



This is the fifth edition of the Brexit Briefing, we hope you enjoy. 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) Summing up in the Senedd (Assembly)
- 2) The View from the Continent (Europe)
- 3) News from the Imperial Capital (Westminster)

If you have any feedback let us know by emailing [post@plaid.cymru](mailto:post@plaid.cymru).

## Summing up in the Senedd

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



The legal process for withdrawing from the EU has huge potential implications for the constitutional settlement of Wales and the other devolved nations. The Welsh Government was granted the right to intervene in the Supreme Court case on the triggering of Article 50, the first step towards Brexit. Because EU law is written into the legislation underpinning the National Assembly for Wales, Article 50 will modify the legislative competence of the Assembly and the powers of the Welsh Government. The Welsh Government's Council General, Mick Antoniw AM, argued that therefore, an act of Parliament followed by the Assembly granting its consent to having its legislative competence changed is needed in order for the process to begin. The judgement is expected in the New Year.

Steffan Lewis AM, Plaid Cymru's Brexit spokesperson, [was interviewed by The Guardian and warned of the risks Brexit poses to Wales' constitutional rights](#). He argued for an 'accession in reverse' model

of negotiations, going through each policy area one by one to negotiate the best possible deal for Wales. Steffan Lewis also accepted that, as the single biggest beneficiary of EU funds in the UK, Wales is 'hugely exposed' by the potential economic fallout from Brexit. He said, 'This is why in terms of the post-withdrawal context, why we need to ensure that the funding levels are maintained at least. We cannot pretend that the UK is an economically homogenous state.'

Meanwhile, Leanne Wood, the leader of Plaid Cymru, [has said that strict immigration controls following Brexit could damage Welsh businesses and public services that rely on overseas labour](#). For example, 30% of the doctors in Wales were trained abroad. She stressed that the facts about immigration to Wales do not support the UKIP's claims that it causes problems. Instead we should focus on protecting Welsh communities, our language and culture, and supporting them to thrive.

## **The view from the Continent**

by Jill Evans MEP & the Plaid Cymru Europe Team



The chief negotiator for the European Parliament, Guy Verhofstadt, had a meeting with the Greens/EFA Working Group. He set out his strategy and emphasised the importance of the European Parliament in the negotiations for withdrawal. A comprehensive report would be drawn up and voted on by parliament in April - after Article 50 is triggered and ahead of the Council decision in May on the guidelines for the mandate.

Just like many others who feel strongly Welsh and European, Jill supports his proposal to include an EU associate citizenship in the resolution. She has received a huge lobby on this from constituents. Guy Verhofstadt believes that exploring this possibility is a sign that the EU is open to discussion. No doors are closed. It also helps counteract the very negative press coverage of the EU in the UK.

Jill spoke at a meeting in Brussels of Culture Action Europe on the impact of leaving the EU on the arts, media and cultural sectors. 96% in these sectors voted to remain.

Jill had a meeting with the British Medical Association to discuss issues such as freedom of movement, cross border healthcare, research and recognition of qualifications. It is clear that leaving the EU will have a damaging affect on the health sector across the EU and not just in the UK.

A European Council meeting is taking place today in Brussels which the Prime Minister will attend. Brexit will not be a major item on the agenda.

## News from the Imperial Capital

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



On the weekend following our previous briefing, Plaid Cymru peer, Dafydd Wigley made a major intervention in the House of Lords, [calling for, what he called, a “Brexit triple lock”](#). He outlined three steps the UK Government should take to ensure the public is fully consulted on the future relationship between the EU and the British State.

1. Firstly, he called for the Government to outline its preferred outcome before Westminster is asked to vote on triggering Article 50;
2. Failing that, he called for the Parliaments of the UK, including the national Parliaments in Wales and Scotland, along with the Northern Ireland Assembly, to retain the right to withdraw their support for Article 50 if they are not happy with the position the UK Government takes; and
3. Failing that, he called for the public to be consulted once more in a referendum on the outcome of the negotiations with the European Union.

Since then, there has been a major vote in the House of Commons on the first of these calls.

The Labour Party tabled a motion calling for the UK Government to publish a “plan” before Parliament is asked to vote on Article 50. The Conservatives then tabled an amendment to that motion calling for a commitment from the Commons to support Article 50.

The Conservatives made a deal with the Labour Party to support their motion calling for a plan if the Labour Party agreed to support their amendment supporting Article 50 in return.

To our utter disbelief, the Labour Party agreed. This is where it gets complicated, so bear with us here...

Firstly, in supporting the Conservative amendment, the Labour Party has agreed to support triggering Article 50, regardless of what is in the plan that the UK Government publishes. They have undermined the whole purpose of their motion in the first place. The Government can now publish whatever it likes in its plan and the Labour Party will support it.

Secondly, the choice of terminology – calling for “a plan”, rather than “a white paper” for example – is significant. There is no definition of what the plan must entail. Technically, the Government could publish an A4 piece of paper saying their plan is to achieve a red, white and blue Brexit and Labour will apparently now support it.

What we need is a comprehensive document, outlining the government’s position on the single market and the customs union as a minimum, and for Parliament to be allowed to propose amendments.

Plaid Cymru [made it clear on the day that we would not be supporting this “stitch up”](#), as Jonathan Edwards MP called it.

Meanwhile, our Brexit questions campaign continues, and answers are beginning to come in. We’ll be commenting on these over the next few days. Watch this space.

Follow [@JonathanPlaid](#) and [@Plaid\\_Cymru](#) on Twitter to keep up to date with the Parliamentary Group’s work on Brexit.