

# Situation after the Referendum and and the Brexit Challenge

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EVS465: Brexit: Politics, Policies and Processes

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# Brexit challenge: basic timeline

- **June 24, 2016:** The referendum result is announced, David Cameron **resigns** as British prime minister, the pound plunges to a **three-decade low**. European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, European Council President Donald Tusk, European Parliament President Martin Schulz and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte (representing the EU presidency), issue a joint statement on the outcome: “We regret this decision but respect it.”
- **June 28, 2016:** David Cameron’s last European Council summit.
- **June 30, 2016:** Home Secretary Theresa May formally declares her **candidacy for the Conservative Party leadership** “to unite the party and country.”

# Brexit challenge: basic timeline

- **July 13, 2016: May becomes prime minister (the UK will “forge a bold new positive role for ourselves in the world.”)**
  - Boris Johnson as foreign secretary, David Davis as Brexit secretary, Liam Fox as international trade secretary and Philip Hammond as chancellor of the exchequer.
- **July 27, 2016:** Frenchman Michel Barnier nominated by the European Commission to lead the EU’s Brexit negotiations.
- **December 7, 2016:** The House of Commons votes 461 to 89 in favor of May’s plan to trigger Brexit by the end of March 2017 (David Davis: it will be “the most important and complex negotiations in modern times.”)
- **December 15, 2016:** EU leaders meet in Brussels without the UK at an informal summit and adopt guidelines for negotiating procedures during the talks.

# Brexit challenge: basic timeline

- **24 January, 2017: Supreme Court rules in favour of campaigner Gina Miller**, that the Government must obtain the approval of Parliament before starting the Brexit process.
- **29 March, 2017: UK delivers formal notice of its intention** to leave the bloc under Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty, to European Council President Donald Tusk.
- **18 April, 2017: May calls a snap General Election.**
- **9 June, 2017: Election results show a hung Parliament** (Labour gains and the Tories lose their majority)
- **13 June, 2017: May secures a deal with the DUP to support her in Parliament**

# Brexit challenge: basic timeline

- **19 June, 2017:** Then-Brexit Secretary David Davis and Michel Barnier meet to begin formal Brexit negotiations
- **22 September, 2017:** May gives landmark Brexit speech in Florence, where she outlined the UK's proposals to the EU
- **8 December, 2017:** Joint report published outlining early details of the Withdrawal Agreement
- **19 March, 2018:** Details of the Transitional Period agreed in principle
- **6 July, 2018:** May hosts Cabinet at her country retreat **Chequers** to launch her Brexit plan (named the Chequers deal) → several ministerial resignations

# Brexit challenge: basic timeline

- **25 September, 2018:** Labour conference votes to consider option of a **second Brexit vote**
- **14 November, 2018:** Government publishes **585-page Draft Withdrawal Agreement** and Political Declaration
- **11 December, 2018:** ECJ rules that UK can unilaterally revoke Article 50, and thus reverse Brexit
- **10 December, 2018:** May delays a planned Meaningful Vote on the Brexit deal
- **12 December, 2018:** May survives a vote of no confidence from within her own party

# Brexit challenge: basic timeline

- **15 January, 2019:** Theresa May loses **Meaningful Vote** (432 MPs voted against it while 202 voted for it - a majority of 230, making it the biggest government defeat since 1924).
- **16 January, 2019:** Theresa May wins second no confidence vote
- **7 February, 2019:** EU rejects changes To Withdrawal Agreement
- **18 February, 2019:** MPs split from Labour Party to form "The Independent Group"
- **12 March, 2019:** MPs reject **Theresa May's Withdrawal Agreement** for the second time

# Brexit challenge: basic timeline

- **18 March, 2019:** Speaker John Bercow tells Theresa May **Meaningful Vote 3 must be different**
- **21 March, 2019:** EU accepts **Brexit delay to April 12** unless Theresa May's deal passes by MPs
- **29 March, 2019:** MPs reject Withdrawal Agreement in '**Meaningful Vote 2.5**'
- **10 April, 2019:** **Emergency EU summit (flexstation, flexible delay until 31 October)**



# Brexit challenge: basic timeline

- **23 May, 2019:** The UK holds **elections to the European Parliament** (Brexit Party led by Nigel Farage being the largest party winning 29 seats, anti-Brexit Liberal Democrats led by Vince Cable coming second with 16 seats)
- **24 May, 2019 :** **Theresa May announces that she will resign as Conservative Party leader,** effective 7 June,
- **24 July, 2019:** **Boris Johnson accepts the Queen's invitation to form a government and becomes Prime Minister of the United Kingdom,** the third since the referendum.
- **28 August, 2019 :** Boris Johnson announces his intention to **prorogue Parliament in September**
- **24 September, 2019:** The Supreme Court of rules unanimously that Boris Johnson's decision to advise the Queen to prorogue parliament was unlawful
- **25 September, 2019:** Parliament is recalled.
- ....BJ unable to get it through the parliament

# Brexit challenge: basic timeline

- **28 October, 2019:** European Council agrees to extend the Brexit deadline until 31 January 2020—the third extension
- **29 October, 2019:** Government introduces the Early Parliamentary General Election Act 2019:
- **12 December, 2019:** General election held in which the Conservative Party gain an 80-seat majority in parliament.
- **20 December, 2020:** The Withdrawal Agreement passed its second reading in the House of Commons in a 358–234 vote.
- **22 January, 2020:** the Withdrawal Agreement Bill proposed by Prime Minister Boris Johnson passed the UK parliament
- **23 January, 2020:** the European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020 received royal assent.
- **31 January, 2020:** At 11 p.m. GMT the United Kingdom withdrew from the European Union, at the deadline set for its departure by the Article 50 extension agreed between the UK and the EU in October 2019.



International New York Times

# Article 50

# ARTICLE 50



# The Lisbon Treaty



1. Any Member State may decide to withdraw from the Union in accordance with its own constitutional requirements.

2. A Member State which decides to withdraw shall notify the European Council of its intention. In the light of the guidelines provided by the European Council, the Union shall negotiate and conclude an agreement with that State, setting out the arrangements for its withdrawal, taking account of the framework for its future relationship with the Union. That agreement shall be negotiated in accordance with Article 218(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. It shall be concluded on behalf of the Union by the Council, acting by a qualified majority, after obtaining the consent of the European Parliament.

3. The Treaties shall cease to apply to the State in question from the date of entry into force of the withdrawal agreement or, failing that, two years after the notification referred to in paragraph 2, unless the European Council, in agreement with the Member State concerned, unanimously decides to extend this period.

4. For the purposes of paragraphs 2 and 3, the member of the European Council or of the Council representing the withdrawing Member State shall not participate in the discussions of the European Council or Council or in decisions concerning it.

A qualified majority shall be defined in accordance with Article 238(3)(b) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

5. If a State which has withdrawn from the Union asks to rejoin, its request shall be subject to the procedure referred to in Article 49.



# Defining Brexit narrative

- UK referendum triggered a **series of processes in the UK** (not just about handling the exit but also about defining what sort of country the UK wants to be).
- British politics defined by a fight to **define the Brexit narrative**
- Why has the process of defining Brexit narrative been so difficult?
  - Theresa May struggling to find unity within her govt over what Brexit should mean.
- Churchill: **history is written by the victors**. Is it really so in the case of Brexit?

# Defining Brexit narrative

- **'Brexit means Brexit' motto** sounds self-explanatory but is meaningless unless Brexit itself is defined.



# Defining Brexit narrative

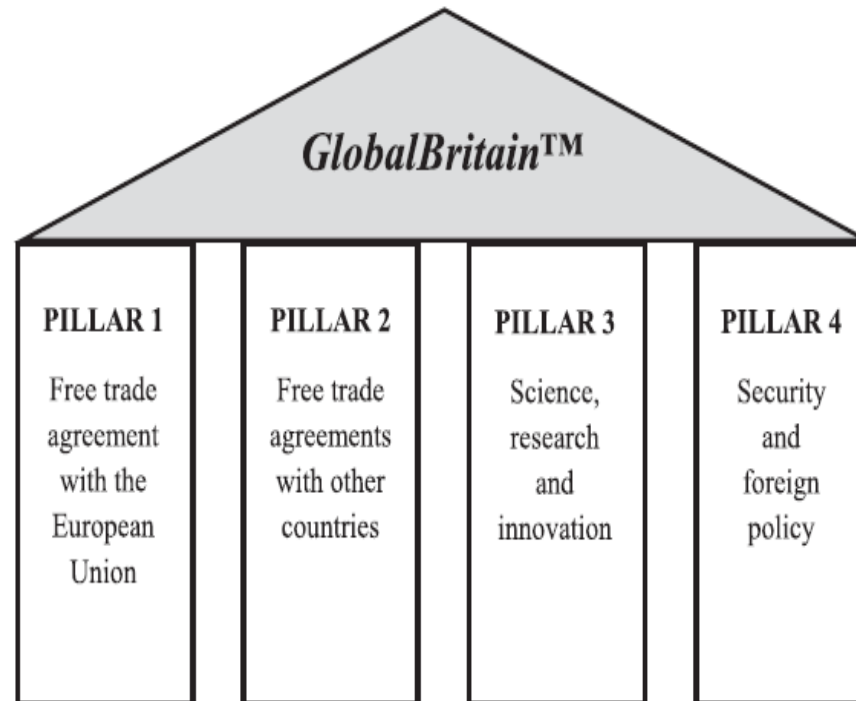
- TM's Brexit narrative defined in “**big speeches on Brexit**” (Lancaster; Florence etc.)
  - Three most important aims:
    - Ending immigration from elsewhere in the EU
    - Ending the jurisdiction of the CJEU
    - Opting for free trade agreements with European markets
- Her Brexit narratives **challenged from many sides.**





# Defining Brexit narrative

## □ Global Britain narrative



# HM Government and Brexit

- Brexit = for the government, it is an **unprecedented peacetime challenge in terms of political unity, administration and delivery**

## Unity/collective responsibility

- TM's **premiership** struggled bc of **Conservative divisions over Europe** (something many of her predecessors faced)
- In appointing her first cabinet she tried to bring in some balance into this by **appointing leading pro-Leave campaigners**
- TM's leadership overshadowed by **doubts from the very beginning**
  - She won the leadership race without a vote.
- Her leadership has been a **sore point for many** – not least bc of the **centralisation of decision making in Downing Street 10** around her two closest advisors: Nick Timothy and Fiona Hill.

# HM Government and Brexit

- Her decision to **call snap elections** (in part on the advice of some of her advisors) caught many in her cabinet by surprise.
  - Her weak campaigning skills and dire campaign – left her even more vulnerable post-election.

# HM Government and Brexit

## The administrative challenge

- Brexit = **the biggest set of administrative, legal, negotiating and constitutional task since 1945**
- Organising British govt for Brexit = a formidable task: i.a. because new departments had to be established:
  - Department for Exiting the EU (DexEU)
  - Department for International Trade
  
  - Some departments busier than others
- Enormous **stretch of UK-EU links**

# HM Government and Brexit

## The search for strategy

- The **inability** of British decision makers to know what they want and whether they can get it.
- **No clear ends and confused ways** (no surprise the UK has struggled to prepare)
- TM triggered Article 50 on 29 March 2017: by choosing this time she made time an ally of the EU
- Quick realization that the UK lacked the **ways and means to secure a 'quick victory'**.
- Repeated failures to analyse and understand the position of the rest of the EU

**Thank you for your attention!**