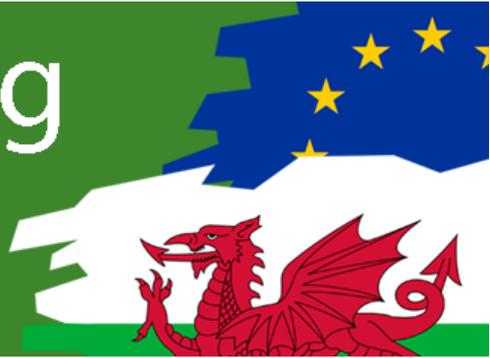


# Brexit Briefing



Plaid  
Cymru | Party of  
Wales



This is the third edition of the Brexit Briefing, we hope you enjoy. Much more information about all of these issues, including past editions of the Briefing, can be found on the [Brexit Section of our website](#).

There are three parts to the Briefing:

- 1) News from the Imperial Capital (Westminster)
- 2) From the European Parliament (Europe)
- 3) Summing up in the Senedd (Assembly)

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

## News from the Imperial Capital

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



On Monday the 7<sup>th</sup> of November, the Westminster team and the Assembly team launched a joint Brexit campaign – to [get the answers Wales deserves](#). Both teams will put forward a written question on Brexit every day to the respective governments. The campaign has been going for two weeks and will continue until the end of the term. Answers should start coming in shortly from both governments which will be used to try and provide clarity to the general public.

The confused messages, contradictory statements and flip-flopping from both the Welsh Government and the UK Government is unacceptable and we hope that this campaign will start to generate clarity and a better understanding of where the governments stand on key issues such as the single market and funding.

The campaign was [covered in the Sunday Times](#) ahead of its launch and in multiple outlets, including [the BBC on its launch day](#).

The questions are published on the [@Plaid Cymru](#) twitter account daily.

In response to the High Court's judgement that the Government must involve the UK Parliament in its decision to trigger Article 50, [we highlighted the importance of giving the national Parliaments of the UK a say, not just Westminster](#), and that more important than the vote on article 50 is what happens afterwards – the negotiations themselves.

The Prime Minister has stepped up her threats of calling a snap election to ensure she has the necessary majority to get Parliament's approval for triggering Article 50. Jonathan responded to this threat by highlighting that the only way to trigger an election would be for the government to call a vote of no confidence in itself, and doing so would give Parliament 14 days in which to form an alternative government. Jonathan highlighted that there is a majority in the House of Commons in favour of a soft Brexit who could form a temporary government, and see Theresa May and her hard-Brexit colleagues pushed into opposition:

## 'Snap election bid could backfire and see hard-Brexit May pushed into opposition'

A PLAID CYMRU MP is proposing an audacious plan which could see the Conservative Party pushed into opposition at Westminster if Theresa May tries to engineer an early general election on Brexit.

Last week's High Court ruling, which said only Parliament could invoke Article 50 of the EU constitution to trigger Brexit has heightened speculation that the Prime Minister could seek to hold a snap election early next year.

But under the terms of the Fixed Term Parliament Act, such an election could only be called if two thirds of MPs vote for it, or if a vote of no confidence is passed in the Prime Minister and no other government is formed within 14 days.

Should the Supreme Court uphold the ruling of the High Court next month, the UK Government is briefing that it would use the threat of a snap election to ensure MPs and peers do not hold sway over its Brexit negotiating position.

Plaid Cymru Treasury spokesman Jonathan Edwards argues that the major ideological divide in the post-EU referendum political landscape is between those who favour a hard Brexit, with the



> Jonathan Edwards MP

UK outside the European Single Market and Customs Union, and those who favour a softer Brexit in order to minimise economic damage.

Despite the May Government's decision to interpret the referendum result as a mandate for hard Brexit, there is a majority in the House of Commons in favour of a soft Brexit and which opposes plans to leave the Customs Union and the Single Market.

Mr Edwards, the MP for Carmarthen East and Dinefwr and a member of the Commons' Brexit committee, said: "While every single MP I have spoken to since the referendum respects the result, there is considerable disquiet about the hard Brexit rhetoric of the Prime Minister, who seems intent not only on

severing all political ties with the EU but economic ones as well.

"Such a reckless Brexit would be disastrous for the economy, with a negative impact on the financial wellbeing of those whom we have been elected to serve.

"In the event of the current UK Government cynically engineering a vote of no confidence in itself, then an election will be held unless an alternative government with the confidence of the House of Commons is formed within 14 days. The Prime Minister could risk being challenged by an alliance of MPs from all political parties who oppose her right-wing, hard-Brexit trajectory. At such a pivotal moment in the UK's constitutional history, pragmatic MPs could come together and rise above party politics to put the interests of the people first and form a fully representative government of the people."

Mr Edwards said there was a majority in the House of Commons in favour of protecting our economic links with Europe, and with party politics to one side, those currently in government who are aggressively pursuing a hard Brexit could find themselves on the opposition benches if they call a vote of no confidence."

Dwyfor Meirionnydd MP, Liz Saville Roberts, has visited Ebbw Vale with the Welsh Affairs Select Committee as part of a nationwide tour of Wales to discuss Brexit and its implications with local people and give people the chance to air their views and concerns. The committee's meeting was [covered on the BBC](#).

Next week the Chancellor will give his Autumn Statement. Plaid Cymru will be making the case for the UK Government to deliver on promises to plug any funding gap for Wales post-Brexit.

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

## **From the European Parliament**

by Jill Evans MEP & the Plaid Cymru Europe Team



### **Progress**

- Preparations on the EU side for the UK leaving have begun in earnest. The Commission's Chief Negotiator, Michel Barnier, has been meeting EU governments for first stage discussions. The word in Brussels is that the EU will want a draft UK exit deal by mid-2018.
- If the UK triggers Article 50 in March 2017, and a deal is agreed by mid to late 2018, it will leave six months for the 27 member states to ratify the deal and a date for exit can be set in 2019.
- There is likely to be a transitional arrangement in terms of trade until a new agreement is made between the UK and EU after the UK leaves.

## Cost

- There will be a financial cost to the UK and this is talked about on the EU side as being in the range of €40-60 billion. Michel Barnier will be taking into account liabilities, loans, project spending and commitments. We can expect a lot of debate on this!

## EU Citizenship

- Many constituents have been in touch expressing support for the idea of associate EU citizenship after the UK leaves. This would give individuals the right to free movement and to stand for election to the European Parliament in an EU member state. At present, EU citizenship is conferred only on those who live in EU member states. We need more discussion on EU citizenship and we need to ensure it is included in the exit deal. There are many Welsh Europeans and that must be recognised.

## European Parliament Committees

- The timescale is very short for the preliminary reports from European Parliament committees on the UK leaving. Guy Verhofstadt, the Parliament's Chief Negotiator, has set out four questions that the committees should address. They deal with current and future legislation. The aim is to have a comparable set of assessments of the impact of leaving by the end of January, in preparation for the resolution which parliament will vote on after Article 50 is triggered.
- These are only initial reports and will be followed up with much more detailed work.

## Summing up in the Senedd

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



The First Minister was scrutinised on Brexit by the National Assembly for Wales External Affairs Committee last week. He repeated the Labour line that they want ‘tariff-free access’ to the single market, while accepting that this may be impossible without accepting the free movement of people. The Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure, Ken Skates, has previously said the opposite. While Labour flip-flops, Plaid Cymru is clear. Maintaining single market membership when we leave the EU is the only way to protect our economy and the sustainability of our public services.

Last week, Steffan Lewis AM and Simon Thomas AM [called for a Welsh EU Continuity Bill](#), to enshrine all existing EU regulations into Welsh law. This will ensure that the standards we value, like environmental protections, food standards, and the rights we have come to take for granted as EU citizens, continue to apply to Wales after Brexit. It will keep Wales EU compliant, which will be essential for the 200,000 Welsh jobs that depend on trade with Europe. It will also stop the Conservatives’ EU Repeal Bill turning into a Westminster power-grab over already devolved matters. The political climate in Westminster is increasingly at odds with the Welsh people. We must ensure that whatever direction Theresa May goes in following Brexit, and a lurch to the right looks increasingly likely, Wales can take its own, distinct path.

Simon Thomas highlighted that this has particular significance for Welsh environmental law, much of which is underpinned by over 200 EU regulations. Decisions about Wales should be made in Wales. This is particularly true of laws relating to agriculture and our environment, where Wales has different needs that are not understood by a distant Westminster Government. The EU accounts for over 90% of Welsh agriculture exports, and remaining EU compliant will be essential to maintain that trade.

Following the High Court’s decision that Parliament alone can trigger Article 50 and kick start the process of the UK leaving the EU, [the Welsh Government has decided to intervene](#) in the appeal in the Supreme Court. Given the potential significance of the Supreme Court’s decision for the constitutional makeup of the UK, it is to be welcomed that Wales will have a voice in the proceedings. The Counsel General, Mick Antoniw AM, has indicated that he will be making representations about the role of Parliament in determining any changes to the devolution settlement, the implications of the UK Government’s proposed use of prerogative powers to bring about changes to constitutional arrangements, and the engagement of the devolved legislatures during the Brexit process. [On Friday November 18<sup>th</sup>, the Supreme Court judged that the governments of Wales and Scotland would indeed be allowed to intervene in the case.](#)