

Opposition parties meet Michel Barnier



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Leading figures from opposition parties will meet Michel Barnier in Brussels today [Thursday] to say the UK must remain within the Single Market and the Customs Union.

The campaign to resolve Brexit through a People's Vote will also be discussed. The Green Party, Liberal Democrats, the SNP and Plaid Cymru have all said they would support the public having a say on the outcome of the Brexit negotiations in a vote in the House of Commons.

Last weekend saw hundreds of thousands of people march in London for the People's Vote and polling shows the option is increasingly the preferred choice across the UK.

The group will open a cross-party line of communication to the European Commission, so that officials are aware of Parliamentary progress made on securing the People's Vote, while continuing to make the case for the UK to stay within the Single Market and the Customs Union.

Those attending the meeting with Barnier will be: Molly Scott Cato, Green Party MEP for the South West of England and Gibraltar, Vince Cable, Leader of the Liberal Democrats, Ian Blackford, Westminster Leader of the SNP and Liz Saville Roberts, Westminster Leader of Plaid Cymru.

Molly Scott Cato said:

"There is now Parliamentary paralysis on Brexit. The Chequers plan is dead, but neither is there support for alternative versions of Brexit being driven by a Brexit syndicate of far-right think tanks.

"It is clear the only way out of this deadlock is to hand the process back to the people. Last weekend 700,000 people marched in support of the People's Vote; more than the combined membership of the Tories and Labour. The momentum behind this idea can no longer be ignored; it now looks unstoppable."

Vince Cable said:

“Our ‘unholy alliance’ has provided a sensible counterpoint to the hard-line Brexiteers who have pushed the Conservatives and Labour’s frontbench into senseless and fudged positions. It is vital that Michel Barnier and the European Commission know that there is another view in Parliament, one that has cross-party support and that can get the EU and the UK out of this mess.

“I will also tell Michel Barnier that there are also brave Conservative and Labour rebels involved in leading this fight to give the people a final say. As a result, there is now tremendous Parliamentary and public pressure to hold that vote.”

Liz Saville Roberts said:

“Plaid Cymru will not stand by and allow the British Government, along with their collaborators in the Labour party, to drag Wales out of the Single Market and Customs Union. Negotiations between the Prime Minister and Michel Barnier have reached another embarrassing stalemate. The only realistic option available to us is to extend Article 50 and take the Withdrawal Agreement to a People’s Vote.

“Leaving the key European economic frameworks will wipe £5 billion off the Welsh economy. In making the case for a People’s Vote, I will impress upon the Chief EU Negotiator the full gravity of the impact of Brexit on Wales. The British Government has never had Wales’s best interest at heart.”

Ian Blackford said:

“While the UK Government clearly still has no plan to break the Brexit impasse, and Labour fail to act as an effective opposition, it has been left to the ‘unofficial opposition’ to speak up for a deal that would protect jobs and livelihoods. I am grateful to Mr Barnier for meeting with us.

“Any Brexit deal that falls short of staying in the Single Market and the Customs Union will not get through Parliament. It’s time for Theresa May to drop the jargon, quit playing games and act to protect our economic future.”

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