

Macro Note

Brexit: Negotiations At Tipping Point As Theresa May Takes Agreement To Parliament

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Following a five-hour evening meeting on Wednesday (14 November), UK Prime Minister Theresa May secured her cabinet's backing for a draft withdrawal agreement between the UK and the EU. May was speaking after what she said was a "long, detailed and impassioned debate" in a five-hour cabinet meeting.

What's Been Agreed?

The [585-page draft withdrawal agreement](#) has now been published, alongside a shorter statement setting out what the UK and EU's future relations will look like. It includes a commitment to protect the rights of EU nationals in the UK and Britons living in the EU to continue living, working and studying. There is also a planned 21-month transition period after the UK leaves the EU in March 2019, and a "financial settlement" from the UK, thought to be between GBP35bn and GBP39bn. The most contentious part of the negotiations is a "backstop", which aims to guarantee that physical checks will not be reintroduced at the border with the Irish Republic, in the event this is not settled by a UK-EU trade deal.

Crucial Days Ahead

The coming days/weeks will be crucial as the May-led government will now try to whip the votes in parliament to accept the deal. **May is due to give a statement to the House of Commons on Thursday (15 November) morning.**

As of 3.30pm SGT (15 November), **European Commission President Donald Tusk has confirmed that the EU summit will be held on 25 November to discuss the deal.**

The threat of resignations remains As of 4pm SGT (15 November), **Shailesh Vara has resigned as Northern Ireland Minister**, saying he cannot support Theresa May's Brexit agreement.

Please refer to **The Brexit Path** in our publication dated 14 November titled [Brexit: UK And EU Agree On Text Of Draft Withdrawal Agreement](#).

Can May Win A Commons Majority

Current State Of The Parties		
Conservative	315	There is division within the Conservative party, with the European Research Group, led by Jacob Rees-Mogg, claiming it has 80 MPs ready to vote against what it sees as May's capitulation to Brussels.
Democratic Unionist Party	10	The DUP's stance on the Brexit deal is uncertain.
Labour	257	May needs to extend an olive branch to Labour, which also has its own divisions. The question is how many of Jeremy Corbyn's MPs are prepared to defy him and support the PM
Scottish National Party	35	The SNP supports remaining in the EU and are likely to vote against it.
Liberal Democrat	12	The Liberal Democrats, Greens and Plaid Cymru have said they are opposed to a deal so this is likely to add 17 to the NO vote
Plaid Cymru	4	
Green Party	1	
Independent	8	
Sinn Féin	7	The Speaker and his 3 Deputies don't vote. The 7 members of Sinn Fein don't take their seats.
Speaker	1	
TOTAL NUMBER OF SEATS	650	

Source: <https://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/current-state-of-the-parties/>

- As shown in the table above, there are 650 MPs. For the Commons vote on a Brexit deal, we subtract the Speaker and his 3 Deputies, who do not vote, and 7 Sinn Fein MPs, who have not taken their seats. That leaves 639 MPs. **Hence, the magic number is 320** – more than half of 639.
- Since the 2017 general election, the Conservative Party has 315 seats, which leaves them short of a working majority alone. This is why they entered into a "confidence and supply" deal with the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), which has 10 MPs who can take her government over the line. **But she currently faces open revolt from both the DUP and Brexiteer and Remain wings of her party.**
- The Parliament website lists **93 MPs who are ministers** and would therefore be bound to support Theresa May's Brexit plans owing to collective responsibility. There are others, such as loyalists to May and the government, who are expected to vote in favour of the deal, along with Brexiteer MPs who may have been spooked by the PM's message that it was this deal, no deal or no Brexit.
- But this still means May have to find up to 100 votes from elsewhere.

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