

Brexit Briefing



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Wales



Thank you for signing up for the Brexit Briefing. This is a bi-weekly report on how the process of the UK's departure from the EU is affecting Wales and how Plaid Cymru is working to protect jobs and the national interest. Much more information about all of these issues can be found on the [Brexit Section of our website](#).

There are three parts to the Briefing:

- 1) The View from the Continent (European Parliament)
- 2) Summing up in the Senedd (Assembly)
- 3) News from the Imperial Capital (Westminster)

We hope you enjoy this, the first edition of the Brexit Briefing. If you have any feedback let us know by emailing post@plaid.cymru.

The view from the Continent

by Jill Evans MEP & the Plaid Cymru Europe Team



Although the negotiations for the UK withdrawal from the European Union will officially take place between the European Commission (acting as negotiator for the other 27 member states of the EU) and the UK Government, the final step in the process is the European Parliament vote to agree the deal. Guy Verhofstadt MEP, leader of the Liberal Group and former Belgian Prime Minister, has been appointed lead negotiator for the European Parliament. He will be assisted by a group consisting of

the president and one other member of each political group. This means that our Greens/EFA group co-president, Philippe Lamberts (Wallonia, Belgium) and our EFA president Josep-Maria Terricabras (Catalonia) are members of this important group.

Guy Verhofstadt has stated that the following four points should be heeded:

- No pre-negotiations before Article 50 is triggered;
- Negotiations should end before the 2019 European elections;
- The new relationship needs to be a close one;
- [The new relationship cannot infringe the four fundamental freedoms of the Single Market](#) (free movement of capital, goods, services and people).

The Greens/EFA group has also established a Working Group on Brexit of which Jill Evans MEP is member.

Jill has been also appointed to the Advisory Committee set up to assist the Welsh Government in the process of leaving the EU. The first meeting took place in September.

Bruegel, an international think tank based in Brussels, has recently published an interesting proposal for a "continental partnership" following the UK's exit. It could enable Wales to remain in the Single Market but outside the EU, via a two-tier European structure. Jill Evans met André Sapir, one of the report's authors, this week to discuss the implications for Wales. The proposals are being discussed widely and could influence the debate. A copy of the report can be [found here](#).

Jill Evans met deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness this week to discuss the very serious implications for the north of Ireland of leaving the EU. He agreed that ongoing and close co-operation between us was essential.

The British Retail Consortium has warned that a failure to secure a good trade deal between the UK and the EU could result in an increase in the price of goods in our shops. Reverting to World Trade Organisation rules could see tariffs on clothes of up to 16%. The elimination of EU quotas on imports such as those of New Zealand lamb [could be a serious threat to the Welsh lamb industry](#) as it tries to compete with a flood of cheap imports.

Whitehall officials now admit that the UK may need to pay into the EU budget. An unnamed cabinet minister has told the BBC that the UK may end up "paying quite a lot" into the EU budget. This further discredits the already ridiculed claim by the Leave campaign that 350 million a week could be instead spent on the NHS.

Other non EU countries such as Norway [already finance programs](#) such as the "EEA Norway grant scheme" to the tune of 391 million euros, and by 2020 will be paying 550 million euros to finance EEA/EFTA contributions for programs such as Horizon 2020 and Erasmus +.

Summing up in the Senedd

by our Assembly Brexit Spokesman Steffan Lewis AM and the Assembly Team



Following the referendum, Plaid Cymru has led the way in forging new relationships with Europe and talking to key players in the Welsh economy. Leanne Wood led a delegation to Brussels which met with representatives of EU states and sub-state nations to discuss Wales' future in Europe. She has travelled to [meet with Airbus in Broughton](#) and to an [engineering firm Excel in Trostre, Llanelli](#) to learn about the challenges they will face as the UK leaves the EU and what must be done to limit to impact on Wales' economy.

In the Senedd, a debate about the desired future relationship with the EU for Wales has been raging with the Labour Government failing to set out a plan for Wales. They became the first administration in the UK to [vote in favour of a 'hard Brexit'](#) along with the Tories and cheered on by UKIP when they voted against continuing membership of the single market when the UK leaves the EU. Adam Price AM uncovered either a 'cock-up or a conspiracy' when he found that the Labour Welsh Government had retrospectively doctored a press release to reflect a change in policy on freedom of movement. [It's worth you taking a few minutes to watch Mr Price making his case.](#) In the Sunday Times, Steffan Lewis AM, Plaid Cymru Brexit spokesperson, [argued that an ever-looser union between the nations of the UK is necessary](#) to accommodate the differing national aspirations of the peoples of the UK as the negotiations unfold.

Simon Thomas AM, Shadow Cabinet Secretary for the Environment and Rural Affairs, has warned of a ['Brexit double whammy'](#) for the beef industry in Wales. A loss of EU funding for the bovine TB eradication programme and the danger of additional regulation after Wales leave the EU could hit the beef and dairy sector in Wales hard. He called on the government to act sooner rather than later.

News from the Imperial Capital

by Plaid Cymru's Brexit Spokesman in Westminster Jonathan Edwards MP and the Westminster Team



- Brexit means... very little so far. We have had nothing more than mixed messages and confusion being peddled by both the Tories in Westminster and the complacent Labour administration in Cardiff Bay. That's why a campaign will be launched next week by Plaid Cymru to hold both the UK and Welsh Government to account. Getting the answers Wales deserves, Plaid Cymru MPs will be tabling a parliamentary question a day to make sure Wales gets the best possible deal when we leave the European Union.
- Dodging questions on Brexit is about to get a lot more difficult for those in the Westminster bubble, after it was announced that we will have a seat on the new Brexit Select Committee in the House of Commons. Our seat on the Committee came after significant pressure from Plaid Cymru, to ensure the views of Wales were properly represented. More announcements on this exciting development will follow soon.

What we've been doing

Plaid Cymru in Westminster has been consistent and united on Brexit. The goal for Wales is to maintain our membership of the single market. [Click here](#) for more information about why this is.

Last week marked the 100th day since the result of the referendum and our Brexit spokesperson in Westminster, **Jonathan Edwards** MP, made an intervention to coincide with that milestone highlighting the chaos within the Westminster parties, none of whom have a solid position on our future economic links with the European Union. [He used this opportunity to set out Plaid Cymru's proposals in precise terms.](#)

During a debate in the House of Commons on leaving the EU, Jonathan Edwards intervened on Labour's front bench calling for [clarity on their position](#) on the Single Market after repeated inaccurate and contradictory statements from Labour politicians in Wales and Westminster.

Jonathan also warned in an article in the [Huffington Post](#) that as the EU accounts for 45% of the UK's exports and 53% of imports, leaving the Single Market would have a cliff edge effect on the UK economy.