

Liberal Democrats rule out coalition with May's Conservatives or Corbyn's Labour

Tim Farron has ruled out doing any coalition deals with Theresa May or Jeremy Corbyn after the election.

Every Liberal Democrat vote and every Liberal Democrat MP elected is a challenge to Theresa May's Hard Brexit agenda. In the next parliament we will fight to stop a disastrous Hard Brexit, keep Britain in the Single Market and make sure people have their say on the final Brexit deal in a referendum with remain as an option.

We don't rule out future coalitions – we believe in plural politics – but we won't do one with May or Corbyn.

This election is your chance to change the direction of our country. If you want to stop a Hard Brexit, if you want to keep us in the Single Market, if you want a real opposition, this is your chance. But you can only do that by voting Liberal Democrat.

With a large number of pro-European Lib Dem MPs in the next parliament we can force the government to soften its approach to Brexit and give people the final say over what comes next.

What about the Tories?

Under no conditions can we sign up to Theresa May's Hard Brexit agenda. She is going to be the Prime Minister – that's not in doubt. Our job will be to hold her to account and fight for the things we believe in – above all else our membership of the single market and for the people to have the final say on the deal.

What about Labour?

Everybody knows Jeremy Corbyn won't be the next Prime Minister. There is no prospect of a coalition that would put him in power. There are many issues that Labour and the Liberal Democrats agree on and many people on their side that we respect – but we won't put Corbyn into power. He is pro-Brexit, has promised to pull us out of the single market and marched his MPs and Peers through the lobbies to vote for article 50 without any concessions from the Tories. On top of that, he would be a disaster for the country – he has no plan for the country, our economy and offers no leadership.

Are you ruling out a progressive alliance?

We want to work with like-minded, pro-European people of all parties and none

to oppose Theresa May's Hard Brexit agenda and fight for a Britain that is open, tolerant and united. But everyone knows Jeremy Corbyn won't be the next Prime Minister and we wouldn't want him to be. We will work with pro-European MPs in any party to stand up to the Conservatives over Hard Brexit, but Corbyn is not that – and there is no prospect of a coalition that would put him in power.

Would you join a coalition with the SNP?

We won't be doing a deal with the SNP at Westminster because, whatever they might say, they are only interested in getting independence. They will not be interested in making a success of the UK.

Statement by the Spokesperson on the attack on an Afghan National Defence Forces base in Balkh Province

Our hearts are again with the Afghan people at this time. The European Union stands in firm solidarity with the Afghan authorities and our international allies in the fight against terrorism.

During discussions over the last four days in Beijing with State Councillor, Yang Jiechi and in New Delhi with Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj and Minister of State for External Affairs M.J. Akbar, the High Representative has emphasised the importance of the engagement of the international community, and in particular regional actors, in bringing peace to Afghanistan. This is also a message she will take to Moscow next week for discussions with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Only an inclusive, peaceful resolution of the conflict can bring the stability and prosperity that Afghan citizens deserve.

Multilateral banks to deepen collaboration with private sector to boost inclusive, sustainable

infrastructure

Leaders of the top multilateral development banks (MDBs) have agreed to deepen their collaboration to encourage private sector investment in vital infrastructure needed to support sustainable and inclusive economic growth throughout the world.

Under the theme of “Delivering Inclusive, Sustainable Infrastructure,” the [Global Infrastructure Forum 2017](#) provided a venue to discuss how MDBs can best work with countries and the private sector to create markets for infrastructure projects. The forum brought together potential investors, representatives of the United Nations and the G20 with the heads of the African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Investment Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, Inter-American Investment Corporation, International Finance Corporation, Islamic Development Bank, New Development Bank and the World Bank.

Basic infrastructure services – like roads, water and sewage lines, and electrical power – are scarce in many developing countries. Over one billion people live without electricity, more than 660 million people don't have access to clean drinking water, and one in three people lack access to flushing toilets and sewerage infrastructure. In addition, countries face the urgent need to invest in climate-resilient infrastructure and renewable, efficient energy sources.

With trillions of dollars in capital sitting on the sidelines earning low or even negative returns, deeper engagement with the private sector can create win-win scenarios where investors earn better returns on long-term investments and developing countries get much needed investment and expertise.

In order to fulfill commitments that countries throughout the world made to meet the ambitious [Sustainable Development Goals](#), the MDBs pledged not only to leverage their resources by joining forces to co-finance projects, but also to help generate interest among private sector investors in Public-Private Partnerships and the development of infrastructure as an asset class for institutional investors.

These pledges are included in the MDBs' Outcome Statement, issued today at the Forum, which will be accessible at <https://pppknowledgelab.org/2017giform>.

Among the speakers at the day-long event were Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations, and Wolfgang Schäuble, Finance Minister of Germany, which currently chairs the G20.

Eight parallel sessions explored a variety of subjects:

- How to ensure that infrastructure meets environmental and climate change

standards;

- How to help cities meet their infrastructure needs and climate objectives;
- The role of national development banks in implementing renewable energy and energy efficiency programs;
- Mobilization of private and concessional resources;
- Special challenges faced by least developed countries, small island developing states and landlocked developing countries;
- Risk mitigation for emerging market infrastructure;
- Infrastructure as an asset class for institutional investors;
- How to prepare projects with an eye on costs and quality control; and constraints and opportunities for energy and economic development in Africa.

The full agenda of the Global Infrastructure Forum 2017 is available on the [Forum's website](#), along with a [reference guide on Public-Private Partnerships \(PPPs\)](#), country data, information on specific infrastructure sectors, key databases and other tools.

[Seven years of Tory government. Seven ways they've failed Scotland.](#)

This year marks seven years of Tory government – despite people in Scotland rejecting the Tories at every single General Election for over sixty years.

[The government's approach to making working more worthwhile for families](#)

I have been sent a reminder of changes coming in this April. We want to support people in work, as well as ensure the welfare system works as a safety net for those who need it.

The measures include:

- A further increase in the Personal Allowance to £11,500; an increase of over 70% since 2010. Since the start of this Parliament we have cut income tax for 31m people and taken 1.3m of the lowest paid out of income tax altogether.
- Increasing support for low earners by raising the National Living Wage to

£7.50.

- Helping working parents with childcare costs by launching Tax Free Childcare from 28 April – saving working parents up to £2000 per year for each child under the age of 12.
- Increasing income for 3 million households by reducing the Universal Credit taper rate from 65 per cent to 63 per cent.
- Investing £330m in practical employment support to help disabled people back into work.
- Helping savers with the launch of a new NS&I bond offering a market-leading interest rate of 2.2% and increasing the annual ISA limit to £20,000.