

# Speech: PM statement in the House of Commons: 12 March 2019

Prime Minister Theresa May made a statement on Brexit in the House of Commons.

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On a point of order, Mr Speaker,

I profoundly regret the decision that this House has taken tonight.

I continue to believe that by far the best outcome is that the UK leaves the EU in an orderly fashion with a deal, and that the deal we have negotiated is the best and indeed the only deal available.

Mr Speaker, I would like to set out briefly how the Government means to proceed.

Two weeks ago, I made a series of commitments from this despatch box regarding the steps we would take in the event that this House rejected the deal on offer. I stand by those commitments in full.

Therefore, tonight we will table a motion for debate tomorrow to test whether the House supports leaving the European Union without a deal on 29 March.

The Leader of the House will shortly make an emergency business statement confirming the change to tomorrow's business.

This is an issue of grave importance for the future of our country. Just like the referendum, there are strongly held and equally legitimate views on both sides.

For that reason, I can confirm that this will be a free vote on this side of the House.

I have personally struggled with this choice as I am sure many other Honourable Members will. I am passionate about delivering the result of the referendum. But I equally passionately believe that the best way to do that is to leave in an orderly way with a deal and I still believe there is a majority in the House for that course of action. And I am conscious also of my duties as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of the potential damage to the Union that leaving

without a deal could do when one part of our country is without devolved governance.

I can therefore confirm that the motion will read:

That this House declines to approve leaving the European Union without a Withdrawal Agreement and a Framework on the Future Relationship on 29 March 2019; and notes that leaving without a deal remains the default in UK and EU law unless this House and the EU ratify an agreement.

I will return to the House to open the debate tomorrow and to take interventions from Honourable Members. And to ensure the House is fully informed in making this historic decision, the Government will tomorrow publish information on essential policies which would need to be put in place if we were to leave without a deal. These will cover our approach to tariffs and the Northern Ireland border, among other matters.

If the House votes to leave without a deal on 29 March, it will be the policy of the Government to implement that decision.

If the House declines to approve leaving without a deal on 29 March, the Government will, following that vote, bring forward a motion on Thursday on whether Parliament wants to seek an extension to Article 50.

If the House votes for an extension, the Government will seek to agree that extension with the EU and bring forward the necessary legislation to change the exit date commensurate with that extension.

But let me be clear. Voting against leaving without a deal and for an extension does not solve the problems we face. The EU will want to know what use we mean to make of such an extension.

This House will have to answer that question. Does it wish to revoke Article 50? Does it want to hold a second referendum? Or does it want to leave with a deal but not this deal?

These are unenviable choices, but thanks to the decision the House has made this evening they must now be faced.

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## [Press release: UK exports grow faster than top competitors](#)

News statistics reveal that UK goods exports grew at the second fastest rate of the top five major economies between 2017 and 2018.

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## Press release: UK exports grow faster than top competitors

UK exports continue to increase despite a challenging global outlook, new figures from the ONS reveal. On the whole British exports grew by 2.7% to £636bn.

International trade statistics for 2018 show that the UK is the second fastest growing goods exporter among the top five economies, just behind China. The latest ONS statistics show that UK good exports grew by 3.1% to £10.6bn in the year to January 2019.

Last year was challenging for the global trading environment which felt the impact of trade tensions between the USA and China and a significant slowing of growth in the Chinese economy which has led to reduced imports. The latter has had a significant impact on the Eurozone which is now predicted to grow by 1.6% for 2019.

**The International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP said:**

UK exports continuing to grow underlines the fundamental strength of the British economy despite the uncertain global economic outlook. Goods exports in particular performed well, rising faster than all of the top five largest economies except China in 2018 – yet further evidence of the massive demand for British products.

We are seeing many of our trading partners, particularly in the Eurozone, struggle to cope with external economic pressures, so maintaining an upward trend in this climate reinforces that message that Britain is open for business.

My international economic department is focused on growing exports and boosting the UK economy through our Export Strategy, providing stability as we leave the European Union and putting the UK at the heart of the world's fastest growing markets through an independent trade policy. These priorities are key to Britain's economic future.

### **Notes to Editors**

- Office for National Statistics: UK Trade, January 2019. Data are on a balance of payments basis.

- ITC Trademap, export of goods data are on a physical movement basis. Top 5 economies are the US, China, Japan, Germany and the UK (IMF, nominal GDP 2018).
  - IMF forecasts are from the January 2019 update outlook, unless otherwise specified and is available to view online [here](#).
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## News story: Celebrating 30 years of the World Wide Web

The invention of the World Wide Web marks its 30th anniversary today, with Sir Tim Berners-Lee, its creator, and leading figures in Britain's technology sector coming together to celebrate at Downing Street.

Sir Tim, a renowned British computer scientist, first unveiled his vision for what would become the web in 1989 as a way to share information for free and across the world. It forms the basis of the internet we know today.

At Downing Street, Sir Tim was joined by the Digital Secretary Jeremy Wright, co-founding director of the World Wide Web Foundation Rosemary Leith, and representatives from companies such as Google, Wikipedia and Monzo, who have also been at the forefront of changing the way people consume information and purchase online today.

Digital Secretary Jeremy Wright said:

It was great to meet Sir Tim Berners-Lee today and mark 30 years since his invention of the World Wide Web. It remains one of the finest examples of British technological ingenuity.

We are at a pivotal moment in the history of the internet and I am determined to make sure it can be a force for good while supporting the next generation of tech innovators.

From entrepreneurs and innovators to bigger organisations, the digital technology sector is one of the UK's fastest-growing industries, worth £116.5 billion to the economy, boosting productivity and employing more than 2.1 million people.