

# News from the Brexit Cliff Edge

## 22nd Mar 2019

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### News Highlights

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#### Welcome to the Brexit Cliff Edge

- A study Bertelsmann Stiftung said Europeans are facing billions in lost income each year because of Brexit. A hard Brexit would result in 57.3bn Euros in income losses in the UK every year and other member states would lose an average 40.4bn Euros in income. Germany would lose an annual income of 9.5bn Euros, France 8bn Euros and Italy 6bn.
- The Financial Times reported on a study by the IE Business School Madrid which showed that the world's largest sovereign wealth funds had slashed their investment in the UK. State-backed funds put \$21bn into the UK in 2017, but only \$1.8bn last year. There were only 8 deals made by SWFs in the UK in 2018 compared with 18 a year before.
- Bank of England said consumers seemed to have shrugged off Brexit uncertainty a little in February, as volumes bought rose by 0.4%, better than the decline of 0.4%, predicted by City economists
- The Bank of England kept interest rates on hold and published a survey which suggested 80% of firms are as ready as they can be for a No Deal Brexit
- Business lobby groups (including the UK's CBI) wrote to the European Commission warning of possible disruption to flights, drug shortages and critical data-sharing interruptions. The document confirmed European companies are as worried about a No Deal Brexit outcome as UK firms are
- The Ministry of Defence has activated a plan called Operation Redfold, which has 3,500 troops at its disposal, to move food and fuel and help manage traffic congestion around ports
- A German toilet roll manufacturer, Wepa, said it had stockpiled 3.5m rolls in warehouses in preparation for a No Deal Brexit. The UK is the largest toilet roll consumer in Europe and a core market for the industry
- Press reports suggest a Pro-Brexit lorry group will carry out their threat to go-slow and jam motorways on Saturday. The same day as more than half a million are expected to travel to London for the Put it to the People March
- Sky News revealed that the government has imposed gagging orders on all organizations working with it in preparation for a No Deal Brexit. The use of NDAs is now at nearly 'epidemic proportions' Sky News observed

#### No Plan B if your deal fails? The EU throws Theresa May a Brexit lifeline

- Britain's departure date has been extended by an extra fortnight to Friday, 12th April - the legal deadline when the UK must decide whether to take part in the EU elections. If Theresa May gets her Meaningful Vote 3 through Parliament next week, Brexit Day moves again to May 22nd to give her time to pass legislation. If she fails, the UK has just these two weeks to come up with a new departure plan, either incorporating a long Article 50 extension, participating in the EU elections or leaving on the basis of No Deal
- Theresa May's performance at the European Council was savaged by some sections of the UK press. 'Black Thursday: Britain humiliated on global stage as it begs for more time' (Politics.co.uk); 'We are not in a souk here' Luxembourg's PM gives an exasperated response

to the UK's Brexit demands' (iNews); 'A colossal failure of statecraft, an epic shambles, the worst political crisis in 70 years' (The Scotsman); 'Nine days from Brexit Day, does anyone have a clue what is happening' (The Guardian); 'Theresa May needs to recognise that Parliament, not the PM, is sovereign' (Politics Home); 'Theresa May has trashed our democracy and put our MPs in danger' (The Guardian)

- Theresa May's performance at home was also savaged. 'Chairman of the 1922 Committee of Tory MPs tells Theresa May to quit over Brexit' (Daily Telegraph). Sir Graham Brady said 'he had been bombarded with text messages demanding Theresa May quit'.
- In an unprecedented move, the two main business and workers organizations in Britain - the CBI and the TUC - wrote a joint letter to Theresa May saying she needs to urgently change her approach to Brexit as the country is now facing a national emergency
- The Revoke Article 50 public petition quietly sailed past 2m signatures yesterday and is likely to carry on adding names. This is despite the website connection failing, on many occasions, simply due to the volume of people trying to sign the petition every minute.
- BBC's Europe correspondent seemed dismayed during a podcast on Brexit, as she warned listeners that it is impossible to know what will happen next week as a No Deal Brexit is a now very real possibility
- The Financial Times said Theresa May had decided that her preferred route, if her deal failed, was a No Deal Brexit last Wednesday evening. It reports many who met her as saying, her mood had hardened and she did not seem concerned about the consequences of No Deal. This also explains her reticence to explain to EU Council leaders what her Plan B should her Meaningful Vote 3 fail next week at the meeting on Thursday

## **Economic Impact**

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### **Soft or hard, Brexit will cost UK and EU billions of euros: study**

Europeans are facing billions of euros in income losses due to Brexit, a study by the German Bertelsmann Stiftung has found. A hard Brexit would hit citizens in both the EU and the United Kingdom particularly hard, resulting in €57.3 billion in income losses every year in the U.K. and €40.4 billion in the EU's remaining 27 member states. Germany alone would see annual income losses of €9.5 billion. France and Italy won't escape unscathed, either: The study expects €8 billion and €6 billion in annual income losses respectively for the two countries, making them the biggest losers after the U.K. and Germany. Yet a soft Brexit would cost Europe dearly too, although considerably less than a hard Brexit. In the U.K., income losses in case of a soft Brexit would amount to €32 billion a year, while the remaining EU countries would incur annual income losses of around €22 billion.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/soft-or-hard-brexit-will-cost-uk-and-eu-billions-of-euros-study/>

### **Hard Brexit would be costly chaos, says former head of WTO**

Britain's humiliation over its Brexit negotiations has been caused by a fundamental inability to resolve a conflict between the desire to leave Europe politically, but to remain economically, Pascal Lamy, the former head of the World Trade Organization, has said. He also said he did not think it feasible for the UK to leave the EU without an agreement, since it would be so costly.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/21/hard-brexit-would-be-costly-chaos-says-former-head-of-wto>

### **Sovereign wealth funds cut UK investment ahead of Brexit**

Dealmaking in the UK by some of the largest sovereign wealth funds has plummeted because of the growing uncertainty around Brexit, a report from IE Business School in Madrid has revealed. State-backed funds — including Singapore's GIC and the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board — invested a total of \$21bn in the UK in 2017 compared with only \$1.8bn last year, said the report, based on the total assets allocation of 91 funds with \$8.1tn of assets under management. There

were only eight deals by SWFs in the UK last year, compared with 18 a year before.

<https://www.ft.com/content/55e0f9aa-4afe-11e9-8b7f-d49067e0f50d>

### **UK retail sales unexpectedly rise even with Brexit looming**

British consumers appear to have shrugged off Brexit uncertainty in February as retail sales unexpectedly jumped during the month, according to data published by the Office for National Statistics on Thursday. Volumes bought rose by 0.4 per cent compared with January, much better than the decline of 0.4 per cent expected by City economists. There was little sign that the rise in sales was because of stockpiling ahead of a potentially disorderly Brexit: food sales were the only subcategory to see a drop in sales during the month, which the ONS attributed to the end of the January sales.

<https://www.ft.com/content/bca187f4-4bbc-11e9-8b7f-d49067e0f50d>

### **Bank of England says 'nature' of Brexit will guide path for economy**

The Bank keeps rates on hold and publishes a survey suggesting 80% of firms are as ready as they can be for a no-deal Brexit.

<https://news.sky.com/story/bank-of-england-says-nature-of-brex-it-will-guide-path-for-economy-11671606>

## **Administrative Fall Out**

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### **UK businesses watch Brexit political chaos with 'sense of horror'**

Britain needs a whole new plan if politicians are to avoid a chaotic departure from the EU, according to the director-general of the UK's largest business association, the CBI. Carolyn Fairbairn said businesses were looking at the parliamentary infighting around Brexit with "a sense of absolute horror".

<https://www.ft.com/content/1376ce46-4b2b-11e9-8b7f-d49067e0f50d>

### **Post-Brexit trade ruling sparks accusations of a 'land grab'**

European fund managers have called on regulators to reconsider plans that would prevent them from trading some of Britain's biggest stocks in London in a no-deal Brexit, amid accusations that the EU is mounting a "land grab" of UK share trading. Investors were surprised by a ruling late on Tuesday from the European Securities and Markets Authority, the pan-European administrator, which detailed some 6,200 stocks that EU-registered investors would have to trade in the EU if the UK leaves the bloc without a deal. The list included 14 stocks whose home listing is in London and which trade overwhelmingly on the city's main exchange, such as Vodafone, Rio Tinto and BP. All 6,200 stocks are either EU-based or have a second, highly active listing in London, such as Ryanair.

<https://www.ft.com/content/8f604aae-4b04-11e9-8b7f-d49067e0f50d>

### **NHS could be short of 100,000 nurses in a decade**

A report co-authored by the Nuffield Trust, Health Foundation and King's Fund predicts that in the next five years nurse shortages will double and GP gaps nearly treble if major action isn't taken. The health think tanks suggest a combination of international recruitment, student grants, a significant overhaul of the current system and an investment of at least £900m is needed to address the widening workforce gap. It recommends offering a £5,200 grant for living expenses to student nurses, tripling the number of postgraduates in training and bringing 5,000 more students onto nursing courses every year.

<https://nursingnotes.co.uk/nhs-will-be-short-of-100000-nurses-in-a-decade/>

### **Next profits fall but boss says Brexit not affecting spending**

Profits at retail chain's stores slump by more than a fifth but online arm reports growth. CEO says customers are numb to Brexit and the results do not relate to it

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2019/mar/21/next-profits-fall-but-boss-says-brex-it-not-affecting-spending>

### **Kent pupils could be left stranded by no-deal Brexit gridlock, warns council**

Teachers in schools in Kent have been told they may have to suspend classes and “adopt a carer role” in the event of disruption caused by a no-deal Brexit. The warning comes as the government confirms it has activated a team in a nuclear-proof bunker under the Ministry of Defence to provide army support in a no-deal scenario. No-deal planning will move from the Cabinet Office to daily meetings of the government’s emergency committee Cobra from next week. Also the military’s Operation Redfold will have authority to direct some 3,500 military personnel to move food and fuel and help with traffic congestion in Kent.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/mar/21/kent-teachers-care-stranded-pupils-parents-traffic-disruption-no-deal-brexit>

### **Brexit and How Japanese Companies Are Navigating Its Uncertainties**

Japanese companies that have invested in Britain offer an interesting example of how international business is coping with the political tumult roiling the UK economy over Brexit. Japanese firms operating in the UK and the Japanese ambassador to London have been uncharacteristically outspoken about their dissatisfaction with Brexit and its inept handling by British politicians. However, they are not rushing to exit the UK. Instead, they are making limited, defensive moves while they wait for clarity to emerge from the chaos.

<https://hbr.org/2019/03/brexit-and-how-japanese-companies-are-navigating-its-uncertainties>

### **Brexit is 'real risk' to Scottish firms**

"We're at quite a serious point," Aquascot's CEO Mr Overton told BBC Radio's Good Morning Scotland programme. "If we do see a no-deal exit from the EU, that's going to be problematic to quite a number of players in the food and drink sector. "It's probably most extreme for those people who export high-value perishable products and seafood. Shellfish, farmed salmon and farmed trout come into that." He added: "We're heading into a period - it could be in the coming weeks - of real risk. "That risk has been looked at and thought about, but frankly it's a big challenge. (There are) big red flashing lights on at the moment."

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-business-47650443>

### **Brexit: Europe's no-deal preparation 'falls short', say businesses**

Business lobby groups have written to the European Commission, warning that its own no-deal Brexit plans "fall short of what is needed to limit major disruptions", Newsnight has learned. The letter is from Business Europe - an umbrella body for lobby groups across the EU, including Britain's CBI. It warns of possible disruption to flights, drug supply shortages and data-sharing interruptions. The Commission said it was in frequent contact with stakeholders. But the document suggests European companies - not just UK firms - are extremely nervous about the economic repercussions of a no-deal Brexit on 29 March.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-47661237>

### **Firms that planned for a no-deal Brexit in March now plan for June**

Companies braced for a no-deal Brexit may empathise. Those with contingency plans for March 29th surely feel relieved that the government is trying to extend the Article 50 talks. Nine in ten firms prefer an extension to crashing out, according to the Confederation of British Industry (cbi), a lobby group. Yet the prospect of a short delay, with no new plan for how to agree on a deal, merely moves the cliff edge back. Firms that had hoped to cancel their costly no-deal plans must now remake them.

<https://www.economist.com/britain/2019/03/23/firms-that-planned-for-a-no-deal-brexit-in-march-now-plan-for-june>

### **UK's top toilet roll supplier stockpiling in case of no-deal Brexit**

One of the UK’s biggest suppliers of toilet and kitchen roll has been stockpiling about 3.5m rolls in UK warehouses in preparation for a no-deal Brexit. The German firm Wepa said it had been storing

an extra 600 tonnes of toilet and kitchen roll in the last three to four months to safeguard supplies in Britain, in case the UK crashes out of the EU without an agreement on 29 March. The company has also built six weeks' supplies of the cardboard core used inside the rolls, as this cannot be sourced from the UK in sufficient quantities and is imported from EU countries in eastern Europe and Scandinavia.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/21/uk-biggest-toilet-roll-supplier-wepa-stockpiling-no-deal-brex-it-avoid-customs-delays>

Additional sources: ([BBC News](#))

### **'Go-slow' protest planned on the M62 motorway over Brexit**

Brexit - or lack of it - appears to be dominating all parts of society. Now protests over delays to the process of leaving the European Union are even being planned for the M62 motorway. Dozens of members of the Brexit Protest and Direct Action Group UK Facebook group have said they would be taking part in a 40mph 'go-slow' drive between Leeds and Liverpool on Saturday, reports Examiner Live. The protest action could see traffic in both directions affected, with protesters travelling westbound from Leeds to junction 18 at Simister Island, and eastbound from Liverpool to the same junction. Almost 60 members of the group have signed up so far.

<https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/brexit-m62-go-slow-protest-16008280>

### **Small firms have 'no resources' for no-deal Brexit planning**

Small businesses are resigned to whatever happens with Brexit as they do not have the resources to plan for a no-deal scenario, according to the Federation of Small Businesses. The organisation has told Sky News that many are finding it impossible to make decisions ahead of a week's time when the UK could be leaving the EU if the prime minister's efforts to agree an extension to the current 29 March deadline fail. Alan Soady, from the FSB, said: "A lot of small businesses don't have the kind of resources, and specialist teams to do contingency planning. "They don't have the money or expertise. That's why many have found it so difficult to plan, and prepare for the possibility of an unplanned no deal.

<https://news.sky.com/story/small-firms-have-no-resources-for-no-deal-brexit-planning-11671122>

## **Political Shenanigans**

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### **Brexit: EU leaders open door to long delay as May fails to set out plan B**

EU leaders have rejected Theresa May's assurances that she can get her Brexit deal passed this week and opened the door to a long delay to the UK's departure, offering pro-EU MPs a two-week window to mobilise for an alternative. In marathon talks in Brussels, EU leaders agreed a 'flexible' extension to Article 50 that will keep the UK in the EU until 22 May if the deal is passed, but giving until 12 April for the UK to ask for more time if MPs reject it again. After telling MPs, the country and 27 European heads of government that she wouldn't tolerate the UK staying in the EU beyond the end of June, fellow leaders ignored her and kept open the possibility of putting Brexit off until the end of the year.

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/general-election/brexit-eu-leaders-open-door-to-long-delay-as-may-fails-to-set-out-plan-b-1-4893861>

### **Brexit: EU draft plans propose Brexit delay until 22 May**

The UK could be offered a Brexit delay to 22 May on the condition MPs approve the PM's deal next week, the latest draft European Council document says. But if MPs vote the withdrawal deal down for a third time, EU leaders would back a shorter delay until mid April

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-47660019>

### **Brexit: MoD prepares for no-deal in Whitehall bunker**

The Ministry of Defence has set up an operations room in a bunker at its main Whitehall building to

deal with a potential no-deal Brexit. The preparations are being run under the banner of Operation Redfold - although officials stress they are part of wider cross-government planning. An MoD spokesman said it was "always willing to support wider government planning for any scenario". Defence chiefs had previously said 3,500 troops were being readied.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-47658403>

### **What the EU should do next about Brexit**

The European Council will probably not take a final decision on whether to extend the Brexit deadline today. But it can do something useful to help bring this process to a good conclusion, and remind the UK parliament that Article 50 of the Lisbon treaty, and a recent ruling of the European Court of Justice, allow only three Brexit outcomes: deal, no-deal or unilateral revocation.

<https://www.ft.com/content/de60a878-4bc8-11e9-8b7f-d49067e0f50d>

### **EU looks at two-stage approach to Brexit delay - diplomats**

European Union leaders were considering an offer of a two-stage Brexit delay on Thursday, depending on whether Prime Minister Theresa May gets her divorce deal approved by the British parliament next week, diplomatic sources said. If she does, the bloc would offer a Brexit delay from the current leave date of March 29 to May 22, according to several diplomats briefed on talks between the other 27 national EU leaders meeting in Brussels. If she does not get approval for her deal, Britain would be given until April 12 to inform the EU whether it would hold European Parliament elections on May 23-26. If Britain agreed to hold the elections, the EU could then consider a longer extension and if it did not, a no-deal Brexit would happen on May 22, the diplomats said.

<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-two-tier/eu-looks-at-two-stage-approach-to-brexit-delay-diplomats-idUKKC N1R22JC>

### **Brexit: EU draft plans propose Brexit delay until May**

EU leaders have agreed on a plan to delay the Article 50 process, postponing Brexit beyond 29 March. The UK will be offered a delay until 22 May, if MPs approve the withdrawal deal negotiated with the EU next week. If they do not, the EU will back a shorter delay until 12 April, allowing the UK time to get the deal through or to "indicate a way forward". Mrs May said there was now a "clear choice" facing UK MPs, who could vote for a third time on her deal next week.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-47660019>

### **Cabinet minister: No Deal Brexit possibility "real and rising"**

One Cabinet Minister tells me his central expectation now is that the vote fails and the EU, in the interests of giving itself a breather before "no deal" and not in expectation of any progress towards a deal in Westminster, grants a temporary extension to April (when the European Parliament elections arrangements need to be locked in stone). The logic runs that they'd be doing that in the hope that some management of the difficulties of "no deal" can be advanced in the interim. A new cliff edge is born but the look on this Cabinet minister's face suggested he thought it was the final one. The chances of no deal are now "real and rising," the Cabinet minister said.

<https://www.channel4.com/news/by/gary-gibbon/blogs/cabinet-minister-no-deal-brexit-possibility-real-and-rising>

*Additional sources: (The Guardian)*

### **Jeremy Corbyn to meet Theresa May on Monday in bid to stave off No Deal Brexit**

The Labour leader was hopeful that a cross-party group of MPs would agree a Norway Plus-style alternative this week if Mrs May's plan is defeated again, to prevent a No Deal. "I think Parliament will come to an agreement next week to stop that happening and we will do everything we can to help them," he said. "The dangers of a chaotic exit are huge, on supplies, investment, jobs and everything else." Labour will support MPs getting a say over the way forward on Brexit on Monday. The party will then back a cross-party amendment focused on the UK's future trading relationship

with the EU, as well as workers' rights. But it remains unclear whether there is a consensus in Parliament around a softer Brexit. The smaller opposition parties, including the SNP and the Lib Dems, are opposed to leaving the EU in any form and want a second referendum instead.

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/jeremy-corbyn-meet-theresa-monday-14169982>

### **Brexit: Hundreds of gagging orders taken out by government**

Sky News can reveal that the government has taken out hundreds of gagging orders as part of its preparations for a no-deal Brexit. The orders, formerly known as non-disclosure agreements (NDAs), are legally binding contracts to stop confidential conversations being talked about in public. They are typically used to maintain secrecy around corporate deals or to protect intellectual property. However, we have discovered that the use of these NDAs has become prevalent across great swathes of the UK government.

<https://news.sky.com/story/brexit-hundreds-of-gagging-orders-taken-out-by-government-11671933>

### **How May summoned up her inner Trump for her Brexit address**

And if Donald Trump had wandered last night out from the Oval Office to the adjoining West Wing dining room where he has installed a 60 inch flat screen TV along one wall, and watched the Theresa May speech he might have found himself giving a knowing nod of the head. Maybe she had listened after all.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-47656236>

### **How Theresa May decided she was willing to accept a no-deal Brexit**

In the early hours of Wednesday morning, Theresa May made a momentous choice. After a day of acrimonious debate in her cabinet and inner circle, the prime minister decided that she was willing to take Britain out of the EU without a deal. At Thursday's European Council meeting in Brussels, EU diplomats wondered whether Mrs May was bluffing, but those close to the prime minister said if she cannot secure her Brexit deal she is determined the UK should embark on a no-deal exit. Since announcing on Wednesday that she would ask EU leaders for a short extension to the bloc's Article 50 process — to delay Brexit from March 29 to June 30 — people who have spoken to the prime minister said she is reconciled to the implications of what happens if the UK parliament continues to reject her withdrawal agreement. "The mood has hardened on no deal," said one person close to the prime minister. One Eurosceptic Conservative MP who met Mrs May on Wednesday night said: "She didn't seem concerned about leaving with no deal."

<https://www.ft.com/content/c1bb68fa-4bed-11e9-bbc9-6917dce3dc62>

### **JCB backs Johnson's leadership bid with a further £15,000 gift**

Boris Johnson has received another £15,000 from the pro-Brexit digger maker JCB, figures show, part of a mass of donations to potential Conservative leadership contenders with the expectation that Theresa May's time in office is coming to an end. The former foreign secretary, a likely standard bearer for pro-Brexit Tories, received £31,000 in donations in the past month, the register of MPs' interests shows, and has been given almost £140,000 in money or other support since late last year. Others to receive new donations in recent weeks include Dominic Raab, the former Brexit secretary who has made no secret of his leadership ambitions. He has been given more than £50,000 in cash and other donations this month alone.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/21/jcb-backs-boris-johnson-leadership-conservatives-gift>

### **May's appeal falls flat as EU seizes control of Brexit date**

The EU has handed Theresa May two weeks' grace to devise an alternative Brexit plan if her deal falls next week after the prime minister failed to convince the bloc that she was capable of avoiding a no-deal Brexit. After a marathon late-night session of talks, the EU's leaders ripped up May's proposals and a new Brexit timeline was pushed on the prime minister to avoid the cliff-edge deadline of 29 March - next Friday. Under the deal agreed by May, Britain will now stay a member

state until 12 April if the withdrawal agreement is rejected by MPs at the third time of asking. The government will be able to seek a longer extension during that period if it can both “indicate a way forward” and agree to hold European elections. In the unlikely event that May does win the support of the Commons when the Brexit deal goes to MPs again on Tuesday, the UK will stay a member state until 22 May to allow necessary withdrawal legislation to be passed. “The 12 April is the new 29 March,” an EU official said.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/21/mays-appeal-falls-flat-as-eu-seizes-control-of-brexit-date>

## **Political Setbacks**

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### **The EU throws Theresa May one last Brexit lifeline**

Members of Parliament could vote the deal down. At this point, the UK would be forced to do some soul searching as it must decide by April 12 whether to take part in the European parliamentary elections, which begin on May 23. If it decided not to participate in those elections, Britain could simply not remain in the EU. Without approval for a withdrawal deal, May 22 would become the new March 29, a cliff-edge over which the UK would be obliged to hurl itself.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/03/21/uk/eu-theresa-may-brexit-lifeline-intl-gbr/index.html>

### **Theresa May facing intense pressure to name a date for her resignation as Tories slam her Brexit attack on Parliament**

Theresa May was under intense pressure to name a date for her resignation as Tories panned her blistering attack on Parliament. Amid uproar in Westminster, backbenchers Anne Marie Trevelyan and Tracy Crouch were among a “large number” who told whips she “had to go”.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8692880/theresa-may-resignation-pressure-brexit-speech/>

### **Black Thursday: Britain humiliated on global stage as it begs EU for more time**

May's previous speeches have often managed to turn otherwise sympathetic European leaders against her. They don't appear to be any better behind closed doors than they are in front of cameras. In both instances they lack charisma, or intellectual content, or even a hint of personal responsibility. She cannot think creatively about problems. She cannot lay out a convincing case for how to proceed with them. All she can do is blame other people - the EU, opposition parties, the House of Lords, or the institution of parliament itself - for her own failings. Expecting her to live up to the historical moment is like asking an old Casio calculator to log on to the internet.

<http://www.politics.co.uk/blogs/2019/03/21/black-thursday-britain-humiliated-on-global-stage-as-it-begs>

### **MPs more likely to reject May's deal after she blamed them for Brexit deadlock**

Theresa May is facing backlash from angry MPs who said they have been subjected to death threats after her controversial speech blaming them for the Brexit deadlock. MPs from all sides lined up to condemn her remarks, warning that they had put them in danger of physical attack by angry members of the public. Anna Soubry, the pro-Remain MP who recently quit the Tory Party to join the Independent Group, said she was unable to travel home this weekend after receiving ‘very, very serious’ death threats.

<https://metro.co.uk/2019/03/21/mps-likely-reject-mays-deal-blamed-brexit-deadlock-8975595/>

### **'No deal most likely' MEP quizzed over EU's Brexit mood - 'May's sided with Brexiteers'**

Speaking on Channel 4 News, host Matt Frei quizzed an Irish MEP and Vice President of the European Parliament, Mairead McGuinness, about a no deal Brexit becoming the “most likely” outcome. The MEP replied: “Two points there, in terms of the internal issues in the Conservative Party. David Cameron tried with the referendum to heal the rift, and perhaps the Prime Minister is also trying to hold her party together. “There are bigger issues than that in my view because Brexit would be such a sundering if it goes wrong, of relationships, and bad for everybody. “I think it is unthinkable that we would allow that to happen.”



<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1103607/Brexit-news-uk-eu-Theresa-May-European-Union-no-deal-Article-50-extension>

### **'We are not in a souk:' Luxembourg's PM gives exasperated response to UK's Brexit demands**

Luxembourg PM Mr Bettel responded with some emphasis: "We didn't force the United Kingdom, you decided to leave, we shouldn't exchange roles. "You want us to be the bad guy. You decided. You decided. "We have to just find a deal and we negotiated the deal, we found the best possible deal and we are not in a souk where we are going to bargain for the next five years."

<https://inews.co.uk/news/uk/brexit-latest-theresa-may-european-council-xavier-bettel-video/>

### **Brexit: This united kingdom is as good as gone**

A colossal failure of statecraft; a collapse of trust between voters and parliament; a desperate and divided government split all the way up to the Cabinet: Brexit has proved an epic shambles and by far the worst political crisis in 70 years.

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/brexit-this-united-kingdom-is-as-good-as-gone-bill-jamieson-1-4893041>

### **Why Europe Should Reject Theresa May's Brexit Extension**

May cannot demand an extension but has to request one because, according to Article 50 of the EU treaty, the power to grant one is at the EU's discretion. The remaining 27 EU members have the right to reject the British request—and they should. The remaining 27 EU members have the right to reject the British request—and they should. They should reject a short extension, as May has requested, because the pressure of time is the only thing that will prevent British lawmakers from continuing to demand the impossible. An extension of a few weeks merely postpones the day of reckoning. But they should also reject a long extension if they care about the survival of the EU.

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/03/21/why-europe-should-reject-theresa-mays-brexit-extension-macron-tusk-parliament-eu-uk/>

### **Theresa May is taking a hideous Brexit gamble**

Brexiters may dream of a "clean break" from the EU. But no deal would be the opposite of "clean". It would be a horrible and long-lasting economic and political calamity.

<https://www.ft.com/content/49e058d0-4a4a-11e9-8b7f-d49067e0f50d>

### **Nine days from 'Brexit day', does anyone have a clue what's happening?**

Three years Brexiters have had to sort this. Might I suggest that if you're mad at Bercow for following parliamentary rules you might reserve a teensy-weensy bit of anger for a government whose only plan with 10 days to go was to show up with the same rejected scrap of paper wearing a false moustache.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/mar/20/nine-days-brexit-clue-extension-liechtenstein>

### **Brexit: DUP 'won't be threatened' into backing deal**

The DUP's Brexit spokesman Sammy Wilson says his party will not be "threatened" into voting for the government's deal. On Wednesday, Theresa May blamed MPs for the failure to ratify an agreement in order for the UK to leave the EU on 29 March. Sammy Wilson said he believed the PM was trying to threaten Parliament. But he said it had not worked and his party would not back the deal if it remained unchanged.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-47652775>

### **Brexit: PM's blame on MPs disappointing says David Jones**

Conservative MP for Clwyd West David Jones, who has voted against the deal, said: "It's very clear from speaking to colleagues that nothing has changed today. "If anything, MPs have been irritated by the hectoring tones of Donald Tusk and the EU's intransigence. "They are also disappointed that

the PM sought to put the blame on MPs for there being no agreement, when the fact is that the deal is disliked by parliamentarians of all colours, whether Leave or Remain".

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-47646775>

### **There is a way to topple Theresa May and stop a no-deal Brexit - this is how it could be done**

The Kennedy Bill has two clauses. But only one counts (the other is a formality and extends the bill across all the nations making up the UK). Clause 1 is simple and effective. Under the heading, "Revocation of notification of intention to withdraw from the European Union", it states: (1) Subsection (2) applies if it appears to the prime minister that a withdrawal agreement is unlikely to be ratified by the United Kingdom before exit day. (2) The prime minister must in that case, before exit day, notify the European Council that the notification given by the United Kingdom under Article 50(2) of the Treaty on European Union, of its intention to withdraw from the European Union, is revoked. The bill's simplicity is its genius

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/theresa-may-brexit-no-deal-article-50-revoke-house-of-lords-kennedy-bill-a8834141.html>

### **ANALYSIS: Theresa May needs to recognise that Parliament, not the prime minister, is sovereign**

It was possibly the most constitutionally illiterate speech ever made by a British prime minister. Standing in front of two Union Jacks in Downing Street, the prime minister told the people that "Parliament has done everything possible to avoid making a choice". She claimed that "motion after motion and amendment after amendment has been tabled without Parliament ever deciding what it wants". She declared that "you, the public, have had enough".

<https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/government-and-public-sector/house/house-magazine/102716/analysis-theresa-may-needs>

### **Remain ministers warn Theresa May they will quit if she blocks free vote on new bid to stop no-deal Brexit**

Remain ministers have warned the Prime Minister that they are prepared to quit unless she gives them a free vote on a new backbench bid to stop no deal. A cross-party group of MPs is on Friday expected to table a new amendment that will force the Prime Minister to accept a longer extension to Article 50 if her deal fails. The amendment, which will be voted on next week, will mean that if Mrs May's deal is defeated Parliament - rather than the Prime Minister - will decide whether to accept any offer of a longer extension of Article 50 from Brussels. A group of eight Remain ministers met Julian Smith, the Chief Whip, on Thursday to demand a free vote on the amendment to avoid the threat of mass resignations

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/03/21/remain-ministers-warn-theresa-may-will-quit-blocks-free-vote/>

### **Exclusive: Theresa May told by chairman of 1922 committee that Tory MPs want her to quit over Brexit**

Theresa May has been told by the most senior Tory backbencher that MPs want her to stand down because of her handling of Brexit, The Telegraph can reveal. Sir Graham Brady, the chairman of the 1922 committee of Tory MPs, visited the Prime Minister in Downing Street on Monday afternoon and made clear that a growing number of Tories believe she has to go. The visit by Sir Graham to Downing Street on Monday came after he was "bombarded with text messages" by colleagues and urged to confront the Prime Minister with demands that she should quit. Sir Graham imparted their calls in a "neutral" manner in his role as chairman of the 1922 committee during the meeting in Downing Street.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/03/21/exclusive-theresa-may-told-chairman-1922-committee-tory-mps/>

### **Theresa May has trashed our democracy and put MPs in danger**

The sense of anger is hard to adequately put into words. Yesterday, in the toxic climate that now defines British politics the prime minister took to a Downing Street podium to place the blame for this national crisis on MPs. She pitted parliament against “the people”, deploying an inflammatory rhetoric reminiscent of far-right populists whose influence is steadily growing in Britain, America and across the world. Reckless doesn't do it justice.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/mar/21/theresa-may-prime-minister-democracy-mps>

### **Brexit will damage UK's economy, stature and future**

An important paper by the Washington-based Petersen Institution for International Economics lays out a stark Brexit prognosis. The paper's authors ran 12 economic simulation models that examined the impact of Brexit on the UK, and virtually every one came out negative. Two simulations came out with a potential positive impact, but the authors concede that those scenarios were “based on unrealistic assumptions.” Just about every major academic study shows similar results. It's hard to find a long-term forecast that demonstrates a bright post-Brexit future.

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/1470301>

### **CBI and TUC bosses warn UK faces national emergency over Brexit**

Britain's foremost business lobby group and trade union body have joined forces to demand Theresa May urgently changes her approach to Brexit, warning the country now faces a national emergency. Writing a joint letter to the prime minister, the heads of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and Trades Union Congress (TUC) said a plan B needed to be drawn up as quickly as possible to avoid a no-deal departure as early as next week. Frances O'Grady, the general secretary of the TUC, and Carolyn Fairbairn, the CBI's director-general, wrote in the letter published before the crunch EU summit in Brussels: “Our country is facing a national emergency. Decisions of recent days have caused the risk of no deal to soar. Firms and communities across the UK are not ready for this outcome. The shock to our economy would be felt by generations to come.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/mar/21/heads-of-tuc-and-cbi-write-to-may-pleading-for-a-brexit-plan-b>

*Additional sources: (Sharecast)*

### **Farmer pressure persuades MP to back May's Brexit deal**

A Shropshire MP (Daniel Kawczynski) has indicated he will now support Prime Minister Theresa May's EU withdrawal agreement, if it is put to the vote next week, having been convinced by farm unions that a “no-deal” Brexit would be a disaster for the farming sector.

<https://www.fwi.co.uk/news/eu-referendum/farmer-pressure-persuades-mp-to-back-mays-brexit-deal>

### **'Cancel Brexit' petition passes 1m signatures on Parliament site**

A petition calling for Theresa May to cancel Brexit by revoking Article 50 has passed two million signatures. Parliament's petitions committee tweeted that the rate of signatures was “the highest the site has ever had to deal with”, after the website crashed. EU leaders in Brussels have reached agreement on a plan to delay Brexit beyond 29 March. Downing Street said the prime minister “has said many times she will not countenance revoking Article 50”. The PM's spokesman added: “The PM has long been clear that failing to deliver on the referendum result would be a failure of democracy and a failure she wouldn't countenance.” Revoke Article 50 has been trending on Twitter as people were urged to sign it. At one point, the petitions committee said there were nearly 2,000 signatures a minute.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-47652071>

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

### **UK's Brexit divisions play out in pub car park as March to Leave passes through Yorkshire**

A microcosm of the UK's Brexit divide played out in a pub car park as the March to Leave passed through Yorkshire only to be greeted by Remain-supporting counter-protesters who taunted 'where's

Nigel?'

<https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/uk-s-brexit-divisions-play-out-in-pub-car-park-as-march-to-leave-passes-through-yorkshire-1-9664944>

### **Britain heading for another election as the only way to sort out Brexit chaos, William Hague warns**

The former Tory leader William Hague predicted Conservative MPs could bring down the Government if she fails to push her deal through next week.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/brexit/8690890/brexit-chaos-snap-election-william-hague/>

### **Douglas Murray: will we have a country left after Brexit?**

The Spectator's Douglas Murray attacks the UK government for its failed Brexit strategy and poses the question as to whether we'll still have a United Kingdom after Brexit

<https://www.spectator.co.uk/2019/03/douglas-murray-will-we-have-a-country-left-after-brexit/>

### **Brexit: Amber Rudd shares Hastings Pier letter in perceived attack on Theresa May**

Amber Rudd has been accused of making a not-so-subtle dig at Theresa May's handling of Brexit in a letter about the uncertain future of Hastings pier. The letter focuses on overshooting a March deadline for re-opening the seaside attraction. The work and pensions secretary said she "can't support any scenario" in which the pier remains closed indefinitely. While she is the MP for the area, Ms Rudd has little power to intervene as the pier is privately owned.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-amber-rudd-theresa-may-hastings-pier-letter-a8834431.html>

### **BBC Katya Adler reveals NO DEAL Brexit 'very very REAL' - 'matter of hours'**

BBC's Katya Adler appeared in dismay as she warned Brexitcast listeners Brexit will now be resolved in a matter of hours but it is difficult to predict where the UK is going to be in a week time.

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1103267/BBC-News-Brexit-news-Katya-Adler-Brexitcast-Theresa-May-deal-EU-summit>

### **'Bad boys of Brexit' were guests at Trump's Mar-a-Lago club**

Arron Banks and Andy Wigmore have drawn the scrutiny of investigators looking into possible Russian interference in the 2016 referendum vote.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/mar/21/arron-banks-andy-wigmore-brexit-supporters-trump-guests-mar-a-lago>

### **Theresa May 'must change course' on Brexit - Sturgeon**

Prime Minister Theresa May "must change course" on Brexit "before it is too late", Nicola Sturgeon has said. Mrs May is in Brussels for talks over an extension to the Brexit deadline, having laid the blame for the delay squarely on MPs in a public statement. The Scottish first minister said Mrs May's comments were "deeply irresponsible" and "failed to accept" her own responsibility for the "mess". Ms Sturgeon said that "if all else fails", MPs should revoke Article 50.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-47653463>

### **Government orders hospitals not to reveal Brexit impact assessments to protect 'commercial interests'**

Hospitals have been ordered not to tell the public about any damage they expect to suffer from Brexit because it would hurt "commercial interests". Requests for information about the impact on the supply of goods and services, and on EU staff numbers, should be refused, the department of health and social care has said. Releasing the information could cause trusts "premature financial harm, and so possibly put public wellbeing at risk," hospital bosses were told.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/nhs-hospitals-brexit-impact-eu-staff-numbers-trust-services-matt-hancock-a8834061.html>

**"I fought in the Second World War, now I am fighting for a second referendum"**

96-year-old World War Two veteran Brigadier Stephen Goodall tells why he is travelling 200 miles from Devon to go on the People's Vote march

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/i-fought-second-world-war-14169506>