

Nomination day



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Today we will learn which of the many possible candidates have eight MP supporters and the will to contest the leadership. We have seen a long phoney war. There will be fewer candidates than the commonly touted 11.

Esther Mc Vey has come up with the clearest and strongest position on the EU. She has stated we must leave by October 31 with no further delays. She is a good presenter of Conservative views, using language that cuts through well and standing up to the abuse and attacks that come with the job. Like all the candidates so far she voted for the unacceptable Withdrawal Treaty on the third vote.

Several candidates have been diverted by stories of their past drug taking. As someone who did not take drugs because it was a criminal offence, I can say these revelations are not helpful to them, but have not proved to be a bar to high office. Mr Gove should not be supported for his long and futile support of the Withdrawal Treaty, his willingness to delay exit longer and his ill thought through views on VAT and sales taxes.

Boris has said the Withdrawal Treaty is dead and any negotiation with the EU would have to encompass both withdrawal and future relationship matters. This is reasserting the position in the Conservative Manifesto of 2017. Given the attitude of the EU it should mean we just leave with or without free trade talks and a mutual agreement to avoid tariffs and new barriers during the talks. He has rightly stressed we must leave the EU with no further delays by 31 October.