

Theresa May: Why we need a general election

Theresa May: I have just chaired a meeting of Cabinet where we agreed that the Government should call a general election to be held on the 8th June. I want to explain the reasons for that decision, what will happen next and the choice facing the British people when you come to vote in this election. Last summer after the country voted to leave the European Union, Britain needed certainty, stability and strong leadership and since I became Prime Minister the Government has delivered precisely that. Despite predictions of immediate financial and economic danger since the referendum we have seen consumer confidence remain high, record numbers of jobs and economic growth that has exceeded all expectations.

We have also delivered on the mandate we were handed by the referendum result. Britain is leaving the European Union and there can be no turning back. And as we look to the future the Government has the right plan for negotiating our new relationship with Europe. We want a deep and special partnership between a strong and successful European Union and a UK that is free to chart its own way in the world. That means we will regain control of our own money, our own laws and our own borders and we will be free to strike trade deals with old friends and new partners all around the world.

This is the right approach and it is in the national interest, but the other political parties oppose it. At this moment of enormous national significance there should be unity here in Westminster, but instead there is division. The country is coming together but Westminster is not. In recent weeks Labour have threatened to vote against the final agreement we reach with the European Union, the Liberal Democrats have said they want to grind the business of government to a standstill, the SNP say they will vote against the legislation that formally repeals Britain's membership of the European Union and unelected members of the House of Lords have vowed to fight us every step of the way. Our opponents believe because the Government's majority is so small that our resolve will weaken and that they can force us to change course.

They are wrong, they underestimate our determination to get the job done and I am not prepared to let them endanger the security of millions of working people across the country because what they are doing jeopardises the work we must do to prepare for Brexit at home and it weakens the Government's negotiating position in Europe. If we do not hold a General Election now their political gameplaying will continue and the negotiations with the European Union will reach their most difficult stage in the run-up to the next scheduled election. Division in Westminster will risk our ability to make a success of Brexit and it will cause damaging uncertainty and instability to the country.

So we need a general election and we need one now because we have at this

moment a one-off chance to get this done while the European Union agrees its negotiating position and before the detailed talks begin. I have only recently and reluctantly come to this conclusion. Since I became Prime Minister I have said there should be no election until 2020 but now I have concluded that the only way to guarantee certainty and stability for the years ahead is to hold this election and seek your support for the decisions I must take.

And so tomorrow I will move a motion in the House of Commons calling for a general election to be held on the 8th June. That motion, as set out by the Fixed Term Parliament Act, will require a two thirds majority of the House of Commons. So I have a simple challenge to the opposition parties. You have criticised the Government's vision for Brexit, you have challenged our objectives, you have threatened to block the legislation we put before Parliament. This is your moment to show you mean it, to show you are not opposing the Government for the sake of it, to show that you do not treat politics as a game.

Let us tomorrow vote for an election, let us put forward our plans for Brexit and our alternative programmes for government and then let the people decide. And the decision facing the country will be all about leadership. It will be a choice between strong and stable leadership in the national interest, with me as your Prime Minister, or weak and unstable coalition government led by Jeremy Corbyn, propped up by the Liberal Democrats, who want to re-open the divisions of the referendum, and Nicola Sturgeon and the SNP.

Every vote for the Conservatives will make it harder for opposition politicians who want to stop me from getting the job done. Every vote for the Conservatives will make me stronger when I negotiate for Britain with the prime ministers, presidents and chancellors of the European Union. Every vote for the Conservatives will mean we can stick to our plan for a stronger Britain and take the right long-term decisions for a more secure future.

It was with reluctance that I decided the country needs this election but it is with strong conviction that I say it is necessary to secure the strong and stable leadership the country needs to see us through Brexit and beyond. So tomorrow, let the House of Commons vote for an election, let everybody put forward their proposals for Brexit and their programmes for government and let us remove the risk of uncertainty and instability and continue to give the country the strong and stable leadership it demands.

WATCH: Picardo – “It is only fair, proper and right that any trade deal

[should apply to Gibraltar.”](#)

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3 comments for: WATCH: Picardo – “It is only fair, proper and right that any trade deal should apply to Gibraltar.”

[WATCH: Fallon – “Gibraltar is going to be protected all the way”](#)

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[Newslinks for Sunday 2nd April 2017](#)

Brexit 1) What Easter Ministerial holiday? May team’s trade tour.





“Mrs May has instructed her top team to spend the Easter break selling Britain abroad as a mecca for inward investment. Chancellor Philip Hammond is being posted to India with a “heavyweight delegation” which includes Bank of England governor Mark Carney. Mr Hammond said he’ll be “banging the drum for British business” and promoting the best of what we have to offer. International Trade Secretary Liam Fox will tour Manila, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Dubai and Oman. He said: “It’s nine months since we voted to leave the EU, and the signs are all positive. The economy is strong, as is inward investment, employment and consumer spending.” – [Sun on Sunday](#)

Brexit 2) Gibraltar “lobbied to be named in May’s letter, Foreign Office wanted it in, Downing Street and Dexu wanted it out”

A minister said: “Gibraltar lobbied very hard to have them specifically mentioned in our letter and it was rejected by Dexu, to the annoyance of the Foreign Office. The Gibraltarian government is feeling very let down. The Spanish have gone behind our backs and got their side of the argument in the EU [draft negotiating guidelines]. They’ve put the issue up in lights and Gibraltar might be pivotal when it wasn’t before. This is an illustration of how one issue can jeopardise the entire unanimous agreement we need to get any deal.” – [Sunday Times \(£\)](#)

Brexit 3) Ministers pondered security negotiation gambit



“Leaked minutes of a Brexit cabinet committee meeting on March 7 show ministers identified the UK’s “very strong hand” on defence as a key advantage in negotiations. Those present said security would be a “defining” issue for the EU and that Britain should not “underplay” its hand as it seeks to secure a favourable free trade deal. Michael Fallon, David Davis, Philip Hammond and Boris Johnson are all understood to have spoken up about the importance of British security to the EU ahead of talks.” – [Sunday Telegraph](#)

- Robertson says military mustn’t be used as a bargaining tool – [Observer](#)

Brexit 4) Labour, LibDems, Tory Remainers plan ways of shafting Great Repeal Bill

“Staff working for MPs from both parties have drawn up a battle plan as Lib

Dem leader Tim Farron threatened to wage legislative warfare against the Government's Great Repeal Bill, described by critics as a "power grab". The meeting last Friday came just days after Remainers hinted they could form a "centrist" party as Jeremy Corbyn dooms Labour to history. Tory MP Anna Soubry, Mr Farron and former Lib Dem chief Nick Clegg are among those said to be considering trying to create a viable force." – [Sunday Express](#)

- Tory Leavers and Remainers will unite to oppose the Great Repeal Bill – Dan Hodges, [Daily Mail](#)

> Yesterday: ToryDiary – [If Britain needs a new party, we'll only find out after Brexit](#)

Brexit 5) Paterson backs an end to subsidies for British farming post-Brexit



"The shock forced a radical shake-up in the country, with sheep farms replaced by deer parks and vineyards. But critics claim it led to widespread economic distress and a sharp rise in suicides...Mr Paterson argued that there were 'clear lessons to be learnt from the policy adopted by New Zealand... which demonstrated that food production can increase when farmers are given the freedom to react to the market'...A source close to Ms Leadsom said yesterday that Ministers were unlikely to follow the New Zealand precedent directly because 'the rug had been pulled away too abruptly', although the way in which subsidies are applied would be looked at closely." – [Mail on Sunday](#)

Brexit news in brief

- Write-up of the Brexit week – Tim Shipman, [Sunday Times \(£\)](#)
- Swedish MEP says his country will be the next to leave – [Sun on Sunday](#)
- Mervyn King pro-Leave interview – Bryan Appleyard, [Sunday Times \(£\)](#)
- Cabinet member briefs that aim of cutting immigration to tens of thousands is dead – [Sunday Express](#)
- Post-Brexit passport redesign – [Sun on Sunday](#)
- Britain won't pay £60 billion, says Iain Duncan Smith – [Sunday Express](#)
- We are not obliged to pay a penny – John Redwood, [Sunday Express](#)
- Poulter wants NHS staff to have special Brexit passports – [Sun on Sunday](#)
- Martin Selymayr, the Eurocrat determined to punish Britain – [Mail on Sunday](#)
- Joseph Muscat, the Maltese leader determined to punish Britain – [Mail on Sunday](#)
- Two thirds of students want a second referendum – [Independent](#)
- New Trade Department Permanent Secretary "bungled Probation Service

privatisation” – [Mail on Sunday](#)

Brexit 6) Charlie Elphicke: May must call an election if necessary



“And it’s not just the EU the Prime Minister must face down. She will be assailed by Labour, Lib Dem and SNP MPs who long for things to go wrong. They will always put party before country. For them, nothing her Government does will ever be good enough. Yet the British people know this is a Government that wants Britain and her people to succeed and prosper. A Government that believes Britain’s best days are yet to come. That’s why if MPs fail to back her she shouldn’t hesitate to take it to the country – and win.” – [Sun on Sunday](#)

Brexit comment in brief:

> Today: ToryDiary – [The Brexit negotiation. Don’t believe everything you read in the media. \(Not that you would anyway.\)](#)

Leadsom to unveil toxins tax

“Leadsom’s plan is expected to extend pollution payments to several more cities, including Birmingham, Leeds, Southampton, Nottingham and Derby, which are already planning to impose toxin taxes on older lorries, coaches and taxis from 2019. Under the new proposals this could be extended to diesel cars too. Under the plans, a network of “clean air zones” will be set up, with councils mandated to impose bans or charges on polluting vehicles that enter them. They will be enforced with camera networks similar to those used in London. Punitive taxes on new diesel vehicles are expected to follow in the chancellor’s autumn budget. This will fit with longer-term plans to make all new cars and vans “zero emission” – that is, electric – by 2040 – [Sunday Times \(f\)](#)

Adam Bolton: Forget UKIP – and Labour as a potential Government. The Liberal Democrats will become the third force in Britain and the real opposition at Westminster



“The latest analysis of council voting patterns by Professor Michael Thrasher ahead of this year’s local elections finds the Lib Dems well up. National equivalent vote share compared with four years ago is Conservatives 31% (+5), Labour 29% (no change), Lib Dems 22% (+9) and Ukip 10% (-12). If the votes are cast that way on May 4 the Lib Dem party will reclaim its place as the third force in English politics from Ukip while Labour will have another poor set of results. The next crucial vote on Britain in the EU will come if and when the May government and Michel Barnier’s EU team agree a Brexit deal. That gives the Lib Dems two years to harry the government on an issue that matters to them profoundly” – [Sunday Times \(f\)](#)

> Today: Andrew Mitchell on Comment – [Lippy, serious, funny – and right about women. Meet my Labour neighbour, Jess Phillips.](#)

News in Brief

- Airports and nuclear power stations on terror alert as government officials warn of ‘credible’ cyber threat – [Sunday Telegraph](#)
- Terror taskforce set up to tackle prisoner extremism – [Sunday Express](#)
- The Prince of Wales donates to Aid to the Church in Need – [Mail on Sunday](#)
- Harvey Proctor sues “Nick” – [Sunday Times \(f\)](#)
- Tax and benefit changes could hit hard-working families the hardest – [Sun on Sunday](#)
- Study reveals Scotland’s sectarian equality gap – [Scotland on Sunday](#)
- Academics claim online campaigning in general elections is out of control – [Observer](#)
- Karl McCartney says IPSA boss must stand down following leak – [Sun on Sunday](#)
- Amnesty criticises Johnson over mother held in Iran – [Sunday Telegraph](#)
- Bob Dylan finally accepts Nobel Prize – [Independent](#)

[Newslinks April 2017](#)

The Brexit negotiation. Don't believe everything you read in the media. (Not that you would anyway.)

A week ago, Article 50 had not been moved. As a new week begins, it finally has been. This means that we now move into the negotiation proper between Britain and the EU27. Which makes this as good a time as any to say: don't believe everything you read about it in the media.

Leaks and briefings are the stuff of which political journalism is made – and thank goodness for that. Where would ConservativeHome be without it? But one be more than usually suspicious, during the weeks ahead, of being stampeded or spun, for three good reasons.

First and inevitably, Ministers will seek to manipulate public opinion. That is par for the course. But take what you read with a handful of salt – particularly if it involves threats to pull the plug on or walk out of the negotiation. Ministers know that Brussels and the EU27 read our newspapers. What they brief will be part of the game of bluff and counter-bluff. [We saw that last week](#) with the to-and-fro over security policy.

Second, there will be genuine leaks at our end. [Today's Sunday Telegraph story](#) about a Cabinet committee discussion of that policy, apparently based on leaked minutes, looks like one such, though one cannot be sure.

Third, Eurocrats and EU27 Ministers will seek to manipulate public opinion, too. For while our Ministers will feed information to journalists, they will want to keep most of their negotiating position under wraps: remember how long it took Theresa May to deliver [her big speech setting out the Government's position on Brexit](#). Our interlocutors will have no such inhibitions. They will brief anyone willing to listen about May's position, if they think it is in their interest – and garnish what they deliver with their own threats and counter-threats. The BBC, the *Guardian*, the *Financial Times* and Remainers everywhere will lap it all up.

Fouth, tales will surface that are, frankly, triumphs of wishful thinking. We hate to single out particular instances, but today's [Sun on Sunday yarn suggesting the return of blue passports post-Brexit is unsupported by its contents](#).

Fifth, stories will appear whose projection is more impressive than their content. The rumpus over Gibraltar is a classic. If Spain wants to use its veto over the matter, or push for support via QMV, or both (depending on what sort of deal is under discussion), it will – at considerable cost to its own growth, by the way. If it doesn't, it won't. What Donald Tusk put about Gibraltar in his letter is simply one of the negotiation's opening shots.

It is this site's duty to link to anything significant reported each morning

in our newlinks. If we're not entirely convinced by it, watch for the use of "appears" or "claims", or the swathing of entire chunks of texts between quotation marks.

We are no more or less prone to being spun, or caught up in the excitement of the moment, than is anyone else. But we will try to keep a cool head during the two years or so ahead, especially since the negotiation is unlikely to begin in earnest until the autumn, when the French and German elections are over.