

# News from the Brexit Cliff Edge

## 17th Apr 2019

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### News Highlights

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#### Welcome to the Brexit Cliff Edge

[In a Ted talk, The Guardian's Carole Cadwaladr digs](#) into one of the most perplexing events in recent times: the UK's super close 2016 vote to leave the European Union. She tracks the result to a barrage of misleading dark facebook ads which were targeted at vulnerable Brexit swing voters - linking the same players and tactics to the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Cadwalladr calls out the Gods of Silicon Vallley for being on the wrong side of history and presiding over a crime scene and asks the audience - are free and fair elections now a thing of the past due to this new technology?

[Pro-Brexit group Leave.eu faked migrant footage in 2016](#), releasing it on social media to influence voters. It included fake videos of migrants attacking women in dark alleys. [It included a fake trip which allegedly showed how easy it was for migrants](#) to be brought across the English channel unchallenged.

[Theresa May has been warned that she has no chance](#) of passing her Brexit withdrawal deal in time to stop the European elections. The staging of the elections will also be seen as a personal humiliation for the Prime Minister, who has repeatedly told MPs they should not take place three years after the Brexit referendum

[An Institute of Government report](#) into the handling of Brexit accuses Theresa May of blundering, by creating an unsustainable split between government departments, while her own highly secretive approach to negotiating the withdrawal agreement only fuelled division in her own cabinet

[Backbench MPs Ken Clarke and Frank Field are plotting to force a soft Brexit](#) through a Commons vote, as a way of ending current Parliamentary Brexit deadlock. Clarke and Field are intending to table a proposal which backs a Customs Union and get it through Parliament, so that neither of the two political party leaders has to back down and sign a formal Brexit deal upsetting supporters

[Ireland is planning to cover the estimated 4m Euro](#) cost of health insurance for Northern Ireland citizens after Brexit. Simon Coveney said it would pose challenges to extend cover to people in the north, as they were no longer EU citizens, so fresh legislation to do so will be necessary

[Jeremy Corbyn said that Tory Party plans](#) for post-withdrawal agreement Brexit deregulation is a major cause of the negotiations starting to stall. He said that Labour continues to propose a customs union as its Brexit proposal, but now it is Theresa May's refusal to budge from her red lines which is the major stumbling block to an agreement

[Conservative Party chairmen are plotting to force Theresa May out sooner](#) than she planned by using a little known rule in the party's rulebook. An emergency meeting of the Conservative Party's National Convention can be summoned if 65 local association chairmen agree it would be best to do so. That would be the groundwork laid for a no confidence vote and her subsequent dismissal

[A UCL study across all regions of the UK has identified Labour Party voters](#) who backed the party in 2017 but are now ready to switch to any party that is perceived as more European

[Amber Rudd confirmed she could well enter the Tory Party](#) leadership contest to succeed Theresa May, were she to stand down

[Dozens of Labour Party allies across the EU](#) are piling the pressure on Jeremy Corbyn to include a promise to overturn Brexit in his upcoming European Parliament manifesto

[EU citizens are facing a voting headache](#), as the two-step process which cut numbers of EU citizens voting in 2014 still has not been resolved. The Electoral Commission said it was told not to bother resolving the issue, as the government believed there would be no European Election in 2019

[Change UK has been recognised as a political party](#) by the Electoral Commission and said it plans to stand candidates to become MEPs at the next European election

[The European Parliament Brexit co-ordinator, Guy Verhofstadt](#), told the European Parliament that the bloc's decision to grant the UK a Brexit delay until the end of October risked prolonging the uncertainty. Verhofstadt said the six month extension to Article 50 was 'too near for a substantial rethink of Brexit and, at the same time, too far away to prompt any action by the UK government'

### **Some good news for Brexiteers**

[Japanese telco and tech behemoth, NTT Corporation](#), has chosen London to be its new global headquarters, according to reports, with the final announcement planned to be in July

[New figures show unemployment is now at its lowest level](#) since 1974, with more people either in work or looking for work than before - wage growth is also rising

### **Now some not so good news**

[A new report called 'Brexit, The Good Friday/Belfast Agreement and the Environment: Issues Arising and Possible Solutions'](#) was launched on Tuesday. It stressed that a No Deal Brexit would cause major environmental headaches across Ireland. There would be a series of physical border related concerns, matched by an equal number of regulatory ones, involving divergence of rules and governance changes - all stemming from Brexit

[The Yorkshire Post published a study of SMEs](#) and how they are failing to cope with Brexit planning. The Simply Business survey said 800 of the 1,200 SME owners in the study felt unsupported ahead of Brexit and are delaying their growth plans and further investment in their businesses. They are also having to make redundancies to cut costs

[The Welsh automotive sector suffered a blow as Japanese firm](#) Calsonic Kansei announced it would be making 100 workers redundant at its Llanelli plant. Late last year the firm secured an investment grant to help create a further 88 jobs over the next five years so the news is a blow to the region

### **Jobs at Risk**

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#### **Car components firm Calsonic Kansei shedding nearly 100 jobs at its Llanelli plant**

The Welsh automotive sector has suffered a further blow with Japanese firm Calsonic Kansei announcing redundancies at its Llanelli plant. The factory, which supplies heat exchange, air conditioning, exhaust and electronic components to manufacturers globally, has confirmed that 95

jobs are at risk following a "significant drop in sales." Late last year the operation secured a £4.4m grant investment from the Welsh Government which it said would help create a further 88 jobs over the next five years, with a focus on developing and producing electric vehicle technology.

<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/business/business-news/car-components-firm-calsonic-kansei-16138286>

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## **Economic Impact**

### **Did someone forget to tell NTT about Brexit? Japanese telco eyes London for global HQ**

Japanese telco and tech behemoth NTT Corporation has chosen London for its new global headquarters amid a massive reorg, according to reports. Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation – the parent of Di Data Group – is in the midst of a massive restructuring, with final details due to be announced in July. But London has scored the global head office seemingly in spite of Brexit worries, reported Nikkei Asian Review.

[https://www.theregister.co.uk/2019/04/16/japans\\_ntt\\_picks\\_london\\_for\\_euro\\_hq/](https://www.theregister.co.uk/2019/04/16/japans_ntt_picks_london_for_euro_hq/)

### **UK boosts business bank by £200m as Brexit hits funding**

The UK government is to inject £200m into a state-run scheme designed to provide financing for business amid concerns over a reduction in funding from the EU after Brexit. The British Business Bank, which works in partnership with other financial institutions to leverage private capital, offers to share the risk of certain losses on a portfolio of new loans made to companies. The government has faced calls to encourage the publicly owned bank, set up by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government in 2014, to invest in start-ups and help offset the impact that Brexit will have on funding for the tech sector.

<https://www.ft.com/content/a62c82f8-6052-11e9-b285-3acd5d43599e>

### **Unemployment figures at record low in Northern Ireland**

The Department for the Economy's (DfE) Labour Market Report for December to February shows that the unemployment rate was 3% – a 0.5 percentage point decrease over the quarter. This level is lower than the UK rate (3.95), the EU rate (6.5%) and that in the Republic (5.3%). While the amount for those out of work is at a record low, the employment rate has also reached a record high – 71.2%. This is an increase of 1.8 percentage points over the year, a "statistically significant" change, according to the DfE. In the last year, however, there has been 2,357 confirmed redundancies in Northern Ireland – a 24% jump when compared to the previous 12 months. A DfE spokesperson said: "The improvements in the NI labour market since 2017 are consistent with the UK experience, where unemployment and inactivity are joint lowest on record and employment is at a joint record high

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/northern-ireland-unemployment-rate-hits-record-low-38020850.html>

### **UK unemployment at its lowest since 1974**

New figures show unemployment is at its lowest since 1974, with more people either in work or looking for work. Ministers say it's a sign of the "underlying resilience" of the British economy. And wage growth is rising too.

<https://www.channel4.com/news/uk-unemployment-at-its-lowest-since-1974>

### **Why the EU carbon market is being roiled by Brexit**

It seems that nothing can escape the claw-like grasp of Brexit: it is now the turn of the European carbon market to be roiled by Britain's stuttering attempts to leave the EU. Prices for the allowances traded under the EU Emissions Trading System hit a 10-year high above €27 a tonne last week, in a move partly attributed to the receding chance of the UK leaving the bloc under a no-deal Brexit.

<https://www.ft.com/content/0fa14de4-5f87-11e9-b285-3acd5d43599e>

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## **Administrative Fall Out**

### **SMEs making cuts due to Brexit**

The majority of UK SMEs are still completely in the dark over what to expect, or how to better prepare for life after Brexit, according to new research released today. According to a survey of 1,200 SME owners across the UK, commissioned by Simply Business, three quarters of self-employed people admit to feeling unsupported ahead of Brexit. A third have decided to delay growth plans and further investment in their business, while 8 per cent stated that they're having to make redundancies to cut costs. Bea Montoya, of Simply Business, said: "There isn't a blueprint for what happens after Brexit."

<https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/business/smes-making-cuts-due-to-brexit-1-9715177>

### **No-deal Brexit threatens 'innumerable problems' for environmental projects**

A new report called 'Brexit, The Good Friday/Belfast Agreement and the Environment: Issues Arising and Possible Solutions' was launched in Leinster House on Tuesday. A disorderly exit could "cause a major environmental headache on the island of Ireland" in the absence of a clear common rulebook regarding species, emissions, water quality and hazardous waste. "It is likely that Brexit (in any form) will interfere with Good Friday/Belfast Agreement cross-border co-operation and place obstacles in its way in general, but in particular in the area of environmental co-operation," it says. "A hard border or a customs border would represent a potential physical obstacle to cross-border environmental projects, potentially causing innumerable problems from movement of staff on projects and goods necessary for the carrying out of projects, to the more abstract problems cause by regulatory divergence and governance changes as a result of Brexit."

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/environment/no-deal-brexit-threatens-innumerable-problems-for-environmental-projects-1.3862862>

### **Brexit: Environmental rules in Northern Ireland 'at risk'**

A paper by Dr Ciara Brennan from Newcastle University and Dr Mary Dobbs from Queen's University points out that where big infrastructure projects affect protected sites, Daera will be responsible for advising on whether there is an "overriding public interest" in proceeding. That would replace the role currently undertaken by the European Commission. The academics suggest planning officials in infrastructure would be asking approval from colleagues in Daera, a situation which, they claim, could lead to "conflicts of interest" where "the government is seeking approval from itself".

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-47913640>

### **Manufacturers fear flipside of no-deal Brexit boom**

Foreign customers of UK businesses are raising their demand for goods and services in advance of a no Deal Brexit exit but such a surge is unlikely to last businesses are saying

<https://www.ft.com/content/70a630e4-5d04-11e9-939a-341f5ada9d40>

## **Political Shenanigans**

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### **European elections and a second Brexit vote**

A formal alliance or pre-election joint lists between clear anti-Brexit parties - the Liberal Democrats, Greens, the Independent Group/Change UK, Scottish National party in Scotland and Plaid Cymru in Wales - won't happen. But they could stop name-calling each other, as indeed could Labour its erstwhile colleagues. I remember the pleasure Labour MPs and activists got in calling the Social Democratic party "renegades" every name under the sun after their 1981 split from Labour. It didn't help. Labour lost the next three elections. Similarly, TIG should drop its jejune insults when it will be Labour MPs, with the help of some Tories, who rescue the nation from the Brexit isolationist fanatics.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/apr/16/european-elections-and-a-second-brexit-vote>

### **Change UK registers as political party ahead of European elections**

Change UK has been formally registered as a political party, allowing the centrist movement

founded by former Labour and Tory MPs to field candidates for the European elections. The group, led by the former Conservative Heidi Allen, has received more than 3,700 expressions of interest in being a candidate in the elections and is polling about 4-7% for the contest, meaning it could get MEPs. Change UK's registration was accepted by the Electoral Commission but the body rejected its proposed emblem. A spokeswoman for the commission said: "The emblem contained a hashtag, and we cannot assess the material linked to a hashtag, which will change over time, against the legal tests. The emblem also contained the acronym TIG, which we were not satisfied was sufficiently well known."

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/apr/16/change-uk-independent-group-registers-as-political-party-ahead-of-european-elections>

### **How May miscalculated the Brexit numbers game | Politics**

It is a Conservative implosion that has been years in the making. Having seen her Brexit deal defeated three times in parliament, Theresa May finally admitted that "as things stand I can't see [MPs] accepting it". Just days later Tory MPs delivered their own verdict. Only a minority of May's party - 133 out of 314 - voted in favour of the prime minister's request for a delay. She was effectively governing on the back of opposition votes.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/apr/16/how-may-miscalculated-the-brexit-numbers-game>

### **Donald Tusk is right, Britain does need more time for Brexit - so it can hold a Final Say referendum**

If we decided to stay, in a Final Say referendum, there might be a heavy price to pay in the short run for the "betrayal" of the 2016 vote - but it would be the only way to allow the EU as a whole to move on to more important things. It is not up to EU leaders to tell us how to run our affairs, but Tusk is right that they should give us the time - and every encouragement - to hold another referendum to put an end to the deadlock.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/brexit-deal-donald-tusk-referendum-eu-final-say-a8872231.html>

### **The Londoner: EU citizens face a voting headache**

EU citizens living in the UK have to undergo a two-step process to register to vote in the elections, a system which was blamed in 2014 for what they said was a steep drop in the number of EU nationals eligible to vote. Now it emerges that despite promising in 2014 to act on this, the Electoral Commission has not made any changes to the system, risking the same problem. In 2014 the Electoral Commission promised it would "identify what can be done to simplify the system and remove unnecessary administrative barriers to participation... at the next European Parliament elections in 2019". Today a commission spokesman explained that it was "not something we looked at" after the Government told it, following the 2016 referendum, that the UK would not be participating in the European elections. Axel Antoni, a spokesman for the 3Million campaigning group of EU citizens, blasted both the Government and the Electoral Commission. "It's disappointing that the UK makes it so hard for EU citizens to register," he said, but added it was "a bit disingenuous" of the Electoral Commission to blame Brexit. "Between 2014 and 2016 what did they do to make it better? Nothing." EU citizens must register to vote as normal and, for the European elections, also complete a form stating they are not voting elsewhere in Europe.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/londoners-diary/the-londoner-eu-citizens-face-a-voting-headache-a4119256.html>

### **EXCL Labour allies across EU pile pressure on Jeremy Corbyn to help overturn Brexit**

Dozens of Labour allies from across the EU have piled pressure on Jeremy Corbyn to include a promise to overturn Brexit in his upcoming European Parliament manifesto. The socialist MEPs representing 10 nations urged the Labour leader to run a "strong, confident pro-European" campaign to help prevent the "rise of populism" and help shape "a better future for an entire continent". They said: "The British Labour party must participate in the European elections and help

change the balance of power in Europe. Labour would do well in European elections and could command a large coalition of internationalists who want to see vast social change. “A Labour party leading the socialist group in coalition with the other European left parties could reform the EU into a project for social and environmental justice across borders.” They said pro- and anti-EU figures on the left should “put aside our differences” to fight the far right forces that are gaining traction across Europe in Hungary, Italy, Holland, France and elsewhere.

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/political-parties/labour-party/jeremy-corbyn/news/103283/excl-labour-allies-a-cross-eu-pile>

### **James Murdoch set to invest \$1bn in media companies**

People with direct knowledge of his plans said James Murdoch wanted to distance himself from the conservative media outlets controlled for decades by his father but had yet to decide how exactly he would invest in the news media. His options range from a liberal news website to a digital magazine focused on culture, society and lifestyle, they said, adding that no final decision had been taken as the new venture was at an early stage.

<https://www.ft.com/content/dd557542-6065-11e9-b285-3acd5d43599e>

### **Amber Rudd back in Tory leadership race as she says it is 'entirely possible' she will run to succeed Theresa May**

Amber Rudd said it is “entirely possible” she will run to be the next Tory leader as she re-entered the race to succeed Theresa May. The Work and Pensions Secretary gave the strongest hint yet of any potential Conservative leadership contender that she could put herself forward to be prime minister as she said she was keeping the “door slightly ajar” to the possibility. Ms Rudd was believed to have ruled herself out of the contest, partially because of her 346 vote majority in her Hastings and Rye constituency. Mrs May has said she will make way for a new Tory leader after the terms of the UK’s divorce from the European Union have been agreed.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/04/16/amber-rudd-back-tory-leadership-race-says-entirely-possible/>

*Additional sources: (Sky News)*

### **The numbers don’t lie: Labour must back a people’s vote to win the next election**

The UCL analysis shows that in every region of the UK, the majority of voters who put a cross next to Labour in the general election of 2017 but say they won’t vote Labour next time, are switching to a party they see as more pro-European. In London, where Labour dominated in 2017, a third of Labour voters who know how they intend to vote now say they will vote for another party, but voters switching to a party seen as more pro-remain outnumber those switching to a more pro-leave party by five to one. In the north of England, the number switching is fewer, at just 20% – but again the number switching to a more pro-remain party outnumber those switching to the Tories or Ukip by four to one. In the Midlands, where a quarter of Labour voters say they are switching, remainers outnumber leavers by five to one. Starkest of all is Scotland, where Labour must win 23 of those 80 seats to form a government. There, 48% of our 2017 voters now say they plan to defect, 45% to a more pro-remain party, just 3% the other way – a ratio of 15 to one.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/15/numbers-labour-back-peoples-vote-election-party>

### **EU has nothing to gain from no-deal Brexit, says Juncker**

The EU has “nothing to gain” from the disruption a no-deal Brexit would bring to the UK, European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker has said. Mr Juncker said the EU had adopted the “necessary contingency measures”, but said only those who seek to undermine the global legal order would benefit from such an exit. “We have adopted the necessary contingency measures and we are ready for a no-deal Brexit,” he told MEPs. “But our union has nothing to gain from great disruption in the United Kingdom. The only ones who would benefit are those who resent multilateralism and seek to undermine the global legal order.” Mr Juncker made the comments as he



addressed the European Parliament in Strasbourg on last week's European Council summit at which Theresa May was offered a six-month Brexit delay.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/eu-has-nothing-to-gain-from-noddeal-brexit-says-juncker-38020466.html>

### **Grassroots Tories hatch fresh plot to oust Theresa May using little-known rule**

Fed-up local Tory chairmen are plotting to force out Theresa May sooner than planned by using little known powers in the party rule book. An emergency meeting of the Conservatives' National Convention, which represents the party's grassroots, can be called if 65 local association chairmen agree, paving the way for a no confidence vote in the Tory leader. The signatures are already being gathered, with Brexit-leaning grassroots Tories furious at the Prime Minister's handling of the UK's departure from the EU. One Tory chairman involved in the campaign told the Mirror: "If she doesn't go before the European elections we'll be hammered. The problem lies not just with her Brexit deal, but her poor leadership."

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/grassroots-tories-hatch-fresh-plot-14382839>

### **Michael Heseltine backs David Lammy's Brexit Nazi comparison, saying similarities to 1930s are 'chilling'**

Former Deputy Prime Minister Michael Heseltine said he sees a "chilling" similarity between the present day and the run-up to the Second World War as he agreed with some of the points made by Labour MP David Lammy who compared hardline Brexiteers to Nazis. Mr Lammy, who is the MP for Tottenham, told the BBC's Andrew Marr Show on Sunday that he had not been "strong enough" in his comparison of senior Brexiteers such as Jacob Rees-Mogg and Boris Johnson to the German Nazi party of the 1930s. The Tory peer said that he did not like people discussing the "extremes of yesteryear" but said he did agree there were similarities in the economic situation that means that anti-immigrant and anti-elite politics have "basic, chilling appeal for people".

<https://inews.co.uk/news/uk/david-lammy-brexit-nazis-comparison-michael-heseltine/>

### **TED TALK - Carole Cadwalladr ask - Are free and fair elections ever possible again given the extent of new technology disruption?**

In an unmissable talk, journalist Carole Cadwalladr digs into one of the most perplexing events in recent times: the UK's super-close 2016 vote to leave the European Union. Tracking the result to a barrage of misleading Facebook ads targeted at vulnerable Brexit swing voters -- and linking the same players and tactics to the 2016 US presidential election -- Cadwalladr calls out the "gods of Silicon Valley" for being on the wrong side of history and asks: Are free and fair elections a thing of the past?

[https://www.ted.com/talks/carole\\_cadwalladr\\_facebook\\_s\\_role\\_in\\_brexit\\_and\\_the\\_threat\\_to\\_democracy](https://www.ted.com/talks/carole_cadwalladr_facebook_s_role_in_brexit_and_the_threat_to_democracy)

### **Tory deregulation agenda stalling Brexit talks, says Corbyn**

Jeremy Corbyn has said Brexit talks with the government are stalling because of a Tory desire for post-withdrawal deregulation, including as part of a US trade deal. Corbyn said Labour had been putting forward a robust case for a customs union during the talks over the past week but suggested he feared the two sides would not find common ground. "There has to be access to European markets and above all there has to be a dynamic relationship to protect the conditions and rights that we've got for environment and consumer workplace rights," he said. "We've put those cases very robustly to the government and there's no agreement as yet."

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/apr/16/brexit-talks-with-government-have-stalled-says-corbyn>

### **Tories and Labour jittery at prospect of Euro poll**

Tories are the most concerned, with senior figures predicting the party could suffer an electoral meltdown as voters protest against Theresa May and the failure to deliver Brexit because of MPs' rejection of her withdrawal agreement. Conservative politicians in Westminster and Brussels believe that if she is still prime minister by the time of the poll, the party will lose most of its 18 existing

MEPs.

<https://www.ft.com/content/528ce492-5f91-11e9-b285-3acd5d43599e>

### **Is there time for another Brexit vote?**

The latest delay to Brexit has energised those campaigning for another EU referendum. The extension to 31 October gives them more time to make the case for a so-called People's Vote. But if a referendum is to be held between now and then, they need to win the argument fast. Within a few weeks, the Halloween deadline - already challenging - would become a nightmare to meet. That is not to say there cannot be another referendum; just that such a vote may require more time.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-47937629>

### **Mike Russell: Second EU vote needed even if Brexit deal reached**

Scotland's Constitutional Relations Secretary has said a second Brexit referendum including an option to remain should be held, even if agreement is reached on the Prime Minister's deal. Mike Russell said if a compromise is found enabling a deal to pass, people across the UK should be given the chance to vote on it.

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/general-election/mike-russell-second-eu-vote-needed-even-if-brexit-deal-reached-1-4908100>

### **Government will pay NI's €4m health insurance post-Brexit - Tánaiste**

Tánaiste Simon Coveney has confirmed the Government will cover the estimated €4 million cost of EU health insurance for Northern Ireland citizens after Brexit, if necessary. The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) entitles EU citizens to state-provided medical treatment if they are injured or become ill in another member state or Free Trade Economic Association country (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland). If the UK leaves the EU without a deal, British-issued health insurance cards will no longer be valid. Mr Coveney said it would pose challenges to extend the cover to people in the North because they would no longer be resident in the EU and legislation would be necessary.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/oireachtas/government-will-pay-ni-s-4m-health-insurance-post-brexit-tánaiste-1.3862738>

### **New soft Brexit plot unveiled in bid to end deadlock (and, yes, it involves more voting)**

A fresh plot is underway to force through a soft Brexit to end the Commons deadlock, it was revealed today. Veteran MPs Frank Field and Ken Clarke are teaming up to force another vote on a customs union in weeks - in a hope they can push through a soft exit. But Independent MP Mr Field told the Evening Standard that bringing it back again could get both party leaders "off the hook" and they won't have to sign a formal Brexit deal.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/brexit/8874989/new-soft-brexit-plot-unveiled-in-move-to-end-deadlock/>

## **Political Setbacks**

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### **Local election candidates feel wrath of Brexit on the doorsteps of Milton Keynes**

"If people are angry about Brexit they might vote UKIP, but I get the feeling that the people most upset are those who believe that any delay has been wrong and they are disproportionately Conservatives." Cllr Douglas McCall, the Lib Dem leader, believes any Brexit effect on the doorstep won't hit the Lib Dems as much as the other parties, especially the Conservatives. "The Tories gained seats that they did not expect to in 2015, when the local elections took place at the same time as the General Election," he said. "Four years later, they are really unpopular and I expect they will lose seats to Labour and the Lib Dems."

<https://www.miltonkeynes.co.uk/news/politics/local-election-candidates-feel-wrath-of-brexit-on-the-doorsteps-of-milton-keynes-1-8892653>

### **The UK teeters on the verge of a Brexit breakdown**



The first warning signs of the toll that Brexit might impose on national wellbeing manifested themselves in Europeans resident in Britain, says Emmy van Deurzen. A consultant psychoanalyst and professor at an offshoot of Middlesex University, Ms van Deurzen says that in the immediate aftermath of the 2016 referendum on Britain's membership of the EU, Europeans living in London suddenly felt less than welcome, and worried about whether they could still call the UK home. Some of her patients said they began losing their appetites and struggling to sleep. This year the same symptoms of anxiety and worse have started spreading to UK citizens, she says. Extreme mood swings. Exhaustion and loss of hope. Delusional outbursts. An inability to carry out everyday tasks.

<https://www.ft.com/content/356e0f12-5faa-11e9-a27a-fdd51850994c>

### **Theresa May's secretive Brexit approach led to blunders, says report**

Theresa May has been accused of blundering through Brexit by creating an "unsustainable" split between government departments while her "secretive" approach to the withdrawal negotiations fuelled division in her own Cabinet. In a highly critical report, the respected think tank the Institute for Government (IfG) blamed Mrs May for creating a divide in responsibilities between No.10 and the Department for Exiting the European Union (Dexu). Tim Durrant, lead author of the IfG report, said: "It is vital that the government uses the next months to develop a better understanding of how the EU will approach the next phase. The time available for negotiations is short and the government must not waste time by failing to prepare."

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/theresa-may-s-secretive-brexite-approach-led-to-blunders-says-report-1-4907984>

### **Damaging impact of Brexit cannot be fully mitigated, warns Sturgeon**

Nobody should pretend that the damage of Brexit can be fully mitigated, according to Nicola Sturgeon. The First Minister will speak at the STUC conference in Dundee on Wednesday and is expected to warn that any form of Brexit would harm living standards and risk jobs. An extension to Article 50 was granted earlier this month, meaning that the UK will not leave the European Union until October 31 unless a deal can be agreed in Parliament sooner.

<https://www.expressandstar.com/news/uk-news/2019/04/16/damaging-impact-of-brexite-cannot-be-fully-mitigated-warns-sturgeon/>

### **Environmental regulations proving sticking point in cross-party Brexit talks, Labour claims**

Brexit talks between Labour and Conservatives have stalled, in part because the Tories are unwilling to reject the option of slashing workers' rights and environmental protections in order to secure a US trade deal post-Brexit, Jeremy Corbyn has said. The Labour leader told the Guardian newspaper on Tuesday that the government "doesn't appear to be shifting its red lines" because parts of the Tory party "actually wants to turn this country into a deregulated, low-tax society which will do a deal with Trump".

<https://www.businessgreen.com/bg/news/3074270/environmental-regulations-proving-sticking-point-in-cross-party-brexite-talks-labour-claims>

### **DUP arranged 'investment meetings' for Brexit campaign donor**

The DUP arranged for a major party donor who bankrolled its Brexit campaign to discuss "investment opportunities" with public bodies in Northern Ireland. Richard Cook, a former vice chairman of the Scottish Conservatives, chairs the Constitutional Research Council (CRC) - a pro-union business group that donated £435,000 to the DUP during the EU referendum campaign. He was involved in a series of senior meetings with Invest NI, Belfast City Council and a Stormont department in the months following the EU referendum, The Irish News has learned. The meetings were to discuss "potential investment opportunities in Northern Ireland". Invest NI and Belfast council said nothing materialised from these engagements.

<https://www.irishnews.com/news/brexit/2019/04/16/news/dup-arranged-investment-meetings-for-brexit-campaign-donor-1598608/>

### **Ukip MEP Stuart Agnew addressed pro-apartheid club**

A leading Ukip MEP made a speech to a pro-apartheid club of expat South Africans that has far-right links and calls Nelson Mandela a terrorist, it has emerged. Stuart Agnew, who is top of one of the party's regional lists for re-election if European elections take place in the UK in May, addressed a recent meeting of the Springbok Club, which is led by a former activist in the far-right National Front (NF) and has links to the murderer of Jo Cox. The organisation has the apartheid-era South African flag as an emblem, and has called for the return of "civilised European rule" to the continent.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/apr/16/ukip-mep-stuart-agnew-addresses-pro-apartheid-club>

### **Nigel Farage says Brexiteer anger will 'explode' if Theresa May strikes deal with Jeremy Corbyn**

Nigel Farage has warned Theresa May that Brexiteer anger will "explode" if she strikes a pact with Jeremy Corbyn to keep the UK closely tied to the European Union. The Brexit Party leader has claimed the UK's democracy is under threat as he sought to build momentum for his movement ahead of the European elections. His comments came after Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt warned that Mrs May could struggle to hang on to power if she cannot get her Brexit deal through Parliament before the May 23 European poll. Mr Hunt said the "total focus" of ministers was to ensure the country did not have to vote in the elections to the European Parliament on May 23. Speaking during a visit to Japan, he acknowledged that the Government would be facing a "very serious situation" if it failed to do so.

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/nigel-farage-says-brexiteer-anger-will-explode-if-theresa-may-strikes-deal-with-jeremy-corbyn-a4118641.html>

### **Brexit: Theresa May warned she has 'no chance' of passing deal in time to stop European elections**

Theresa May has "no chance" of passing her Brexit deal in time to pull the UK out of the European parliament elections and avoid a likely devastating defeat, experts have concluded. Time has already effectively run out on attempts to ratify the agreement by 22 May, they say – despite the prime minister insisting talks with Labour can still deliver a compromise before the deadline. The verdict puts the Conservatives on course to lose most of their MEPs, polls suggest, as Leave voters protest at the failure to deliver Brexit, a disastrous result that would trigger huge pressure on Ms May to resign. The staging of the elections will also be a personal humiliation for the prime minister, who repeatedly told MPs they should not take place, three years after the Brexit referendum

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-deal-theresa-may-european-parliament-elections-a8873056.html>

### **Key Corbyn Supporters In Battle For Labour's Coveted Euro Parliament Seats**

All the main parties are currently fast-tracking selection of potential candidates for the Strasbourg elections, which will go ahead on May 23 if the UK parliament fails to approve a Brexit deal beforehand. While the Tory party is facing a serious threat from Nigel Farage's Brexit Party and UKIP, polls show that Labour is on course to gain seats in the Euro elections and the battle has begun in selection races across the country.

[https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/key-corbyn-supporters-in-battle-for-labours-plum-euro-parliament-seats\\_uk\\_5cb370dde4b0ffefe3b20444](https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/key-corbyn-supporters-in-battle-for-labours-plum-euro-parliament-seats_uk_5cb370dde4b0ffefe3b20444)

### **Farage should Fix himself - Brexit Party boss busted**

The outright lies and failure to deal adequately with policy details will go down in history as the Leave side's most prominent sore. Leaving the European Union is a mammoth legal, technical and constitutional task which cannot be orchestrated according to the whims of the political

sloganeering we saw in the 2016 referendum. The jaws of reality, it turns out, cannot be avoided indefinitely. To some extent, I should have had greater foresight and viewed the withdrawal issues through a more critical lens. But then again, this could be said of almost anybody invested in Brexit. Farage's grotesque simplifications, parroted by individuals uninterested in complexity, and the almost religious evasion of detail were never going to prepare us for our departure. It is here where history will truly judge him.

<https://bylinetimes.com/2019/04/16/farage-should-fix-himself-brexit-party-boss-busted/>

### **'Their first decision was to go on holiday': EU's Verhofstadt fears UK will waste Brexit delay**

A top EU figure has said he fears Britain will waste its latest Brexit reprieve and "run down the clock" once again. European Parliament Brexit co-ordinator Guy Verhofstadt told the European Parliament that the bloc's decision to grant a delay until the end of October risked prolonging the uncertainty. He said the six-month extension to Article 50 is "too near for a substantial rethink of Brexit and at the same time too far away to prompt any action".

<https://news.sky.com/story/their-first-decision-was-to-go-on-holiday-eu-fears-uk-will-waste-brexit-delay-11695220>

### **UK MEPs could sit for 'months or longer'**

The UK will take part in May's European elections and British MEPs could sit for "months or even longer", European Council President Donald Tusk has said. Mr Tusk said the decision to delay Brexit to 31 October meant British voters would be going to the polls. But Brexit co-ordinator Guy Verhofstadt said the six-month extension was too short for change and too far away to prompt action.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-47946256>

### **Voters now more sure they voted the right way in 2016 Brexit referendum, new poll reveals**

Most voters have become even more sure that they voted the right way in the 2016 Brexit referendum despite three years of furious campaigning on both sides, a new poll has revealed. A fresh study by YouGov finds that 64% of Remain voters and 57% of Leave voters are "more sure than I was that I voted the right way" in the nationwide referendum held almost three years ago. A further 22% of Remain voters and 25% of Leave voters told the polling firm that they were "about as sure" as they were in 2016 that they had cast their ballot in the right direction.

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/foreign-affairs/brexit/news/103289/voters-now-more-sure-they-voted-right-way-2016-brexit>

### **How pro-Brexit group Leave.EU faked migrant footage**

People-smuggling across the Channel. Migrants attacking women in dark alleys. All designed to fuel fears about immigration - perhaps the defining issue of the EU referendum. Tonight, Channel 4 News reveals disturbing new evidence of fakery - produced for Arron Banks's Leave.EU - and pumped out on social media in the run up to the vote in 2016. And at the heart of it, a secretive security company owned by Mr Banks.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I\\_YUtWMIMMA&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_YUtWMIMMA&feature=youtu.be)

### **Only a proper Brexit can spare us from this toxic polarisation**

I know it may not feel much like it at the moment, but some day soon we are going to get out. Unless we MPs have taken leave of our senses, we will honour the wishes of the people. Unless the PM has some secret plan to stifle Brexit with a series of ever more ludicrous delays, it seems to me all but inevitable that we will eventually respect the result of the 2016 referendum and leave the European Union.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/04/14/proper-brexit-can-spare-us-toxic-polarisation/>

## **Pro-Brexit Leave.EU group accused of faking videos and forging images of migrants committing crimes**

Pro-Brexit campaign group Leave.EU has been accused of faking a viral video of illegal "migrants" and forging images purporting to show immigrants committing violent crimes. The group, which is led by businessman and former Ukip donor Arron Banks, staged a video that it claimed showed how easy it was for migrants to cross to Britain illegally, according to Channel 4 News. The video was released in the weeks before the 2016 EU referendum and was watched hundreds of thousands of times. But Channel 4 said satellite data showed that the boat had never left UK waters, and footage appearing to show the "migrants" entering the country was filmed before they left UK shores. It also reported that Leave.EU had staged images that the group said showed a migrant attacking a young woman in Tottenham, north London. The photos appearing to show the violent attack were reportedly sent by a special forces veteran who works for Mr Banks to Andy Wigmore, Leave.EU's head of communications.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-leave-eu-faking-forging-videos-images-illegal-migrants-violent-crime-aaron-banks-a8873461.html>

## **Damaging impact of Brexit cannot be fully mitigated, warns Sturgeon**

Nobody should pretend that the damage of Brexit can be fully mitigated, according to Nicola Sturgeon. The First Minister will speak at the STUC conference in Dundee on Wednesday and is expected to warn that any form of Brexit would harm living standards

<https://www.eveningexpress.co.uk/news/scotland/damaging-impact-of-brexit-cannot-be-fully-mitigated-warns-sturgeon/>

## **Shrewsbury MP Daniel Kawczynski calls for vote of confidence to break Brexit deadlock**

Shrewsbury MP Daniel Kawczynski has called for a vote of confidence in the Government to ensure Britain leaves the EU. The Conservative MP said he wanted the Prime Minister to bring her withdrawal agreement back before the Commons for a fourth time, but ...

<https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/politics/2019/04/16/shrewsbury-mp-daniel-kawczynski-calls-for-vote-of-confidence-to-break-brexit-deadlock/>

## **BREXIT BREAKING POINT How one BBC Veteran Believes BBC Coverage of Farage's New Party 'facilitates fascism'**

While BBC journalists working around the world in terribly difficult circumstances still meet the highest ideals, I have to say - with an extremely heavy heart - that I have changed my view of the BBC. I am an "Unashamed Remainer" (to use John Humphrys' phrase), and have been uneasy for some time about the corporation's Brexit coverage, and publicly critical of it. But I still managed to believe that the BBC was trying to do the right thing, and that it was ultimately a force for good. That finally changed with the way it covered the launch of Nigel Farage's new party, and in particular his speech in which he said he wanted "to put the fear of God" into MPs.

<https://bylinetimes.com/2019/04/15/brexit-breaking-point-how-one-veteran-believes-bbc-coverage-of-farages-new-party-facilitates-fascism/>

## **Trade Deals/Negotiations**

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

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

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

Additional sources: ([Daily Mail](#))

**@Channel4News "We made it clear to all that if there is any harm to the Good Friday accords: no trade agreement."**

"We made it clear to all that if there is any harm to the Good Friday accords: no trade agreement." US House of Representatives speaker Nancy Pelosi says that the prospect of a post-Brexit US-UK trade deal rests on maintaining the Good Friday Agreement.

<https://twitter.com/Channel4News/status/1118176610715353088>

## **EU Funding Benefits**

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### **EU law fixes minimum rights for 'gig economy' workers**

The European Parliament has approved new EU rules to protect workers in the so-called "gig economy". The law sets minimum rights and demands increased transparency for those in "on-demand" jobs, such as at Uber or Deliveroo. It proposes more predictable hours and compensation for cancelled work, and an end to "abusive practices" around casual contracts. Member states will now have at most three years to enforce the new rules. The European Parliament says the new legislation will apply to "the most vulnerable employees on atypical contracts and in non-standard jobs" - including those on zero-hour contracts. Employees in EU member states already enjoy a wide range of protections to working hours, minimum breaks and holiday entitlement.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-47947220>