



PM May Denied Opportunity to Negotiate Directly with EU 27 at Salzburg Summit

15 August 2018

Media reports have suggested that Theresa May will not be given the opportunity to conduct face-to-face EU exit negotiations at a September EU 28 meeting in Salzburg, hosted by the Austrian rotating presidency. EU diplomatic sources have re-iterated that all EU exit negotiations will be led by Michel Barnier, in an attempt to block May from circumventing Barnier and appealing to national leaders in a bid to break the current negotiation deadlock.

The Salzburg summit is a precursor to an important quarterly Council meeting in Brussels in October, anticipated as the earliest possible date that a UK exit deal could be agreed upon. However, despite Brexit Secretary Dominic Raab expecting to "...clear away all obstacles that lie in our path to a strong deal in October" commentators broadly agree that a deal will not realistically be finalised before December – narrowing the time available for the deal ratification process prior to UK exit in March 2019.



Barnier: UK's EU Exit a 'lose-lose' Situation

06 July 2018

The Commission's chief Brexit negotiator, Michel Barnier, has called for de-

escalation of the “drama” surrounding the ongoing negotiations. Barnier singled out the Northern Ireland/Ireland ‘backstop’ proposals – which are particularly contentious to both negotiation teams – for such a reset, stating that “...ultimately, these are only technical controls on goods, no more, no less...”, making the point that veterinary and phytosanitary checks already took place across the border.

Barnier made his comments as Prime Minister Theresa May seeks to coalesce her disunited cabinet around her Chequers blueprint, a definitive agreement on which could be reached by October to avoid the likelihood of a ‘no-deal’ scenario. EU officials, however, have predicted that a conclusive settlement is unlikely before the end of 2018, raising the prospect of the UK requesting an extended negotiating period or the UK leaving the bloc without a deal – in Barnier’s estimation a ‘lose-lose’ situation.



UK Government

First Minister Convenes Summit on EU Exit and the Scottish Seafood Sector

16 August 2018

Scotland’s first Minister Nicola Sturgeon held a roundtable discussion with representatives from across the Scottish sea food sector, aiming to explore the impact of EU exit on the sector’s market access, trade and jobs. The meeting came amid press reports that EU countries constitute 7/10 of Scotland’s top overseas export destinations, leading Rural Economy Secretary Fergus Ewing to warn “...the industry needs an assurance that it can continue to easily access EU markets”. Ewing also called for the UK government to provide clarity on the future of the sector, given the possibility for business disruption owing to potential trade barriers, customs-induced delays and migrant worker shortages brought about by a ‘no deal’ EU exit.

Expat Group Launch Legal Challenge to ‘nullify referendum vote’

15 August 2018

A group of British expatriate residents in Spain, France and Italy have launched a legal challenge to the 2016 UK European Union referendum result. The bid, which will be heard by the UK’s High Court, centres on the alleged unlawful actions perpetrated by ‘leave’ campaigners, and arises after two exit-advocating referendum campaign groups – Vote Leave and Leave.EU – were fined £61,000 and £70,000 respectively by the Electoral Commission for breaching electoral laws.

Lawyers representing the UK in EU Challenge Group will argue that the Prime Minister's decision to trigger Article 50 of TEU was based on 'factual error' resulting from the opprobrious conduct of 'leave' campaign group, thereby invalidating the referendum result. UK in EU Challenge Group have anticipated that winning the case will enable a judicial review to be undertaken, which in their opinion has the potential to lead to the 'leave' referendum vote to be declared unsafe.

UK Ministers to Press Pharmaceuticals Companies to Stockpile Drugs as 'no deal' Contingency Plan

07 August 2018

According to industry journal Health Service UK, Ministers from the Department of Health and Social Care will encourage the pharmaceuticals industry to increase their supply of key medical provisions, to guard against a 'no deal' UK exit from the EU causing supply chain disruption. The government will reportedly offer to fund increased specialised warehousing capacity in order that some six weeks' supply is available to mitigate shortages for reliant patients should a 'no deal' scenario prevail resulting in shipment delays.



Dates for the diary



- 20 August 2018: **European Parliament returns from recess to prepare for Strasbourg Plenary session (10-13 September)**
- 30-31 August 2018: **Informal meeting of EU Foreign Affairs Ministers, hosted by the Austrian Presidency**
- 5 September 2018: House of Commons returns from summer recess
- 12 September 2018: **DEFRA consultation on 'Sustainable Fisheries for Future Generations' White paper closes**



Further information



- [EU exit talks reconvene as Latvian minister estimates 50% chance of 'no deal'](#)
- [Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt: Commission must "change approach"](#)

- Remain support among Scots increases since 2016 referendum according to poll

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