savaged for his "lack of respect" after he fell foul of regulations aimed at cleaning up politics for the second time in less than a year.

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/breaking-boris-johnson-savaged-breaching-14252267>

Merkel should 'reopen withdrawal deal'

Leader of the House Andrea Leadsom said it would be "fantastic if Angela Merkel will try to support a proper UK Brexit by agreeing to reopen the withdrawal agreement". Ms Leadsom added there had been rumours that senior members of the German government would be willing to do that. The withdrawal agreement sets out how the UK will leave the EU including details of a 'divorce bill' and citizens' rights.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-politics-47866471/andrea-leadsom-merkel-should-reopen-withdrawal-deal>

If Corbyn helps the Tories deliver Brexit, it will be a disaster for Labour

This is not 2016. Brexit is not the clearcut will of the people. A majority of voters now oppose it, as do a large majority of Labour supporters. Delivering Brexit means setting yourself against a mass movement, a million of whom have marched and 6 million of whom have petitioned for the outright revocation of article 50. Labour cannot expect to demoralise its activist base by choosing to implement a policy they regard as a fundamental affront to their values, and then just talk about school funding instead.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/09/corbyn-tories-brexit-labour-voters>

Donald Tusk says there's 'little reason to believe' we can sort Brexit by June

Brussels chief Donald Tusk says there's 'little reason to believe' we can sort out Brexit by the end of June. It came just minutes after MPs approved Theresa May's plan to seek a delay until June 30. But inviting EU leaders to a crunch summit in Brussels tomorrow, the European Council President said: "In reality, granting such an extension would increase the risk of a rolling series of short extensions and emergency summits, creating new cliff-edge dates. "This, in turn, would almost certainly overshadow the business of the EU27 in the months ahead. "The continued uncertainty would also be bad for our businesses and citizens. Finally, if we failed to agree on any next extension, there would be a risk of an accidental no-deal Brexit. "This is why I believe we should also discuss an alternative, longer extension. One possibility would be a flexible extension, which would last only as long as necessary and no longer than one year, as beyond that date we will need to decide unanimously on some key European projects."

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/donald-tusk-says-theres-little-14271328>

@ITVNews Theresa May arrives in Berlin for Brexit talks with German leader Angela Merkel - but no one is there to greet her

Theresa May arrives in Berlin for Brexit talks with German leader Angela Merkel - but no one is there to greet her <https://bit.ly/2FXX3uU>

<https://twitter.com/itvnews/status/1115575691272171520>

Theresa May is "hiding" from Vote Leave Brexit campaign fraud claims' says SNP MP

Theresa May is "hiding" from taking action on claims of electoral fraud against the Vote Leave Brexit campaign, according to a Glasgow MP. Stewart McDonald, Glasgow South SNP MP had written to the Prime Minister seeking a judge led inquiry to investigate the allegations of fraud. The Prime Minister said she has passed the question on to the Cabinet Office, leaving the MP to conclude she doesn't want to take responsibility for initiating action. Mr McDonald asked in a written question if the Prime Minister had plans to "set up a judge led inquiry to investigate alleged fraud in the EU referendum".

<https://www.eveningtimes.co.uk/news/17561816.theresa-may-is-hiding-form-vote-leave-brexit-campaign-fraud-claims-says-snp-mp/>

@Doozy_45 A. Burt: "I'm from agricultural constituency, 20% of business would collapse" #Brexit

Q. Would you be happy with no-deal? Hoey: "We'd cope" A. Burt: "I'm from agricultural constituency, 20% of business would collapse" #Brexit

https://twitter.com/Doozy_45/status/1115548310981500928

@alexwickham Tory grassroots revolt: this draft motion of no confidence in Theresa May is doing the rounds among Conservative associations

Tory grassroots revolt: this draft motion of no confidence in Theresa May is doing the rounds among Conservative associations

<https://twitter.com/alexwickham/status/1115529411162513408>

Losing Momentum - can Jeremy Corbyn Survive a Split from his Base?

"It was inevitable," one Labour adviser remarked after shadow cabinet members openly defied a three-line whip to abstain on a crucial indicative vote on a second referendum last week. "The left always eats itself. It's no surprise discipline has broken down." Byline Times has interviewed more than half a dozen senior Labour party figures and advisers in the wake of the unprecedented frontbench rebellion by the party chairman Ian Lavery and shadow leader of the house John Trickett. These sources have spoken on condition of anonymity as Labour strives to preserve party unity. Most are on the left of the party or from the grassroots Momentum movement.

<https://bylinetimes.com/2019/04/08/losing-momentum-can-jeremy-corbyn-survive-a-split-from-his-base/>

@Jacob_rees_mogg If a long extension leaves us stuck in the EU we should be as difficult as possible. We could veto any increase in the budget, obstruct the putative EU army and block Mr Macron's integrationist schemes.

If a long extension leaves us stuck in the EU we should be as difficult as possible. We could veto any increase in the budget, obstruct the putative EU army and block Mr Macron's integrationist schemes.

https://twitter.com/Jacob_Rees_Mogg/status/1114086264024727554

Trade Deals/Negotiations

Exclusive: Liam Fox tells Tory MPs that customs union will be 'worst of both worlds' in leaked letter

"A customs union - where the UK was obliged to implement the common customs tariff - would allow the EU to negotiate access to UK markets as part of EU trade policy, irrespective of the interests or wishes of the UK. "It will be able to offer full access to the world's fifth biggest market as part of any EU offer, without the need to balance this access by negotiating on key UK offensive interests." He said that countries that negotiate new free trade agreements with the EU will have "automatic access to the UK market with the UK having no reciprocal access". "The key question is that if a trading partner already had access to the UK for no cost, why would it be interested in negotiating a further bilateral agreement?"

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/04/09/exclusiveliam-fox-tells-tory-mps-customs-union-will-worst-worlds/>

The Brexiteers need to realise that the Commonwealth is not coming to save them

The Commonwealth does about a sixth of the trade with the UK that the EU does - and has neither the capacity nor the desire to be turned into a significant trading bloc. "We understand the UK wants to come to us (as the Commonwealth), in the fullness of time, to present some post-Brexit bigger, deeper agreement that they would want to negotiate with us," he says. "We would meet them after three years or something, assess the situation and take stock." Being put on the backburner like this doesn't sound like the Global Britain promised by the Brexiteers, where the UK rids itself of the shackles of Europe and spreads its wings to seek global markets across the oceans.

<https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/staggers/2019/04/brexiteers-need-realise-commonwealth-not-coming-save-t>

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The myth of the Great British Brexit trade policy

It makes almost no sense for the Brexit debacle to have come down to the issue of an 'independent British trade policy'. Trade was not a central issue at the referendum and remains wildly misunderstood by public and politicians alike. But we are where we are. If we end up crashing out by accident, or the May government tears itself apart, it will be on the pretext that significant numbers of Tory MPs want that independent trade policy and cannot stomach the restrictions that a customs union would put on Britain's freedom over trade.

<https://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2019/04/the-myth-of-the-great-british-brexit-trade-policy/>