



DEBATE PACK

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E-petition 219905 relating to leaving the European Union

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The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

1. Background

How no deal might happen

Article 50 of the *Treaty on European Union* (TEU) provides for an EU Member State to leave the EU with or without a withdrawal agreement or 'deal'. The EU and UK hoped to reach agreement by October 2018 on the UK's terms of withdrawal and on the framework for future relations, but this deadline slipped to November or even December. A way of avoiding a hard border between Ireland and Northern Ireland has been the most difficult for the negotiators.

If there is no withdrawal agreement, and no UK request or no EU agreement to extend the negotiations, or if there is a withdrawal agreement but either the UK Parliament or the European Parliament or the other 27 EU Member States do not endorse it, the EU Treaties will no longer apply to the UK from 29 March 2019.

Possible ways to avoid this would be for the UK Government to ask for an extension of the negotiations under Article 50 in order to continue talking, which would require the unanimous agreement of the other 27 EU Member States (EU27); or for the possibility of an extension or a different exit day to be inserted in the withdrawal agreement, which would require the approval of only a qualified majority of the EU27.

Another point at which 'no deal' could occur is at the end of the proposed 21-month transition (implementation) period if there is no detailed agreement on the future EU-UK relationship, if such an agreement is not in force, or if there is no extension to the transition period in which to try and reach agreement.

Both sides in the negotiations agree that 'no deal' is not what they want, but some Brexit supporters would prefer it to a 'soft' Brexit which does not end free movement, payments to the EU, membership of the Single Market and customs union, continued adherence to EU rules and the jurisdiction of the Court of Justice of the EU.

UK preparations for no deal

Government guidance on preparations for no deal

The UK Government insists that preparations for no deal are part of its overall Brexit preparation strategy. The Prime Minister's [Statement](#) on the Cabinet away day at Chequers in July included a pledge to step up

preparedness for all possible outcomes to the negotiations, including no deal, and the Prime Minister has assured Parliament that it is preparing for 'no deal' as well as other scenarios. The Government believes a no-deal scenario could be managed in an "orderly" fashion (although this view is not necessarily shared by other stakeholders). On 23 August 2018 the Department for Exiting the EU began to publish 'technical notices' or [guidance](#) for businesses and individuals on how to prepare for Brexit if there is no deal.

European Union (Withdrawal) Act

Secondary legislation is being laid under the [European Union \(Withdrawal\) Act 2018](#) that will preserve EU law in domestic law or convert it into UK law on exit day. If the UK leaves the EU without a deal, most EU law will still apply in the UK but as domestic law ('retained EU law' or EU-based UK law). But there will be no reciprocity with EU Member States.

No deal in practice

What would 'no deal' look like in practice? It would mean no transition (implementation) period and no framework for future relations. The impact is still unknown overall, but in some areas it is easier to estimate the practical consequences and costs than in others. Views on 'no deal' range from chaos to 'no big deal'.

Business and the economy

It is difficult to pinpoint the economic impact of 'no deal' with certainty. Many economists expect the pound to fall in value in the event of 'no deal'. This would mean the price of imports would rise, pushing up inflation. However, UK exports would become cheaper internationally, potentially mitigating some of the disruptive effects on trading with the EU. There might also be an opportunity for improved UK growth prospects from trade deals with other non-EU countries. But most economic modelling in this area shows that the potential benefits of leaving the EU with no deal over the longer term do not make up for the higher trade barriers with the EU, given its importance to the UK.

Trade and customs

With no withdrawal agreement or framework for future relations, trade between the two economies would be conducted under the terms of the World Trade Organisation. Tariffs on UK exports to the EU and vice versa are expected (assuming the UK would not change its Most Favoured Nation tariffs under WTO rules). [Tariffs would be low, averaging around 3%, but for some goods they would be higher.](#) Potentially more disruptive would be non-tariff barriers, where additional paperwork, customs checks, technical requirements and regulatory standards could slow things down. At the moment of leaving the EU customs union without a deal, the border between the UK and the EU would become a customs border. This is likely to mean

more customs controls and probably increased costs and delays for business.

Food supply

Half of the UK's food and drink supply comes from within the UK, with 30% from the EU and 20% from the rest of the world. Potential disruption to food supplies immediately after a no-deal Brexit has been given regular media coverage. Exiting the EU Secretary Dominic Raab told the Exiting the EU Committee that the Government would "look at this issue in the round and make sure that there is adequate food supply...". The retail sector is concerned about the practicalities of stockpiling food.

Agriculture and fisheries

Trading arrangements - tariffs and standards – would be the main issue. With no alternative arrangement, the UK as a third country would be subject to tariffs, checks, registrations, certifications etc for commodities, food and feed, plant and animal-based products. Agriculture could also be impacted by the 'no deal' effects of other policies such as immigration (for seasonal, agri-food workers and vets).

Brexit means the UK will become an independent coastal state with responsibility for managing fisheries in the UK's Exclusive Economic Zone of 200 miles. It will not be bound by the Common Fisheries Policy and could deny access to EU Member States' vessels (and vice versa). But under international law States are required to minimise economic dislocation to other States whose nationals have habitually fished in a zone.

Energy

The UK and EU energy sectors are integrated through trade, legislation and inter-connection of energy supply, although EU Member States are ultimately responsible for their domestic energy supply to citizens. Aspects of the UK energy sector, such as Euratom and the Internal Energy Market (IEM), will probably be affected similarly by a deal or no-deal Brexit. The UK will leave Euratom along with the EU; the Government is open to leaving the IEM and has begun preparations for leaving, but the future relations White Paper suggests a preference for future energy integration. 'No deal' could mean a less integrated relationship than the UK would like and not enough time to prepare for alternatives.

Transport

For the International Air Transport Association (IATA), [the aviation deadline is earlier](#) than the Brexit deadline of 29 March 2019. But would planes actually stop flying between the UK and the EU27 in the event of no deal? The Government [believes](#) it might be possible to agree a 'bare bones' aviation agreement in the event of a no-deal scenario.

The border between Ireland and Northern Ireland

The EU and the UK Government share a commitment to avoiding a hard border between Ireland and Northern Ireland, but reaching agreement

on how best to avoid checks and physical infrastructure at the border has proved the most difficult challenge. Technology, a degree of ongoing regulatory alignment and some sort of customs agreement have all been put forward as possible solutions, but to date nothing suggested has been acceptable to all sides. The proposed 'backstop', by which there would be a customs border between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, is unacceptable to the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), on whose support the Prime Minister relies in the Commons, and to Brexiteers who fear it could mean the UK staying in the customs union indefinitely. The backstop language has been ambiguous and the EU and UK have different views as to what this would mean. For the EU it means the UK in respect of Northern Ireland, but for the UK it would cover the whole UK. The three apparently irreconcilable issues that the negotiations have sought to solve are:

- Avoiding a hard border in Ireland;
- Allowing the UK to diverge from EU regulations and have an independent trade policy;
- Avoiding regulatory and customs divergence between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK – i.e. no border in the Irish Sea.

The legal text agreed by the negotiators on 13 November is not available at the time of writing, but it is reported to include a backstop to avoid a hard border on the island of Ireland in the form of a temporary UK-wide customs arrangement and specific "deeper" provisions for Northern Ireland on customs and regulatory alignment in the main text and the annexes, in case the UK-wide arrangement is not enough to avoid a hard border. It is also reported to contain a review mechanism for the temporary UK-wide customs arrangement. There is a question mark over whether such arrangements will be acceptable to Parliament.

Can Brexit be stopped?

Neither the EU nor the UK Government want the UK to 'crash out' of the EU with no deal. But it is not clear whether the Brexit process under Article 50 TEU can be stopped, even if the Government and/or Parliament and/or the UK electorate wanted it to. If Article 50 can be revoked and the process stopped, it is not clear whether this would mean maintaining the status quo in the UK's relationship with the EU.

Could Parliament stop Brexit?

Whether Parliament can stop Brexit is ultimately a political question. Neither the *European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018* nor the *European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Act 2017* provides Parliament with a domestic legal mechanism by which it can halt or revoke the Article 50 process.

Unless and until we know whether, as a matter of EU law, Article 50 is (unilaterally) revocable (see below), we cannot say with any degree of confidence what Parliament's role could/would have to be in the domestic process of making a revocation. The EU law question has been

referred to the CJEU and we would only learn of Parliament's role in that (e.g. whether a revocation requires primary legislation) if and when the matter returns to the Scottish courts.

Although Parliament can inhibit the ratification of any withdrawal agreement, it cannot legally 'instruct' the Government to conduct foreign affairs or treaty negotiations in a certain way. This is because those matters fall under the Royal Prerogative. Even if Parliament approves a motion 'directing' the Government to do something (such as to ask for an Article 50 extension or a second referendum) it cannot compel the Government to do those things. Motions have purely political force unless a statute provides otherwise. Ultimately, however, a Government holds its position and exercises powers under the prerogative because it commands the confidence of the House of Commons.

Can the Article 50 notice be revoked?

Article 50 TEU is silent on the matter of whether it can be revoked by the State that triggered it, and there are no judicial precedents to guide CJEU interpretation of Article 50. Academic opinion tends towards the conclusion that notification could be revoked before Brexit day,¹ but there have been some authoritative views to the contrary.² The question gives rise to others such as whether Article 50 could be revoked unilaterally or whether the EU Member States would have to permit the UK to revoke its notice; and whether, if revocable, the UK would remain an EU Member State on its existing terms (with opt-ins, opt-outs, budget rebate etc) or whether the EU might set conditions. There are [reports](#) that the UK Government's legal advice was that Article 50 can be withdrawn, but the Government has not confirmed that it received such advice and maintains in any case that Article 50 will not be revoked as a matter of policy.

The UK Supreme Court did not address the matter in the [Miller](#) judgment because both parties had agreed to assume the notice was irrevocable, although many argued at the time that it would be the Supreme Court's duty to refer the issue to the CJEU.³

Scottish Court of Session refers revocability question to EU Court

In February 2018 a cross-party group of Members of the Scottish Parliament (from the Labour Party, SNP, Liberal Democrats and Scottish Greens), MEPs and MPs,⁴ supported by the [Good Law Project](#), were granted permission for [judicial review](#) into whether the UK could [unilaterally](#) revoke Article 50. The petitioners asked:

¹ See, for example, [UK Constitutional Law Association webpages](#) on revocability issues.

² See, for example, the March 2018 [Report](#) produced for the EP's AFCCO Committee, *Verfassungsblog*, [Miller, Brexit and the \(maybe not so evil\) Court of Justice](#), Daniel Sarmiento, 8 November 2016.

³ See, for example, [Peers](#), [Syrpis](#), [Sanchez-Graells](#), [Sarmiento](#).

⁴ Andrew Wightman MSP, Ross Greer MSP, Alyn Smith MEP, David Martin MEP, Catherine Stihler MEP, Christine Jardine MP, Joanna Cherry QC MP.

Where a Member State has notified the European Council of its intention to withdraw from the European Union, does EU law permit that notice to be revoked unilaterally by the notifying Member State; and, if so, subject to what conditions and with what effect relative to the Member State remaining within the EU?

After an initial [refusal to refer](#) the question to the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU) in June 2018,⁵ an appeal in September resulted in the Scottish Court asking the CJEU for a preliminary ruling.

In early November the Government submitted written observations to the CJEU in [Wightman and Others v Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union](#). Its position is that the questions are inadmissible because the CJEU does not answer hypothetical questions or provide advisory opinions. The Government also sought permission to appeal the decision of the Scottish Court to the Supreme Court, but its application failed.

If the CJEU rules that unilateral revocability is permissible and the UK did revoke it, the UK's opt-outs, opt-ins and budget rebate would be kept – the *status quo* would prevail. If the CJEU takes a broad approach and rules that revocation is possible but conditional, for example, on EU27 approval (i.e. not unilateral), or on changes to the UK's various Treaty concessions (which would entail Treaty change), this would change the nature of the debate about the UK's EU membership.

Would EU leaders agree to the UK withdrawing the Article 50 notice?

EU leaders have indicated they would be happy if the UK were to change its mind and stay in the UK. In June 2017 French President Emmanuel Macron [said](#) the door was “always open” for the UK to stay. European Council President Donald Tusk [indicated](#) in January 2018 that the EU was open to a UK “change of heart”, and European Commission President Jean Claude Juncker [told](#) the European Parliament: “we are not throwing the British out, we want the British to stay, and if they so wish they should be allowed to do so”.

⁵ Mainly because courts typically do not answer hypothetical questions and the CJEU has stated this principle in [Gauweiler and others](#) (Case C-62/14, paras. 24 and 25).

2. E-petition 219905 and the Government response

[E-petition 219905](#)

If there is no agreement to leave the EU then Brexit must be stopped

If there is no agreement by the deadline for reaching agreement with the EU during the talks then Brexit should be stopped as leaving with no deal will be very bad for businesses and for the Irish border issue and for EU citizens living here.

Government responded

Whilst striking a deal with our EU partners remains the outcome we expect, 'no deal' plans are well-developed and we stand ready to make a success of Brexit, whatever the outcome of our negotiations.

We are leaving the EU. That's what the British public voted for and that is what we will deliver.

Negotiations are progressing well and we are confident of a deal this autumn. We have been having regular discussions with the EU on the future framework, outlining our positions on a wide range of topics covering the future security partnership and the future economic partnership, and we remain confident of reaching agreement on the Withdrawal Agreement and Future Framework.

We have now locked down the text on the majority of other separation issues. Taken with the agreement reached in March on the implementation period, on citizens' rights and on the financial settlement - we have now reached agreement on around 80% of the Withdrawal Agreement. This provides important certainty for businesses and individuals.

The Government has also published its White Paper on the future relationship, which is our vision for a bold, ambitious and innovative new partnership with the EU. Principled and practical, faithful to the referendum, it delivers a deal that is good for the UK, and good for our EU friends.

Now that the White Paper has been published, our negotiations with the EU are accelerating and intensifying. We have already seen an increase in pace with Michel Barnier now pledging 'continuous negotiations'. We expect the EU to engage seriously with the proposals and both negotiating teams to work at pace to reach a substantive agreement on the Future Framework in the autumn.

We firmly believe it is in the interests of both the EU and the UK to strike a deal. That remains the goal on both sides and we are confident that this will be achieved. But it is the job of a responsible Government

to prepare for all scenarios, including the unlikely event that we reach March 2019 without agreeing a deal.

We have already carried out very significant 'no deal' preparations and have been publishing a series of notices so that businesses and citizens have time to prepare. This does not reflect an increased likelihood of 'no deal'; an acceleration at this point was long-planned to ensure plans are in place by March 2019 in the unlikely scenario they are needed.

Our objective in our preparations is to minimise disruption and to prioritise continuity and stability, including for businesses, at the border, as well as for EU citizens in the UK.

Over the past year we have spent time talking to businesses across different industries about how they could be preparing for exit. The notices published on gov.uk over the last few weeks provide further information in order to guide businesses on how they can best prepare for our exit from the EU. We will continue working closely with industries that are most affected by 'no deal' plans and implementation, particularly to understand how we can support businesses in making the transition outside of the European Union.

At the border, we will continue to apply highly automated, risk based and intelligence targeted customs controls when the UK leaves the EU. As they do today, HMRC will work closely with industry to ensure its interventions are conducted in a way which minimises delays and additional burdens for legitimate trade, while robustly ensuring compliance.

The Prime Minister has been clear from the beginning of this process that she wants EU Citizens and their families in the UK to be able to stay. She gave a clear commitment to EU citizens in October, when she said "I couldn't be clearer: EU citizens living lawfully in the UK today will be able to stay." The UK will move swiftly to safeguard the future of EU citizens, regardless of the outcome of negotiations.

Whilst striking a deal with our EU partners remains our top priority, we are supporting businesses and citizens to prepare for all scenarios and stepping up preparations to ensure that 'no deal' plans are well-developed. Over the coming months more of these preparations will become clear, while our focus and discussions with the EU remain on achieving the ambitious and positive deal we hope for and expect.

Whatever the outcome of our negotiations, we stand ready to make a success of Brexit.

Department for Exiting the European Union.

3. Press articles

The following is a selection of news and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or the accuracy of external content.

[Theresa May fights to save Brexit deal as MPs plot leadership challenge](#)

Financial Times

Jim Pickard, Laura Hughes and Michael Peel

15 November 2018

[Final Say: Theresa May admits Brexit can be stopped by new referendum as cabinet back draft deal](#)

Independent

Joe Watts

15 November 2018

[‘If you don’t back May, Brexit might never happen,’ Hague warns Cabinet](#)

Politico

Eddy Wax

14 November 2018

[EU says it ‘will retain all control’ under Theresa May’s agreement, leaked note shows](#)

Independent

Jon Stone

14 November 2018

[Reality Check: When is Brexit crunch time?](#)

BBC News

13 November 2018

[Brexit: Theresa May calls special cabinet meeting](#)

BBC News

13 November 2018

[Brussels prepares to adopt delayed no deal Brexit contingency plan](#)

Financial Times

Mehreen Khan

13 November 2018

[May races to revive Brexit plan as pressure mounts](#)

Financial Times

Jim Pickard

12 November 2018

[Jacob Rees-Mogg reveals plan to break Brexit deadlock - ‘Time for me to compromise’](#)

Express
Katie Harris
12 November 2018

[Labour's Keir Starmer says Brexit can be stopped](#)

Guardian
Pippa Crerar and Peter Walker
12 November 2018

[Brexit: Cabinet ministers 'voiced doubts over PM's plan at start'](#)

BBC News
12 November 2018

[UK all but gives up on November Brexit summit](#)

Guardian
Dan Sabbagh, Daniel Boffey and Jennifer Rankin
12 November 2018

[Brexit: New referendum still an option, says Emily Thornberry](#)

BBC News
11 November 2018

[Businesses call for state bailouts if UK crashes out of EU](#)

Politico
Charlie Cooper
11 November 2018

[Jo Johnson: it would be travesty not to have second Brexit vote](#)

Guardian
Damien Gayle
10 November 2018

[Reality Check: What are EU countries doing to prepare for a no-deal Brexit?](#)

BBC News
06 November 2018

[City of London concerns grow about a bad Brexit deal](#)

Financial Times
Patrick Jenkins
06 November 2018

[Michel Barnier: UK could reapply for EU membership once it is 'a third country'](#)

Politico
Eddy Wax
06 November 2018

[UK poll predicts 8-point victory for Remain in second Brexit vote](#)

Politico
Eline Schaart
05 November 2018

[Most British voters want Brexit compromise, but Tories don't](#)

Politico

Tom McTague and Annabelle Dickson
03 November 2018

No deal Brexit explained: What could a no-deal Brexit really mean for you and me?

Express
Kate Whitfield
02 November 2018

UK to lose dozens of trade deals in event of 'no-deal' Brexit

Politico
Tom McTague
12 October 2018

Transcript of Theresa May's post-Salzburg speech

Financial Times
21 September 2018

Brexit: May humiliated by Salzburg ambush as she fights to save Chequers

Guardian
Dan Sabbagh, Daniel Boffey and Pippa Crerar
21 September 2018

4. Press releases

[PM statement on Brexit negotiations: 15 November 2018](#)

**Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street
15 November 2018**

With permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to update the House on our negotiations to leave the European Union.

First, I want to pay tribute to my Rt Hon Friends the Members for Esher and Walton and Tatton.

Delivering Brexit involves difficult choices for all of us.

We do not agree on all of those choices but I respect their views and thank them sincerely for all that they have done.

Mr Speaker, yesterday we agreed the provisional terms of our exit from the European Union, set out in the Draft Withdrawal Agreement.

We also agreed the broad terms of our future relationship, in an Outline Political Declaration.

President Juncker has now written to the President of the European Council to recommend that “decisive progress has been made in the negotiations.”

And a special European Council will be called for Sunday 25th November.

This puts us close to a Brexit deal.

Mr Speaker, what we agreed yesterday was not the final deal.

It is a draft treaty that means we will leave the EU in a smooth and orderly way on 29 March 2019 and which sets the framework for a future relationship that delivers in our national interest.

It takes back control of our borders, laws and money.

It protects jobs, security and the integrity of the United Kingdom.

And it delivers in ways that many said could simply not be done.

We were told that we had a binary choice between the model of Norway or the model of Canada. That we could not have a bespoke deal.

But the Outline Political Declaration sets out an arrangement that is better for our country than both of these - a more ambitious free trade agreement than the EU has with any other country.

And we were told we would be treated like any other third country on security co-operation.

But the Outline Political Declaration sets out a breadth and depth of co-operation beyond anything the EU has agreed with any other country.

So let me take the House through the details.

First, on the Withdrawal Agreement, the full legal text has now been agreed in principle.

It sets out the terms on which the UK will leave the EU in 134 days' time on 29th March 2019.

We have secured the rights of the more than three million EU citizens living in the UK, and around one million UK nationals living in the EU.

We have agreed a time-limited implementation period that ensures businesses only have to plan for one set of changes.

We have agreed Protocols to ensure Gibraltar and the Sovereign Base Areas are covered by the Withdrawal Agreement.

And we have agreed a fair financial settlement - far lower than the figures many mentioned at the start of this process.

Mr Speaker, since the start of this process I have been committed to ensuring that our exit from the EU deals with the issue of the border between Northern Ireland and Ireland.

I believe this issue can best be solved through our future relationship with the EU. But the withdrawal agreement sets out an insurance policy should that new relationship not be ready in time at the end of the implementation period.

I do not pretend that this has been a comfortable process – or that either we or the EU are entirely happy with all of the arrangements that have been included within it.

Of course this is the case – this is an arrangement that we have both said we never want to have to use.

But while some people might pretend otherwise, there is no deal which delivers the Brexit the British people voted for which does not involve this insurance policy.

Not Canada ++++. Not Norway for Now. Not our own White Paper.

The EU will not negotiate any future partnership without it.

As the House knows, the original proposal from the EU was not acceptable as it would have meant creating a customs border down the Irish Sea and breaking up the integrity of our United Kingdom.

So last month, I set out for the House the four steps we needed to take.

This is what we have now done and it has seen the EU make a number of concessions towards our position.

First, the EU proposal for a Northern-Ireland only customs solution has been dropped and replaced by a new UK-wide temporary customs arrangement that protects the integrity of our precious Union.

Second, we have created an option for a single time-limited extension of the Implementation Period as an alternative to bringing in the backstop.

As I have said many times, I do not want to extend the Implementation Period and I do not believe we will need to do so. This is about an insurance policy.

But if it happens that at the end of 2020 our future relationship is not quite ready - the UK will be able to make a choice between the UK-wide temporary customs arrangement or a short extension of the Implementation Period.

Third, the Withdrawal Agreement commits both parties to use best endeavours to ensure this insurance policy is never used.

And in the unlikely event that it is needed, if we choose the backstop, the Withdrawal Agreement is explicit that it is temporary and that the Article 50 legal base cannot provide for a permanent relationship. And there is also a mechanism by which the backstop can be terminated.

Finally, we have ensured full continued access for Northern Ireland's businesses to the whole of the UK internal market.

Mr Speaker, the Brexit talks are about acting in the national interest - and that means making what I believe to be the right choices, not the easy ones.

I know there are some who have said I should simply rip-up the UK's commitment to a backstop.

But this would have been an entirely irresponsible course of action.

It would have meant renegeing on a promise made to the people of Northern Ireland during the Referendum campaign and afterwards that under no circumstances would Brexit lead to a return to the borders of the past.

And it would have made it impossible to deliver a Withdrawal Agreement.

As Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, I have a responsibility to people in every part of our country and I intend to honour that promise.

Mr Speaker, by resolving this issue, we are now able to move on to finalising the details of an ambitious future partnership.

The Outline Political Declaration we have agreed sets out the basis for these negotiations and we will negotiate intensively ahead of the European Council to turn this into a full future framework.

The Declaration will end free movement once and for all.

Instead we will have our own new, skills-based, immigration system - based not on the country people come from, but on what they can contribute to the UK.

The Declaration agrees the creation of a free trade area for goods, with zero tariffs, no fees, charges or quantitative restrictions across all goods sectors.

No other major advanced economy has such an arrangement with the EU. And at the same time, we will also be free to strike new trade deals with other partners around the world.

We have also reached common ground on a close relationship on services and investment, including financial services which go well beyond WTO commitments.

The Declaration ensures we will be leaving the Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy.

So we will decide how best to sustain and support our farms and our environment, and the UK will become an independent coastal state once again.

We have also reached agreement on key elements of our future security partnership to keep our people safe.

This includes swift and effective extradition arrangements as well as arrangements for effective data exchange on Passenger Name Records, DNA, fingerprints and vehicle registration data.

And we have agreed a close and flexible partnership on foreign, security and defence policy.

Mr Speaker, when I first became Prime Minister in 2016 there was no ready-made blueprint for Brexit.

Many people said it could simply not be done.

I have never accepted that. I have been committed day and night to delivering on the result of the referendum and ensuring the UK leaves the EU absolutely and on time.

But I also said at the very start that withdrawing from EU membership after 40 years, and establishing a wholly new relationship that will endure for decades to come, would be complex and require hard work.

I know it's been a frustrating process – it has forced us to confront some very difficult issues.

But a good Brexit. A Brexit which is in the national interest is possible.

We have persevered and have made a decisive breakthrough.

Once a final deal is agreed, I will bring it to Parliament and I will ask MPs to consider the national interest and give it their backing.

Voting against a deal would take us all back to square one.

It would mean more uncertainty, more division, and a failure to deliver on the decision of the British people that we should leave the EU.

If we get behind a deal, we can bring our country back together and seize the opportunities that lie ahead.

Mr Speaker, the British people want us to get this done. And to get on with addressing the other issues they care about.

Creating more good jobs in every part of the UK and doing more to help families with the cost of living.

Helping our NHS to provide first class care and our schools to give every child a great start in life.

And focusing every ounce of our energy on building a brighter future for our country.

So Mr Speaker, the choice is clear.

We can choose to leave with no deal.

We can risk no Brexit at all.

Or we can choose to unite and support the best deal that can be negotiated. This deal.

A deal that ends free movement...

...takes back control of our borders, laws and money...

...delivers a free trade area for goods with zero tariffs...

...leaves the Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy...

...delivers an independent foreign and defence policy, while retaining the continued security co-operation to keep our people safe...

...maintains shared commitments to high standards...

...protects jobs...

...honours the integrity of our United Kingdom...

...and delivers the Brexit the British people voted for.

I choose to deliver for the British people.

I choose to do what is in our national interest.

And I commend this Statement to the House.

[PM's statement on Brexit: 14 November 2018](#)
Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street
14 November 2018

The Cabinet has just had a long, detailed and impassioned debate on the draft Withdrawal Agreement and the Outline Political Declaration on our future relationship with the European Union.

These documents were the result of thousands of hours of hard negotiation by UK officials, and many, many meetings, which I and other ministers held with our EU counterparts.

I firmly believe that the draft Withdrawal Agreement was the best that could be negotiated, and it was for the Cabinet to decide whether to move on in the talks.

The choices before us were difficult, particularly in relation to the Northern Ireland backstop.

But the collective decision of Cabinet was that the Government should agree the draft Withdrawal Agreement and the Outline Political Declaration – this is a decisive step which enables us to move on and finalise the deal in the days ahead.

These decisions were not taken lightly - but I believe it is a decision that is firmly in the national interest.

When you strip away the detail, the choice before us is clear. This deal which delivers on the vote of the referendum, which brings back control of our money, laws and borders; ends free movement; protects jobs, security and our union; or leave with no deal; or no Brexit at all.

I know that there will be difficult days ahead. This is a decision which will come under intense scrutiny and that is entirely as it should be and entirely understandable.

But the choice was this deal, which enables us to take back control and to build a brighter future for our country, or going back to square one with more division, more uncertainty and a failure to deliver on the referendum.

It is my job as Prime Minister to explain the decisions that the Government has taken and I stand ready to do that beginning tomorrow with a statement in Parliament.

If I may end by just saying this. I believe that what I owe to this country is to take decisions that are in the national interest, and I firmly believe with my head and my heart that this is a decision which is in the best interests of our entire United Kingdom.

5. PQs

[UK Trade with EU: Borders](#)

05 Nov 2018 | 185716

Asked by: Helen Hayes

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what progress his Department has made on developing the necessary (a) border infrastructure and (b) alternative customs systems needed in the case of the UK leaving the EU without a deal.

Answering member: Mel Stride | Department: Treasury

HMRC has well-developed plans to ensure that on day one of a no deal scenario there will be a functioning customs, VAT and excise system.

HMRC is already having extensive engagement with ports, airports and rail terminals on what would need to be in place at March 2019 and in the longer term. We are currently developing specific requirements around the physical infrastructure needed in each of the exit scenarios. In a no deal scenario, HMRC's plans will allow for the border to operate without new infrastructure on day 1, and it is not placing new requirements on ports and airports to have infrastructure in place by day 1.

[Agriculture: Seasonal Workers](#)

02 Nov 2018 | 184923

Asked by: David Simpson

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what his Department's policy is on the provision of financial support to farmers that are unable to hire seasonal workers in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a no deal.

Answering member: George Eustice | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

We firmly believe it is in the interests of both the EU and the UK to strike a deal, and we remain confident we will agree a mutually advantageous deal with the EU.

We do not want or expect a no deal scenario. It is however the duty of a responsible Government to continue to prepare for a range of potential outcomes including the unlikely event of no deal. Defra are taking necessary steps to ensure the country continues to operate smoothly from the day we leave.

Defra understands the importance of seasonal labour in supporting a successful and effective agricultural sector, and is considering how best to support the needs of the sector both before and after the UK leaves the EU. Defra is working closely with the Home Office to ensure that there is a long term strategy for the food and farming workforce as part of the future immigration policy.

The Government will introduce a new pilot scheme for 2019 and 2020 enabling up to 2500 non-EEA migrant workers to come to the UK to

undertake seasonal employment in the edible horticultural sector.

[Ports](#)

01 Nov 2018 | 183208

Asked by: John Redwood

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to publish the details of arrangements for clearing goods quickly through UK ports after 29 March 2019.

Answering member: Mel Stride | Department: Treasury

Government ministers and officials have been engaging extensively with key UK ports to discuss the challenges that the introduction of customs declarations would pose Roll-on Roll-off (RoRo) port environment as well as potential mitigations for Day 1 of a 'no deal'.

We have also begun communicating targeted technical delivery critical messages and actions to groups of impacted stakeholders and businesses, for example on RoRo, Excise and VAT software, through our technical notices. By the end of the year, HMRC will provide more information on what people can do should they wish to make preparations and when they should do this.

[Pharmacy: Storage](#)

31 Oct 2018 | 184394

Asked by: Luciana Berger

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what plans his Department has to build pharmaceutical cold storage facilities in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

Answering member: Stephen Barclay | Department: Department of Health and Social Care

The Department has no plans to build pharmaceutical cold storage facilities in the event that the United Kingdom leaves the European Union without a deal.

On 23 October 2018, the Department launched an invitation to tender inviting providers of warehouse space to bid for Government funding to cover the costs they would incur by providing additional storage space for stockpiled medicines to support our no-deal Exit contingency planning.

[Brexit](#)

31 Oct 2018 | 182723

Asked by: Philip Hollobone

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what preparations the Government has put in place to leave the EU on 29 March 2019 without a deal.

Answering member: Chris Heaton-Harris | Department: Department for Exiting the European Union

We do not want or expect a no deal scenario. It is however the duty of a responsible Government to continue to prepare for a range of potential outcomes.

Extensive work to prepare for a 'no deal' scenario has been under way for over two years. For instance, we have already successfully passed critical legislation, signed international agreements, recruited additional staff and guaranteed certain EU funding in a 'no deal' scenario.

We have also published 106 technical notices to help businesses and citizens to prepare for March 2019 in the event of a 'no deal' scenario.

Immigration Controls

29 Oct 2018 | 907314

Asked by: Philip Hollobone

What plans his Department has to change passport control procedures at ports and airports in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

Answering member: Caroline Nokes | Department: Home Office

The Government remains of the view that a deal between the UK and the EU is in the best interests of both sides, and we are continuing to work to reach an agreement.

At the same time, we are obviously taking a responsible approach and are preparing plans for all outcomes.

Import Duties

29 Oct 2018 | 183215

Asked by: John Redwood

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he plans to announce the rate of customs levies charged on the UK for 30 March 2019 as part of the planning for the UK leaving the EU without a deal.

Answering member: Mel Stride | Department: Treasury

We are focused on negotiating an ambitious future relationship with the EU, which secures frictionless access at the border to each other's markets for goods.

However, in the event of a "no deal" the Government will determine and publish these new UK duty rates before we leave the EU.

Brexit

26 Oct 2018 | Written questions | 182667

Asked by: Tom Brake

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, pursuant to the Answer of 17 October to Question 175802 on Brexit, whether

the Government has held any discussions with EU member states on the potential extension of Article 50.

Answering member: Chris Heaton-Harris | Department: Department for Exiting the European Union

The Government's policy remains that Article 50 will not be extended. We will be leaving the EU on 29 March 2019 and are negotiating to that timeline. We are confident of reaching a deal which is in the best interests of both the UK and the EU.

[EU Countries](#)

25 Oct 2018 | 907262

Asked by: Mike Wood

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what steps the Government has taken to cooperate with other EU states on those countries' preparations for the UK leaving the EU without a deal.

Answering member: Chris Heaton-Harris | Department: Department for Exiting the European Union

We are committed to negotiating a successful exit. As a responsible Government we are also preparing for the unlikely scenario in which we leave without a deal. This includes cooperating with Member States to minimise disruption to citizens and businesses. We will continue to impress upon Member States our joint responsibility to work together.

The European Commission have also made clear Member States should take the steps necessary to prepare for this scenario.

[Ports: Infrastructure](#)

25 Oct 2018 | 182304

Asked by: Martyn Day

To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what (a) financial and (b) technical support the Government has made available for port operators to put in place the required infrastructure for when the UK leaves the EU.

Answering member: Mel Stride | Department: Treasury

The Government remains confident we will agree a mutually advantageous deal with the EU, and is committed to ensuring that trade is as frictionless as possible through UK ports.

HMG is working together with key industry partners, and, in particular the ports, to plan for all possible scenarios and take account of industry views on what is deliverable and practicable, including with respect to infrastructure and IT.

UK Trade with EU: Republic of Ireland**24 Oct 2018 | Written questions | HL10551****Asked by: Lord Lilley**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their assessment of whether the EU can reach a legally binding agreement with the UK on the future trading relationships across the border between Ireland and the UK, before the UK has left the EU.

Answering member: Lord Callanan | Department: Department for Exiting the European Union

While we remain committed to resolving the Northern Ireland border through our overall economic relationship, the backstop is a critical issue and we stand by all our commitments. There must be a legally operative backstop in the Withdrawal Agreement - and one that is fully consistent with all the commitments made in the Joint Report.

We agree that we need to maintain a measured and pragmatic approach to this issue, whilst respecting the key principles of both sides and we are confident that a deal is in the interests of both sides, so we approach these negotiations anticipating success.

British Overseas Territories: Brexit**24 Oct 2018 | 176039****Asked by: Helen Goodman**

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what assessment he has made of the potential effect on the British overseas territories of (a) the UK leaving the EU without a deal and (b) the EU accepting the Chequers proposals.

Answering member: Chris Heaton-Harris | Department: Department for Exiting the European Union

The UK Government regularly engages with the Overseas Territories as we exit the EU to ensure they are prepared for all exit scenarios and that their interests and priorities are properly taken into account. The UK - Overseas Territories Joint Ministerial Council on EU Negotiations provides a mechanism for dialogue between the Overseas Territories and the Government. It ensures representatives can share their assessments about the potential effects of EU Exit scenarios on their Territories. Gibraltar, as the only Overseas Territory in the EU, has its own Joint Ministerial Council (Gibraltar EU Negotiations). In all these meetings, Ministers have discussed a variety of issues including contingency planning and the UK's proposals for our future relationship with the EU.

[Ports](#)

23 Oct 2018 | House of Lords | HL10561

Asked by: Lord Mendelsohn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the impact of Brexit on the productivity of the UK's ports, and (2) the likely impact on the UK's ports of a no-deal Brexit.

Answering member: Baroness Sugg | Department: Department for Transport

Her Majesty's Government is seeking to negotiate arrangements whereby trade will flow as frictionlessly as possible, facilitating continuing growth in unit load traffic and port productivity. In the event of a no-deal outcome, the aim is to ensure that UK border controls at the frontier enable traffic to continue to flow efficiently through our ports.

[Cross Border Cooperation: Northern Ireland](#)

23 Oct 2018 | 180079

Asked by: Tom Brake

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, if she will ensure that the six areas of cross-border cooperation outlined in the Good Friday Agreement continue to be aligned in the event of a no-deal scenario.

Answering member: Shailesh Vara | Department: Northern Ireland Office

We are committed to the Belfast Agreement in all its parts, including the institutions and areas of cross-border cooperation set up following the Agreement, no matter what the outcome of the negotiations.

[EU Countries: British Nationals Abroad](#)

23 Oct 2018 | 181353

Asked by: Jo Stevens

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what discussions his Department has had with his counterparts in other EU member states on (a) the right to work, (b) access to social security and (c) accessing UK based pensions in the EU if the UK leaves the EU without a withdrawal agreement.

Answering member: Chris Heaton-Harris | Department: Department for Exiting the European Union

The Prime Minister has been clear that in the unlikely event that we reach March 2019 without agreeing a deal, we want EU citizens to stay in the UK and their rights will be protected.

Ministers and Ambassadors have been engaging with their counterparts across the EU to stress that we would expect the same treatment for UK nationals in the EU, in the unlikely event we do not reach an agreement with the EU. Most recently Minister Robin Walker stressed this in his

engagements in France and Spain.

Ports: Wales

22 Oct 2018 | 180793

Asked by: Jo Stevens

To ask the Secretary of State for Wales, when the Government plans to publish its contingency plans for the transport network servicing trade and travel through Welsh ports to Ireland in the event that no deal is reached for the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

Answering member: Alun Cairns | Department: Wales Office

We do not want or expect a no deal scenario. It is however the duty of a responsible Government to continue to prepare for a range of potential outcomes including the unlikely event of no deal.

We have now published 106 specific technical notices, including on transport, trading with the EU, and the Common Travel Area, to help businesses, citizens and consumers to prepare for March 2019 in the event of a no deal scenario. These are available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/how-to-prepare-if-the-uk-leaves-the-eu-with-no-deal>

UK Trade with EU: Exports

22 Oct 2018 | 179314

Asked by: Jared O'Mara

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what plans his Department has to support businesses that export to the EU in the event that that the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

Answering member: Graham Stuart | Department: Department for International Trade

The Department for International Trade has carried out significant preparations for a 'no deal' scenario, and alongside other Departments has published technical notices to guide businesses on preparing for this eventuality. Our technical notices cover trade remedies, export control regulation, and trade agreement continuity, as well as a further technical notice on tariffs which we published jointly with HMRC and HMT. We are also preparing the Department to provide business-friendly answers to EU Exit enquiries on areas within our competence. Together with other Departments we are ensuring that businesses can access Government information on EU Exit online.

Businesses, including current exporters to the EU, will benefit from the Department for International Trade's strong offer regardless of the outcome of Brexit negotiations. This offer includes impartial export advice from International Trade Advisors, our overseas network with a presence in 108 countries, and access to digital services that sit on our great.gov.uk platform.

Northern Ireland Office: Brexit

19 Oct 2018 | 177721

Asked by: Seema Malhotra

To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, whether she plans to publish her Department's preparations for no deal.

Answering member: Shailesh Vara | Department: Northern Ireland Office

We firmly believe it is in the interests of both the EU and the UK to strike a deal. That remains the goal on both sides and we are confident that this will be achieved. But it is the job of a responsible Government to prepare for all scenarios, so we have already carried out very significant 'no deal' preparations for the unlikely event that we reach March 2019 without agreeing a deal.

We have already published over 100 technical notices so that businesses and citizens have time to prepare in the event of a 'no deal' scenario. These are available on Gov.uk in a centralised location that is easy for people to access and use.

Northern Ireland: Borders

18 Oct 2018 | 179068

Asked by: Tom Brake

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, if the Government will adhere to the commitments on the Northern Ireland border which the UK and EU made in the December 2017 Joint Report in the event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

Answering member: Chris Heaton-Harris | Department: Department for Exiting the European Union

The proposals we have put forward for both the future economic partnership with the EU, and for the Northern Ireland backstop, would allow both sides to meet our commitments to the people of Northern Ireland in full, and we are working hard to get a deal on that basis. The Prime Minister has been clear that a negotiated deal is the best outcome for the UK and EU, and that it is achievable.

In the unlikely event of no deal, we have been clear that we will do everything in our power to avoid a hard border, and that we must continue to respect our unique relationship with Ireland, with whom we share a land border and who are co-signatories of the Belfast Agreement.

British Nationals Abroad and EU Nationals**18 Oct 2018 | 176271****Asked by: Paul Blomfield**

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, what discussions he has had with his counterparts in the EU on maintaining the rights of EU citizens resident in the UK and those of UK citizens resident in the EU in the event of the UK leaving the EU without a deal.

Answering member: Suella Braverman | Department: Department for Exiting the European Union

The Prime Minister has been clear that in the unlikely event that we reach March 2019 without agreeing a deal, we want EU citizens to stay and their rights will be protected. Ministers and Ambassadors have been engaging across the EU to stress that we would expect the same treatment for UK nationals in the EU, should we not reach a deal. Most recently Minister Robin Walker stressed this in his engagements in France and Spain.

Brexit**17 Oct 2018 | 175802****Asked by: Tom Brake**

To ask the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, with which EU countries the UK has discussed the potential extension of the Article 50 period.

Answering member: Suella Braverman | Department: Department for Exiting the European Union

The Government's policy is that Article 50 will not be extended. We will be leaving the EU on 29 March 2019 and are negotiating to that timeline. We are confident of reaching a deal which is in the best interests of both the UK and the EU.

Food: Shortages**16 Oct 2018 | 176559****Asked by: Hugh Gaffney**

To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential for food shortages in the event of the UK leaving the EU without a deal.

Answering member: David Rutley | Department: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

A responsible government should prepare for all potential outcomes, including the unlikely scenario in which no mutually satisfactory agreement can be reached and that is what we are doing.

Defra is working closely with all relevant Government departments on food sector issues relating to leaving the EU, including BEIS, DfT, HMRC, Department for Exiting the EU, Department for International Trade, the

FSA and others. Defra is also working closely with industry to support preparations for leaving the EU.

Food is one of the UK's 13 critical infrastructure sectors and Defra produces an annual sector security and resilience plan as lead Government Department. These plans identify potential risks and set out a programme of measures to improve resilience where necessary.

[Driving: EU Law](#)

15 Oct 2018 | 174688

Asked by: Grahame Morris

To ask the Secretary of State for Transport, whether drivers of goods vehicles who hold UK driving licenses will be required to purchase an International Driving Permit to travel to EU member states after the UK leaves the EU.

Answering member: Jesse Norman | Department: Department for Transport

The Government is seeking to ensure that UK motorists can continue to drive in the EU after we have left. The treatment of driving licences will depend on the outcome of the final agreement.

If there is no deal with the EU, both private and professional drivers may need an International Driving Permit, as well as their UK driving licence, to drive in the EU after the UK leaves.

6. Other Parliamentary material

6.1 Debates

[EU Withdrawal Agreement: Legal Advice](#)

13 Nov 2018 | Opposition days | House of Commons | 649 cc189-236

[Legislating for the Withdrawal Agreement](#)

10 Sep 2018 | House of Commons | 646 cc491-564

[Vote Leave Campaign: Electoral Law](#)

10 Sep 2018 | House of Commons | 646 cc205-224WH

[Leaving the EU: Negotiations](#)

10 Jul 2018 | House of Commons | 644 cc880-931

[Leaving the EU: Parliamentary Vote](#)

11 Jun 2018 | House of Commons | 642 cc245-278WH

6.2 Urgent question

[Leaving the EU: Rights of EU Citizens](#)

05 Nov 2018 | 648 cc1232-1246

[Leaving the EU: Meaningful Vote](#)

22 Oct 2018 | 648 cc33-45

6.3 Early Day Motions

[PEOPLE'S VOTE MARCH](#)

EDM 1745 (Session 2017-19)

23 October 2018

Tom Brake

That this House celebrates the fact that over 700,000 people marched on 20 October 2018 in favour of a People's Vote on the Government's Brexit deal; congratulates the People's Vote campaign and other cross-party movements which helped organise the march; notes that the march was the largest march held in the UK since the Iraq War protests in 2003; praises all who marched for standing up for the futures of younger generations who do not want to see life opportunities blighted by the UK leaving the EU; emphasises that the People's Vote campaign is a cross-party and non-party movement which has united many different groups; and calls on the Government and Official Opposition to support a People's Vote on Brexit, including the option to remain in the EU.

FUNDING FOR WALES POST-BREXIT

EDM 1552 (Session 2017-19)

23 October 2018

Jonathan Edwards

That this House expresses deep concern about the future of funding for Wales once the UK leaves the EU; recognises that between 2014 and 2020, Wales will have received over £2 billion from the EU through European Structural Funds; further recognises that these funds help to support people into work and training, youth employment, research and innovation, connectivity and urban development; reminds the UK Government that Vote Leave explicitly said Wales would not lose out and would receive Brexit dividend; regrets that the UK Government are yet to publish any details about the UK Shared Prosperity Fund the new body responsible for allocating funding post-Brexit on a UK-wide basis; further regrets that this body sits within the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, a Department only for English affairs; believes that it is crucial that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, reflects the needs-based structures of the EU's structural funds; and urges the UK Government to ensure that the distribution and allocation of these funds are devolved to the Welsh Government.

IMPORTANCE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION CUSTOMS UNION

EDM 1372 (Session 2017-19)

11 June 2018

Hywel Williams

That this House notes the amendment to Lords Amendments No 2. to the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill in the names of Plaid Cymru hon. Members that seeks to ensure that the Government negotiates, as part of the framework for the UK's future relationship with the EU an arrangement which enables the UK to continue participating in the EU Union; believes retaining membership of the EU Customs Union is the best way to mitigate the economic risks of Brexit, rather than negotiating a new customs union with the EU; recognises the benefits of UK membership of the EU Customs Union which removes costly and time-consuming customs processes and red tape for trade with other EU member states, allows the operation of a soft Northern Ireland-Republic of Ireland border that would be in jeopardy were the UK to leave, and allows the UK to fully benefit from 56 existing trade agreements; further notes the support for continued membership of the EU Customs Union across the House; regrets the Government's alternatives for the EU Customs Union, a new customs partnership, maximum facilitation, and a 10 mile buffer zone, none of which deliver the same benefits as the EU Customs Union and protect the soft border between Northern Ireland and the Republic as it stands; does not believe that the Government will be able to successfully negotiate free trade deals with other countries that will adequately replace the loss in trading relationships as a result of leaving the EU Customs Union; and calls on the Government to support this amendment to ensure it negotiates for the UK to remain a member of the EU Customs Union following the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

IMPORTANCE OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AREA**EDM 1371 (Session 2017-19)****11 June 2018****Hywel Williams**

That this House supports the Lords Amendment No. 51 to the European Union (Withdrawal Bill) that seeks to ensure the Government negotiates, as part of the framework for the UK's future relationship with the EU, an international agreement which enables the UK to continue to participate in the European Economic Area after exit day; recognises that continued participation in the European Economic Area would retain full access to the EU's internal market, allowing the UK to continue to trade with the EU on a tariff-free basis; notes the overwhelming cross-party support this amendment received in the House of Lords; regrets the decision of the Labour frontbench in the House of Lords to abstain on this amendment; further regrets the decision of the Labour frontbench in this House to amend this amendment to dilute its impact and jeopardise the likelihood of Lords Amendment No. 51 from passing; and calls on the Government to support this amendment to ensure it negotiates for the UK to remain a member of the European Economic Area following the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

6.4 Statements**October EU Council****22 Oct 2018 | Ministerial statements | House of Commons | 648 cc45-78**

[...]

The Prime Minister (Theresa May):

Turning to Brexit, Mr Speaker, let me begin with the progress we have made on both the Withdrawal Agreement and the political declaration on our future relationship.

As I reported to the House last Monday, the shape of the deal across the vast majority of the Withdrawal Agreement is now clear.

Since Salzburg we have agreed the broad scope of provisions that set out the governance and dispute resolution arrangements for our Withdrawal Agreement.

We have developed a Protocol relating to the UK Sovereign Base Areas in Cyprus.

Following discussions with Spain – and in close co-operation with the Government of Gibraltar - we have also developed a Protocol and a set of underlying memoranda relating to Gibraltar, heralding a new era in our relations.

And we have broad agreement on the structure and scope of the future relationship, with important progress made on issues like security, transport and services.

And this progress in the last three weeks builds on the areas where we have already reached agreement - on citizens' rights, on the financial settlement, on the Implementation Period, and in Northern Ireland, agreement on the preservation of the particular rights for UK and Irish citizens - and on the special arrangements between us such as the Common Travel Area, which has existed since before either the UK or Ireland ever became members of the European Economic Community.

Mr Speaker, taking all of this together, 95 per cent of the Withdrawal Agreement and its protocols are now settled.

There is one real sticking point left, but a considerable one, which is how we guarantee that - in the unlikely event our future relationship is not in place by the end of the Implementation Period - there is no return to a hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland.

The commitment to avoiding a hard border is one this House emphatically endorsed and enshrined in law in the Withdrawal Act earlier this year.

As I set out last week, the original backstop proposal from the EU was one we could not accept, as it would mean creating a customs border down the Irish Sea and breaking up the integrity of our United Kingdom.

I do not believe that any UK Prime Minister could ever accept this.

And I certainly will not.

But as I said in my Mansion House speech: We chose to leave; we have a responsibility to help find a solution. So earlier this year, we put forward a counter-proposal for a temporary UK-EU joint customs territory for the backstop.

And in a substantial shift in their position since Salzburg, the EU are now actively working with us on this proposal.

But a number of issues remain.

The EU argue that they cannot give a legally binding commitment to a UK-wide customs arrangement in the Withdrawal Agreement, so their original proposal must remain a possibility.

Furthermore, Mr Speaker, people are understandably worried that we could get stuck in a backstop that is designed only to be temporary.

And there are also concerns that Northern Ireland could be cut off from accessing its most important market - Great Britain.

During last week's Council, I had good discussions with Presidents Juncker, Tusk and Macron, Chancellor Merkel and Taoiseach Varadkar and others about how to break this impasse.

I believe there are four steps we need to take.

First, we must make the commitment to a temporary UK-EU joint customs territory legally binding, so the Northern Ireland only proposal is no longer needed.

This would not only protect relations North-South, but also, vitally, East-West.

This is critical: the relationship between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK is an integral strand of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement. So to protect that Agreement we need to preserve the totality of relationships it sets out.

Nothing we agree with the EU under Article 50 should risk a return to a hard border, or threaten the delicate constitutional and political arrangements underpinned by the Belfast Good Friday Agreement.

The second step, is to create an option to extend the Implementation Period as an alternative to the backstop.

Mr Speaker, I have not committed to extending the Implementation Period.

I do not want to extend the Implementation Period – and I do not believe that extending it will be necessary.

I see any extension - or being in any form of backstop - as undesirable. By far the best outcome for the UK, for Ireland and for the EU – is that our future relationship is agreed and in place by 1st January 2021.

I have every confidence that it will be. And the European Union have said they will show equal commitment to this timetable.

But the impasse we are trying to resolve is about the insurance policy if this does not happen.

So what I am saying is that – if at the end of 2020 our future relationship was not quite ready - the proposal is that the UK would be able to make a sovereign choice between the UK-wide customs backstop or a short extension of the Implementation Period.

And Mr Speaker, there are some limited circumstances in which it could be argued that an extension to the Implementation Period might be preferable, if we were certain it was only for a short time

For example, a short extension to the Implementation Period would mean only one set of changes for businesses - at the point we move to the future relationship.

But in any such scenario we would have to be out of this Implementation Period well before the end of this Parliament.

The third step, Mr Speaker, is to ensure that were we to need either of these insurance policies – whether the backstop or a short extension to the Implementation Period – we could not be kept in either arrangement indefinitely.

We would not accept a position in which the UK, having negotiated in good faith an agreement which prevents a hard border in Northern Ireland, nonetheless finds itself locked into an alternative, inferior arrangement against our will.

The fourth step, Mr Speaker, is for the Government to deliver the commitment we have made to ensure full continued access for Northern Ireland's businesses to the whole of the UK internal market.

Northern Ireland's businesses rely heavily on trade with their largest market - Great Britain - and we must protect this in any scenario.

Mr Speaker, let us remember that all of these steps are about insurance policies that no-one in the UK or the EU wants or expects to use.

So we cannot let this become the barrier to reaching the future partnership we all want to see.

We have to explore every possible option to break the impasse and that is what I am doing.

When I stood in Downing Street and addressed the nation for the first time, I pledged that the government I lead will not be driven by the interests of the privileged few but of ordinary working families.

And that is what guides me every day in these negotiations.

Before any decision, I ask: how do I best deliver the Brexit that the British people voted for.

How do I best take back control of our money, borders and laws.

How do I best protect jobs and make sure nothing gets in the way of our brilliant entrepreneurs and small businesses.

And how do I best protect the integrity of our precious United Kingdom, and protect the historic progress we have made in Northern Ireland.

And, if doing those things means I get difficult days in Brussels, then so be it. The Brexit talks are not about my interests. They are about the national interest – and the interests of the whole of our United Kingdom.

Serving our national interest will demand that we hold our nerve through these last stages of the negotiations, the hardest part of all.

It will mean not giving in to those who want to stop Brexit with a politicians vote – politicians telling the people they got it wrong the first time and should try again.

And it will mean focusing on the prize that lies before us: the great opportunities that we can open up for our country when we clear these final hurdles in the negotiations.

That is what I am working to achieve. And I commend this Statement to the House.

[...]

EU Exit**15 Oct 2018 | Written statements | House of Commons | HCWS1005****Technical Notices**

As announced by the Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union on 18 July 2018, the Government is publishing a series of technical notices. We published 25 of these notices on 23 August, 28 on 13 September, and 24 on 24 September. Last Friday, 12 October 2018, we published a further 29 notices. These notices are designed to inform people, businesses and stakeholders about steps they may need to take in the event of a 'no deal' scenario.

Notices were published on the following areas:

Accounting and audit if there's no Brexit deal
 Breeding animals if there's no Brexit deal
 Classifying, labelling and packaging chemicals if there's no Brexit deal
 Commercial fishing if there's no Brexit deal
 Consumer rights if there's no Brexit deal
 Control on mercury if there's no Brexit deal
 Control on persistent organic pollutants if there's no Brexit deal
 Existing free trade agreements if there's no Brexit deal
 Export and import of hazardous chemicals if there's no Brexit deal
 Exporting GM food and animal feed products if there's no Brexit deal
 Exporting objects of cultural interest if there's no Brexit deal
 Funding for British Overseas Territories if there's no Brexit deal
 Geo-blocking of online content if there's no Brexit deal
 Health marks on meat, fish and dairy products if there's no Brexit deal
 Importing high-risk food and animal feed if there's no Brexit deal
 Maintaining the continuity of waste shipments if there's no Brexit deal
 Meeting climate change requirements if there's no Brexit deal
 Meeting rail safety and standards if there's no Brexit deal
 Plant variety rights and marketing of seed and propagating material if there's no Brexit deal
 Providing services including those of a qualified professional if there's no Brexit deal
 Rail transport if there's no Brexit deal
 Regulating biocidal products if there's no Brexit deal
 Regulating pesticides if there's no Brexit deal
 Sanctions policy if there's no Brexit deal
 Structuring your business if there's no Brexit deal
 Taking horses abroad if there's no Brexit deal
 Trading and moving endangered species protected by CITES if there's no Brexit deal
 Trading electricity if there's no Brexit deal
 Trading gas with the EU if there's no Brexit deal

Notices are being published on gov.uk. These can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/how-to-prepare-if-the-uk-leaves-the-eu-with-no-deal>

Copies of notices will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses to ensure all Members have access.

EU Exit Negotiations

**09 Oct 2018 | Ministerial statements | House of Commons | 647
cc51-73**

Dominic Raab (Secretary of State for Exiting the European

Union): With permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to update the House on the progress in negotiations to leave the EU, and the government's planning for No Deal.

Negotiations

Since I last updated the House, our negotiations with the EU have continued and intensified.

Over the recess break, we have been engaging constructively with our EU counterparts.

Let me take the main areas of the negotiations in turn.

On the Withdrawal Agreement, while there remain some differences, we are closing in on workable solutions to all the key outstanding issues, building on the progress we made during the summer on issues such as data and information, the treatment of ongoing police and judicial co-operation in criminal matters, and ongoing Union judicial and administrative procedures after the date of exit.

We have also been discussing proposals on the linkage needed between the Withdrawal Agreement and the Future Relationship, and the EU is engaging constructively.

On the Northern Ireland Protocol, we remain committed to the undertakings we made in the Joint Report back in December, to agree a backstop in case there is a delay between the end of the Implementation Period and the entry into force of the treaty on our future relationship.

That was agreed to avoid any risk of a return to a hard border in the intervening period.

But we will not accept anything that threatens the constitutional or economic integrity of the United Kingdom.

Creating any form of customs border between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, which is what the EU had proposed, would put that at risk and that it is unacceptable.

As my Rt Hon friend the Prime Minister has said, it is not something she, nor any British Prime Minister, could conceivably agree to.

We are engaging with the EU on our alternative proposals that preserve the integrity of the UK.

They will be in line with the commitments we made back in December, including the commitment that no new regulatory barriers should be

created between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK unless the Northern Ireland Executive and the Assembly agree.

On the Future Relationship, we continue to make progress, for example, on both the internal and the external security arrangements for future cooperation, although there is still some way to go.

And as the House will know, the Prime Minister presented our proposals on the economic partnership to EU leaders, at the informal Salzburg Summit.

We understand that the EU has raised some concerns, particularly around the distinction between goods and services under the common rule book and with respect to the Facilitated Customs Arrangement.

We continue to engage constructively with the EU, we continue to press our case.

The UK's White Paper proposals are the best way of ensuring there is continued frictionless trade in goods after Britain leaves the EU, whilst fulfilling the joint commitment to avoid a hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland, and respecting the referendum.

These negotiations, Mr Speaker, were always bound to be tough in the final stretch.

That is all the more reason why we should hold our nerve, stay resolute and focused, and I remain confident that we will reach a deal this autumn.

Because it is still in the best interests of the UK, and the European Union.

It is the best way of protecting trade between Britain and the EU, trade which underpins millions of jobs across Europe.

It is the best way of making sure we continue to cooperate seamlessly on security matters, to tackle crime and terrorism to keep UK and EU citizens safe.

And it is the best way to avoid a hard border in Northern Ireland that would adversely affect communities living there, or indeed separating Northern Ireland from Great Britain which we will not countenance.

To achieve these aims, the UK has brought forward serious and credible proposals.

We continue to engage with the EU to press our case, and to better understand the nature of some of their concerns.

Equally, it is time for the EU to match the ambition and pragmatism that we have shown.

No Deal

Mr Speaker, while we intensify negotiations to secure the deal we want, the deal that we expect, we are also expediting preparations for no deal.

In case the EU do not match the ambition and pragmatism we have demonstrated.

As the Prime Minister stated on 21 September after the Salzburg Summit.

The government has made clear we will unilaterally protect the rights of EU citizens in the UK in the event of No Deal.

To the 3 million here, we say: you are our friends, our neighbours, our colleagues, we want you to stay. And we will be setting out all of the details as soon as is practical.

We also now urge the EU and all its member states to step up and give UK citizens on the continent the same reassurances.

Mr Speaker it is time, on both sides, to provide all our citizens with that comfort and with that confidence.

Since I last updated the House in September, we have published 52 more technical notices, in two further batches.

They inform people, businesses and other key stakeholders of the steps they need to take, if we don't reach a deal with the EU.

They cover a wide range of sectors, building on other work that has taken place across government over the last two years.

They enable us to prepare the UK for Brexit irrespective of the outcome of the negotiations.

They acknowledge that there are risks to a no deal scenario.

But they also demonstrate the steps we will take to avoid, mitigate and manage any potential short-term risks and disruption.

Overall now we have published 77 technical notices which form part of the sensible, proportionate, measures that we are taking to prepare the country for every eventuality.

Mr Speaker our most recent batch of technical notices were published on the 24th of September they are set out in a written Ministerial statement today.

There are 24 and they range from aviation, and the advice for airlines on the impact of 'no deal' and the actions for them to consider to maintain services on the day we leave the EU, through to car insurance, and the arrangements to ensure Green Cards will be available free of charge from insurance companies to enable UK drivers to continue to drive on the continent.

The publication of the technical notices enables further engagement as part of our No Deal planning.

So for example, our earlier technical notice on VAT set out the VAT changes that companies will need to prepare for when importing or exporting goods from the EU, when supplying services to the EU, or interacting with EU VAT IT systems.

That one was welcomed by the British Chamber of Commerce, and we are grateful to them and to all of our stakeholders for their constructive ongoing engagement on that necessary planning.

More broadly, I met with the British Chamber of Commerce, the CBI, the IoD, EEF and the Federation of Small Businesses as part of the government's Business Advisory Group on the 17th of September, to make sure we are explaining our negotiating proposals and No Deal planning, and listening to UK businesses of all sizes, and across all sectors.

We will keep providing people and businesses with the advice they need as we negotiate our exit from the European Union.

We also keep working with the devolved administrations on all aspects of our planning for exit.

I attended the joint ministerial committee on the 13th September.

It has now met 12 times, and our last meeting was a valuable opportunity to give the devolved administrations a full update on the negotiations, as well as discuss the necessary No Deal planning.

We continue to listen very carefully to all of their views.

Mr Speaker, that is the way, with concerted effort on all fronts, that we have put ourselves in the best possible position to make the best of Brexit.

And I commend this statement to the House.

[Brexit Negotiations and No Deal Contingency Planning](#)

04 Sep 2018 | Ministerial statements | House of Commons | 646 cc49-72

Dominic Raab (Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union): Thank you Mr Speaker, and with your permission, I'd like to provide the House with an update on the progress of Brexit negotiations and the government's No Deal contingency planning.

Exit Negotiations

On Friday I was in Brussels for the fourth time since I became Secretary of State, for a further round of talks with Michel Barnier.

We had an extended discussion, covering outstanding Withdrawal Agreement issues, internal and external security, and our future economic partnership.

We have injected some additional pace and intensity into the negotiations, as we reach the final phases.

The vast majority of the Withdrawal Agreement has been agreed. And when signed, the Agreement will:

- Safeguard the rights of EU citizens in the UK and UK nationals in the EU so they can continue to live their lives broadly as they do now;
- It will provide for a time-limited implementation period, giving businesses and citizens the certainty they deserve until we reach the new partnership; and
- It will allow for the UK to make an orderly and smooth transition as we move towards a future deep and special partnership with the EU.

In the course of August, we made further progress across a range of the outstanding separation issues including:

Protection of data and information, the treatment of ongoing police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, and ongoing Union judicial and administrative procedures after exit.

So the scope and the contours of the Withdrawal Agreement are now clear, subject to some further technical detail that we will of course continue to work on.

Northern Ireland

At the same time Mr Speaker we continue work to complete a backstop to deal with the position of Northern Ireland and Ireland, as we committed to do in the December Joint Report with the EU.

As the government has made clear, the EU proposals are unacceptable, because they would create a customs border down the Irish Sea.

We are determined to reach a solution that protects the Belfast Agreement and avoids a hard border on the island of Ireland.

We will not permit a customs border down the Irish Sea, which would put at risk the constitutional and economic integrity of the United Kingdom, and of course, this can be done without compromising the EU's core principles.

Importantly, Mr Speaker, we look to meet our commitments to the people of Northern Ireland through our future partnership,

So that no backstop would ever need to come into effect.

Future relationship

Mr Speaker, the White Paper we published in July has served as the basis for constructive discussions on our future relationship with the EU.

I, my Right Honourable Friend the Prime Minister, and other Cabinet colleagues have made visits across Europe, explaining our proposals making the case for what we have put forward for our future relationship.

I can tell the House that since the publication of the White Paper, ministers have had more than 60 engagements ministerially with their counterparts across Europe.

I met the French Europe Minister in Paris recently, I saw the Swedish Foreign Minister and the Irish Foreign Minister in London.

And I also met with Guy Verhofstadt, the European Parliament's Brexit coordinator last week.

And we've received a wide range of positive and constructive feedback.

Equally, just as we have presented our proposals in a spirit of compromise,

So too they have proved challenging in some respects for some in the EU.

But, our friends across Europe are engaging seriously with our proposals on the substance.

As my Right Honourable Friend the Prime Minister set out, we are committed to delivering on the vision in the White Paper,

And delivering a future relationship that will see:

- The United Kingdom leave the Single Market and the Customs Union;
- An end to free movement, so the UK controls its own borders;
- The end of the jurisdiction of the European Court; and
- And the UK and the EU meeting their shared commitments to Northern Ireland and Ireland in the way that I have already described.

And at the same time, we want to build up the foundations of a bright, strong and enduring new relationship for the future with:

- Frictionless trade across our borders;
- Continued close cooperation on law enforcement and other security matters;
- The UK free to develop its own independent trade policy; and
- Broader UK-EU cooperation from research to student exchanges, in many of the areas that we prize on both sides.

We approach these talks with ambition, pragmatism and with energy.

And if our EU friends match us, we will strike a deal that is in the clear and overwhelming interests of both sides.

No Deal Contingency Planning

Mr Speaker, I would also like to update the House on steps the Government has taken over the summer to prepare for the unlikely event that we don't reach a deal with the EU.

And while we expect to reach a deal with the EU, while it remains the most likely outcome, and whilst it remains our top and indeed our overriding priority, as a responsible government, we have a duty to prepare for any eventuality.

So on 23 August, we published 25 technical notices, intended to inform people, businesses and stakeholders about steps they need to take in the event of a 'no deal' scenario.

They build on the steady and patient work that has taken place over the last two years to prepare this country for life outside the EU — irrespective of the outcome of the negotiations.

That work has included passing key bits of legislation to ensure a smooth Brexit, including the EU (Withdrawal) Act,

It includes recruiting the staff in Whitehall and our operational agencies so we have the teams in place.

And it includes preparing our institutional capacity, from the Competition and Markets Authority to the Information Commissioner's Office.

The technical notices continue the same, responsible, practical approach to preparing our country for Brexit.

Among the technical notices, there is advice for businesses on some of the new processes they would be expected to follow when moving goods between the EU and UK in a no deal scenario.

Our technical notice on workplace rights sets out how workers in the UK will continue to be entitled to the rights they have under UK law.

And we have set out how, in the event of no deal, we would recognise the testing and safety approvals of existing medicines if they've been carried out by an EU Member State regulator,

To minimise any disruption to the supplies of medicines or medical devices from the EU.

These notices are proportionate.

They are measured.

And they prioritise stability for our citizens, businesses, public bodies and indeed for NGOs.

The 25 notices published in August were the first in a series of updates which we will be publishing over the coming weeks to keep stakeholders informed about what, if any, action they need to take.

Our approach acknowledges that there are some risks to a 'no deal' scenario,

And demonstrates that we are taking the action to avoid, to minimise and to mitigate these potential risks so we are equipped to manage any short-term disruption.

And while it is not what we want, a no deal scenario would bring some countervailing opportunities.

We would be able to lower tariffs and negotiate and bring into effect new free trade deals, straight away.

There would be the immediate recovery of full legislative and regulatory control, including over immigration policy,

And, whilst mindful of our legal obligations, a swifter end to our financial contributions to the EU.

Looking Ahead

So, Mr Speaker, I will continue to meet regularly with Michel Barnier,

Confident that a deal is within our grasp, and if the ambition and pragmatism that we have shown is matched by our EU friends.

But this House and the British people can rest assured, that the UK will be ready for Brexit – deal or no deal – and prepared, whatever the outcome, so this country will go from strength to strength.

And I commend this statement to the House.

7. Further reading

Government Policy Paper

[Progress on the UK's exit from, and future relationship with, the European Union](#)

Department for Exiting the European Union
14 November

Library Briefing Papers

[A User's Guide to the Meaningful Vote](#)

Commons Briefing Paper CBP-8424
25 October 2018

[What if there's no Brexit deal?](#)

Commons Briefing Paper CBP-8397
12 October 2018

[Brexit Unknowns \(update\)](#)

Commons Briefing Paper CBP-8408
26 September 2018

[Brexit: What would 'no deal' look like?](#)

Library Insight article
September 2018

Committee inquiries

[The progress of the UK's negotiations on EU withdrawal inquiry](#)

Exiting the European Union Committee

[The UK's economic relationship with the European Union inquiry](#)

Treasury Committee

[The land border between Northern Ireland and Ireland](#)

Northern Ireland Affairs Committee

[The impact of UK-EU arrangements on wider UK trade policy inquiry](#)

International Trade Committee

[Home Office delivery of Brexit: immigration inquiry](#)

Home Affairs Committee

Other

[Options for deal or no deal](#)

Institute for Government
30 October 2018

[Understanding the economic impact of Brexit](#)

Institute for Government
19 October 2018

[Three things you might want to know about the government's preparations for a No Deal Brexit](#)

Full Fact blog
13 September 2018

[The view from Brussels: How are the EU27 preparing for a 'No Deal' Brexit?](#)

Open Europe
30 August 2018

[IEA launches a series of 'no deal' Brexit Fear-Checkers to help separate Project Fear from Project Fact](#)

Institute of Economic Affairs
27 August 2018

[Brexit Shift – Best for Britain report](#)

Best for Britain
17 August 2018

[How to prepare if the UK leaves the EU with no deal](#)

Department for Exiting the European Union
Last updated 12 October 2018

[PM's open letter to EU citizens in the UK](#)

10 Downing Street
October 2018

[No deal Brexit preparations](#)

Institute for Government
October 2018

[No Deal: The economic consequences and how they could be mitigated](#)

Open Europe
October 2018

[The progress of the UK's negotiations on EU withdrawal \(June to September 2018\)](#)

HC 1554
Exiting the European Union Committee,
18 September 2018

[Cost of no deal revisited](#)

The UK in a Changing Europe
September 2018

[Do voters still want to leave the EU? how they view the Brexit process two years on](#)

The UK in a Changing Europe and NatCen
September 2018

[The future relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union](#)

Cm 9593

Department for Exiting the European Union

July 2018

[Government Response to Brexit: deal or no deal](#)

Department for Exiting the European Union

26 February 2018

[Brexit: deal or no deal](#)

HL Paper 46

European Union Committee

7 December 2017

[Can Parliament block a 'no deal' Brexit?](#)

Public Law for Everyone blog

Mark Elliott

16 October 2017

[Brexit](#) page on GOV.UK

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