

Discussions with the EU on departure

The EU is always quick to point out that there will be discussions about the details of our departure, and these are different from the discussions about our future relationship. Some in the Commission fondly imagine they can make a meal of the former. There is even talk of presenting the UK with a large leaving bill! A few people write into this site to ask if we have to pay it. Of course we don't.

There is nothing in the Treaty to provide for the calculation and presentation of a leaving bill. There is plenty in the Treaty to say the remaining member states need to have good relations with neighbouring countries in Europe. Presenting a big bill would be a violation of that part of the Treaty.

The truth is the UK has a share in a wide range of assets built up by the EU over the years we have been a member, including our small shareholding in the vast bond portfolio of the ECB, our share of the many expensive properties the EU institutions own and occupy and our share of the cash and other financial assets held by the EU. I doubt the EU will be totting them all up and wanting to send us our share. Our rights to those assets will be unenforceable once we leave.

Similarly, the EU has borrowed a lot of money whilst we have been members, to spend on itself and other countries in the Union. There is no enforceable claim on us for any part of that debt after we have gone. If they send us a bill we will tell them we will not be paying it. If I resign from a club which has borrowed money and has a valuable club house, I immediately lose my stake in the property and end any responsibility for the debts. If just after I left the club they sell the clubhouse and distribute some cash to members I don't get a share as a past member. The assets and the liabilities are assumed by the remaining members. When a new nation joins the EU it signs up to share in the present and future assets and liabilities for the duration of its membership.

Some in the EU seem to think we should be liable for the pensions of Euro officials who happen to live in the UK and are UK nationals. It is difficult to see the logic behind this. They acted as EU officials, as EU citizens, and swore an oath to the EU. No-one asked the UK to underwrite their pensions at the time they were accruing them. Surely the EU has to accept it incurred the debts and it needs to meet them. It is a pity it didn't invest the money from the pension contributions at the time, because then there would be no future problem.

The UK will have to pay the pensions of all those UK civil servants who have been effectively working for the EU for many years putting in place all their regulations and directives in the UK. The UK promised to pay their pensions and we will keep that promise. I was pleased to see senior German politicians now talking about how they will need a trade deal with us to keep their exports flowing. This is an early sign of some realism returning

to the continental debate.

[Huang Xingguo under graft investigation](#)

Huang Xingguo, former acting Party chief and mayor of Tianjin Municipality, is under investigation on suspicion of accepting bribes, the Supreme People's Procuratorate (SPP) announced on Sunday.

The SPP said Huang has been placed under "coercive measures," which may include summons by force, bail, residential surveillance, detention and arrest.

Investigation into his case is currently under way, according to the SPP.

[PLA helicopter crashes during night training](#)

A helicopter that belonged to the PLA Army Aviation Corps crashed on Thursday evening during a night time training flight. The two pilots remain missing as of Friday 20:10, the Chinese Ministry of National Defense (MOD) confirmed late on Friday.

The MOD statement says that the accident happened around 19:20 on Thursday evening in the rural area of the Quangang District, Quanzhou City in southeast China's coastal Fujian Province. The MOD did not specify the model of the helicopter nor which military unit it belonged to, adding that the cause of the crash is still being investigated.

The crash also resulted in four damaged village houses and three injured local people with non-life-threatening injuries.

Media have released the news of the helicopter crash in Quanzhou soon after the accident happened, but local authorities said the military authorities will announce the official account of the accident.

12 feared dead in central China landslide

Rescuers have found no signs of life of the 10 people missing after a landslide in central China's Hubei Province on Friday night, indicating the death toll is very likely to stay at 12.

Two people have been confirmed dead.

The Mirage Hotel in Nanzhang County was devastated at around 7:30 p.m. Friday when around 3,000 cubic meters of debris slid down a slope behind the hotel, said the firefighters in charge of the rescue.

Hotel owner He Dahui is among the missing.

A total of 15 people were trapped, and rescuers pulled five survivors from the debris, two of whom died in hospital.

A three-storey building collapsed, trapping hotel workers and guests in the restaurant on the first floor.

Rescue work has been suspended due to risks of a secondary disaster. Rescuers will remove rocks that pose threat to the people on site before the work restarts.

Surgeons use 3D printer in pediatric heart surgery



A 3D printer is working on a vase. [File photo/Xinhua]

Chinese surgeons in a Central China hospital have succeeded in performing two complex pediatric heart surgeries using 3D printing technology.

The first patient was a 13-year-old girl suffering from hypertrophic obstructive cardiomyopathy, which causes her heart muscle to grow abnormally thick. The second was a 3-year-old boy with severe left ventricular outflow tract obstruction, said Yang Yifeng, a cardiologist with the Second Xiangya Hospital of Central South University in Hunan province.

Yang said the left ventricle is responsible for pumping oxygenated blood to tissues all over the body. Symptoms of left ventricular outflow tract obstruction include shortness of breath, sensation of rapid, fluttering heartbeats during exercise, chest pain, and fainting.

In either of the two cases, because of the complexity involved, doctors decided to use a 3D printer to produce a 1:1 replica of the patient's heart. The model allows doctors to carefully study the disease and plan their surgery, Yang said.

It is the first time 3D printing technology is used in Hunan for pediatric cardiovascular surgery. It proves quite successful and the two patients are recovering well, Yang added.

3D printing is being embraced by doctors in China's major hospitals for surgeries and training, as the technology greatly improves surgery precision and helps doctors to discuss the ailment with their colleagues and sometimes their patients.