

THE BBC and BREXIT

Analysis of the Today Programme's
coverage of the Triggering of Article 50

29 March – 4 April 2017

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SUMMARY:

In the week of the filing of the UK's Article 50 letter (March 29 – April 4, 2017), BBC Radio 4's Today programme broadcast six editions which contained almost five hours of material about the letter and its aftermath. This was almost half of the available feature airtime.

The programme coverage was strongly biased against Brexit and made special efforts to illustrate the extent to which leaving the EU could have catastrophic consequences for the UK. There was, by contrast, only minimal effort to examine the potential benefits.

A measure of this overwhelming negativity was that only **eight** (6.5%) of the 124 speakers who appeared over the six editions were given the space to make substantive arguments that the future for the UK outside the EU would yield significant benefits.

The overall gloom was buttressed by the programme's editorial approach. Presenters and correspondents, for example, pushed at every opportunity to illustrate potential (and existing) problems. At the same time, they were strongly adversarial towards Brexit supporters, but much less so to guests who advocated that the UK was, in effect, now staring down the barrel of a loaded gun.

Problems that were deliberately pushed to the forefront included the wealth of City of London being under threat, the creation of a 'legislative soup', the EU not agreeing with the UK's preferred path of negotiations, and the possibility the of exit talks extending up to 10 years.

BBC 'fact-checking', though presented as objective, was anything but. Chris Morris, the 'fact checker' was most focused on choosing topics that showed Brexit in a negative light, and failed at even the elementary level of pointing out that 'EU money' was actually provided UK taxpayers.

A series of reports from Sunderland, purportedly to explore both Leave and Remain perspectives, focused most on this negative fact checking. It also gave most prominence in its framework to the possibility of Nissan leaving the area and negative business developments since Brexit and the possibility of arts funding drying up. Local voices supporting Brexit were included, but in vox pops with only soundbite points.

Special effort was made throughout to show that the City of London was under pressure as a result of Brexit. A story that Lloyd's of London were establishing a Brussels 'headquarters' was elevated to major significance in the bulletins, and across several mentions in Business News slots, even though the chief executive admitted that 'only 'tens' of jobs were involved.

By contrast to this blanket negativity, a News-watch report from 2002 covering the introduction of euro notes and coins across the EU was strongly positive about the prospects for the new currency and strained editorial sinews and resources to show that its advent had been joyfully received in the relevant EU countries.

The BBC strongly defended its post-Brexit coverage during the survey period (through a high profile article in *Radio Times* by Today presenter Nick Robinson) as being in accord with its own rules of 'due impartiality'. The evidence of this survey is that its assessment methods are seriously skewed against Brexit and in favour of the EU.

SECTION ONE – MONITORING STATISTICS

1.1 Background

In the referendum of June 23 2016, the UK voted to leave the European Union by a majority of 52% to 48%. The formal process for Britain's withdrawal is outlined in Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty, which specifies that any member state wishing to leave the EU must notify the European Council of its intention, and states that an agreement will be negotiated within a two-year period. On March 28 2017, Prime Minister Theresa May formally signed a letter invoking Article 50, and Sir Tim Barrow, Britain's ambassador to the EU, delivered this to European Council President, Donald Tusk at lunchtime March 29.

On April 18, during the compiling of this report, the fall-out from the Leave vote took an unexpected turn when Prime Minister Theresa May announced the UK's first snap election since 1974. Her justification was to win a mandate to deal with Brexit. . Calling for 'a deep and special partnership between a strong and successful European Union and a United Kingdom that is free to chart its own way in the world', she said that 'at this moment of enormous national significance there should be unity here in Westminster, but instead there is division. The country is coming together, but Westminster is not.'¹

1.2 News-watch and the Today Programme

Between 1999 and the referendum in 2016, News-watch tracked and analysed on an academic basis more than 7,000 hours of BBC news and current affairs programming. This involved thousands of pages of programme logs and more than 9,000 full transcripts of EU-related items containing 4.5 million words. During the referendum campaign itself, new technologies allowed the recording and retrieval of every BBC radio and television programme, and a range of individual programmes and strands were analysed in detail, in both formal reports and for a daily referendum blog on the News-watch website.² Overall over the 18 years, this adds up to the largest sustained monitoring of the BBC ever undertaken.

¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-39630009>

² <http://news-watch.co.uk/?s=referendum>

The Today programme has been a cornerstone of News-watch's investigations since 1999. This is because it is BBC Radio 4's self-declared flagship news and current affairs programme, broadcasting for three hours each weekday morning, and for two hours each Saturday. In February 2017, Bob Shennan, Director of BBC Radio and Music, announcing record listening figures of 7.45 million per week, said³:

In an era of fake news, echo chambers and significant shifts in global politics, the role of Radio 4's Today as the trusted guide to the world around us is more important than ever. As Today celebrates its 60th anniversary this year, Radio 4 listeners continue to wake up to world-class journalism which scrutinises the headlines, holds those in power to account and enlightens them with stories that shape our society.

News-watch has a unique and deep understanding of Today. In the 13 years leading up to the referendum, monitoring of the programme has encompassed 309 full weeks (5,253 hours), including consecutive editions of the programme for 45 weeks between September 2002 and June 2003; more than twenty projects of between 6 and 15 weeks in length, and, most recently, of the programme's Business News slots from the morning the referendum result was announced on June 24 until December 2016.⁴ Key findings have included:

- There has been massive bias by omission with important EU themes and issues being afforded low priority. Correspondents openly referring to EU politics as 'boring' on air.
- Systematic, long-term inequalities in the numbers of pro-EU and 'Eurosceptic' guest voices at a ratio of 4:3, coupled with an apparent failure to appreciate that many of these 'sceptical' voices were, fundamentally, Remain supporters.
- The withdrawal case being ignored or presented narrowly, often through the prism of divisions within the Conservative party or perceived problems with UKIP, and painted as 'extreme', with only 3.4% of the 5037 guest speakers on EU issues being identifiable supporters of Brexit on the monitored editions of Today between September 2002 and July 2015.
- Clear differences in tone and treatment of those speaking unfavourably about the EU compared to their pro-EU counterparts, including a higher rate of interruptions and the recurrent use of negative language and stereotypes.

³ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2017/rajar-q4-2016>

⁴ <http://news-watch.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/News-watch-Business-News-Survey-.pdf>

1.3 Nick Robinson's Radio Times Article

On the final day of this latest survey, 4 April 2017, Today presenter Nick Robinson penned an article for the *Radio Times* about the BBC's approach editorial approach to political balance. He began with what appeared to be direct criticism of the statistical approach to monitoring deployed by News-watch:

Welcome to another week of moaning about the BBC. "Stop being so pessimistic. Stop talking the country down. Stop ignoring the will of the people." A week in which the stopwatches and calculators are out, as first one side, then the other, time our interviews and add up the number of Remainers and Leavers and so-called optimists and pessimists we invite on air.

The background was that News-watch had recently published its survey into six months of Today's Business News coverage, which found that 52.5% of guests had been negative about the impact of the Brexit vote, compared to just 16.3% who offered a positive view. In addition, also in March 2017, over 70 MPs from four parties, coordinated by Julian Knight MP, signed a letter to BBC Director General Lord Hall accusing the Corporation – in its coverage of the Brexit debate – of being 'unable to break out of pre-referendum pessimism and accept new facts', and noted that 'forecasts of immediate economic harm were at best misplaced'.

Mr Robinson disparaged quantitative analysis, but such methodology is also deployed by university media departments who have been commissioned to supply 'objective' content analysis for the BBC Trust's 'impartiality reviews'⁵. Since the referendum, senior BBC staff have claimed that the BBC has provided balanced coverage, presumably based on similar internal measurement, though how they arrive at their judgments is not made clear.

Mr Robinson's *Radio Times* argument was also misleadingly reductive: his bald claim that 'moaners' are using 'stopwatches and calculators' ignores the textual and thematic analysis undertaken by News-watch alongside the more straightforward headcounts. Mr Robinson provided an example:

If company 'A' announces that it will invest more in the UK and create more jobs, it's not our duty to search for a company that says it will invest less, just to balance the news.

⁵ See, for example content analyses undertaken by Loughborough University for the BBC Trust Impartiality Review into coverage of the Middle East; research by Cardiff to investigate the BBC's coverage of the Four Nations of the UK, and also as part of the Prebble Report; Leeds University's inquiry into the BBC's Business Coverage. All available from:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/our_work/editorial_standards/impartiality.html

His argument at first glance *seems* logical. But Mr Robinson chose a singular news ‘event’,⁶ when, in reality, Today is not simply an extended news bulletin. It contains multi-layered treatments of news stories through interview, discussion and debate, and the proportions of space afforded to these various and varied perspectives – whatever the fundamental root of a story – do matter enormously in terms of political and general balance. For example, in the News-watch post-referendum Business News survey, it was found that an overwhelming majority of guests stuck to their pre-referendum predications of the ‘economic shock’ a Leave vote would cause, even when presented with growing evidence to the contrary.⁷

Mr Robinson then referred directly to the Julian Knight letter, and attempted to shift the blame for any numerical imbalance in the BBC’s coverage onto the reluctance of prominent Leave campaigners to appear on Today:

In the week that Article 50 was triggered, ardent Leavers complained that too many Remainers were being heard on the BBC. What they failed to acknowledge is that many of their most prominent leaders – Messrs Johnson, Fox and Gove – seem remarkably reluctant to accept invitations to be interviewed. In the nine months since the referendum, not one of them has agreed to appear on Radio 4’s Today programme.

This was a weak defence. It is the job of journalists to find alternative ways of expressing different perspectives when guests are reluctant to appear. And in any case direct input from politicians is only one component of the BBC’s post-Brexit bias. In the News-watch Business News survey, for example, in the six months after the referendum result, politicians were only five of the 336 programme guests.⁸

Also relevant in this context are very recent observations about Today’s interview processes by two regular Today programme guests. John Longworth, former Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce, noted in a blog article published 26 March 2017:

When waiting to participate on the BBC Radio 4 Today Programme, I was asked why I thought there was a downward pressure on wages while the economy was growing. Amongst other things I said that the unlimited supply of cheap labour from the EU was beginning to bear down

⁶ Mr Robinson also, pointedly, offered as his example a reversal of the *actual* trend identified by News-watch, which showed positive economic news had been heavily downplayed in the post-referendum period

⁷ Including resilience in consumer spending, positive financial results from major companies and better-than-expected GDP figures.

⁸ In the six month survey of Business News undertaken between 24 June and 22 December 2016, only 1.5% of interviewees speaking about Brexit were UK politicians (5 speakers from 339 total)

on wages. The interviewer declared that in view of that he wasn't going to ask me the question on air! It wasn't what he wanted to hear.⁹

Prominent Leave advocate John Redwood MP made a similar point in an online article published on 20 April 2017. He said that he had been telephoned and asked onto the Today programme to answer how the election would change the UK's ability to negotiate a good new relationship with the EU. He claimed that he was asked a series of questions 'designed to get me to disagree with the UK negotiating position and the Prime Minister', and that he had to explain during this conversation that the thesis being put to him – that Leave supporting MPs were in disagreement with Theresa May and were 'rebels' – was untrue. Mr Redwood said the researcher had promised to 'get back to him' with an invitation but, 'she did not of course bother, as it was clear I was unwilling to feed their view of what the news should be.'¹⁰

Mr Robinson's argument is also arguably hypocritical, given the BBC's own (corporate) unwillingness to be questioned about the statistical claims on air. On the morning the Julian Knight letter was delivered, 21 March 2017, Today presenter Sarah Montague, said in an introduction, 'Well, we did ask somebody from the BBC to . . . come forward, come on the programme and be interviewed, they didn't want to put anybody forward', and instead discussed the matter with the BBC's media correspondent.

But by far the most concerning aspect of Mr Robinson's article was his assertion:

The referendum is over. The duty we broadcasters had to "broadly balance" the views of the two sides is at an end. Why? Because there are no longer two sides, two campaigns, two rival sets of spokespeople reading out those focus-grouped slogans.

News-watch has established that, despite the strict referendum guidelines, many elements of coverage during the campaign were not balanced.¹¹ But Mr Robinson's apparent abandoning of the commitment to future balance is deeply troubling. There are fundamental debates raging concerning the shape and nature of Brexit, former Remainers continue to argue for the 'softest' possible Brexit, single market access, maintaining the free movement of people, and, in some quarters, a second

⁹ <http://brexitcentral.com/bbc-culture-brexite-negativity/>

¹⁰ <http://commentcentral.co.uk/bbc-consumed-with-own-its-agenda/>

¹¹ See, for example News-watch's survey of Radio 1's *Newsbeat* during the ten-week referendum campaign, where audiences were 1.5 times more likely to hear a voice supporting Remain than Leave, and Remain supporting politicians were given twice as much airtime as their counterparts from the Leave campaign. Other, as yet unpublished, statistics gathered during the referendum indicate that although numerical headcount balance was achieved between Leave and Remain on BBC1's *News at Ten* there were significantly more political, economic and academic contributors speaking for Remain, and balance was only achieved by 'ordinary people' and vox pop interviewees speaking for Leave, suggesting an imbalance in the number of 'figures of authority' speaking for each side.

referendum, and there are those who argue precisely the opposite. In this context, suggesting that there is no problem in giving more space to one side over the other amounts to the abandonment of the need for impartiality on a matter of huge public importance . Mr Robinson continued:

The BBC has a commitment to what's called "due impartiality". Translated, that means we aim to get as close to the truth as we can each day – to weigh arguments, to assess the evidence, to ask difficult questions – and then be ready to listen and learn and correct any errors we may make.

News-watch's long-term monitoring, together with the findings of this current week-long survey, indicate that 'due impartiality' serves mainly to ensure the BBC is impervious to complaints based on longitudinal analysis of programme content. Further, the Corporation itself decides what is 'due' in terms of balance according to its own internal rules.

In addition, despite what Mr Robinson claims, the BBC has rarely been receptive to 'listening and learning'. This lack of responsiveness was noted as far back as The Wilson Report in 2005, which criticised the BBC's approach by declaring:

'There is no evidence of any systematic monitoring to ensure that all shades of significant opinion are fairly represented and there is a resistance to accepting external evidence.'¹²

News-watch's recent Business News survey was crudely dismissed by the BBC press office as 'a flawed analysis' from 'a group with a slanted perspective'¹³, in so little time that it is difficult to believe that the research had been considered in any detail – let alone the findings properly scrutinised against the material that had been broadcast.

Mr Robinson subsequently expanded on his *Radio Times* points in a discussion with journalist Charles Moore, published in The Spectator.¹⁴ Mr Robinson suggested that balanced reporting would somehow lead to tedious coverage of the Brexit negotiation process:

But my worry is that we'll kill this interesting period of political debate by some sort of desperate, banal tedium of broadcasting being, 'And now campaign A will be countered by campaign B. Campaign A will say X and campaign B will say not X.' If we do that for two years, then we will all want to jump into the Channel.

¹² http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/our_work/govs/independentpanelreport.pdf p.5

¹³ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/03/26/bbc-radio-4s-today-programme-business-slot-has-three-times-remainers/>

¹⁴ <https://www.spectator.co.uk/2017/04/bias-and-the-bbc/>

This is a classic *straw man* argument. News-watch has never advocated any sort of quota system, or suggested that individual reports and discussions ought to be balanced solely or mainly by stopwatch. In News-watch surveys, statistics have been used only as an *ingredient* of multi-tiered analysis, to assess the shape and tone of coverage, to define which voices and perspectives are included and excluded, and which themes, stories and interviewees tend to be allocated the most weight.

Much more importantly there is no reason why for so many years the BBC drastically and consistently underplayed the majority opinion among voters about leaving the EU. Rather, Nick Robinson, through the *Radio Times* article, has now chillingly declared that the approach will continue.

1.4 Monitoring Overview

News-watch monitored Radio 4's Today programme on the day Theresa May's Article 50 letter was delivered, Wednesday 29 March, until Tuesday 4 April 2017.

All reports carried by the six editions relating to Brexit or EU politics were transcribed, and detailed information, including on individual guest contributors, was entered into the News-watch proprietary database. A line-by-line qualitative analysis was undertaken of over 73,000 words of transcription, including interviews, bulletins, newspaper reviews, and discussions between presenters and correspondents.

1.5 Airtime

News-watch bases its airtime calculations on Today's 'feature reports'. This ensures that totals are not skewed by repeated programme content, for example, the bulletins and newspaper reviews, and 'non-news' parts of Today, such as sports reports, weather and trailers for other BBC programmes.

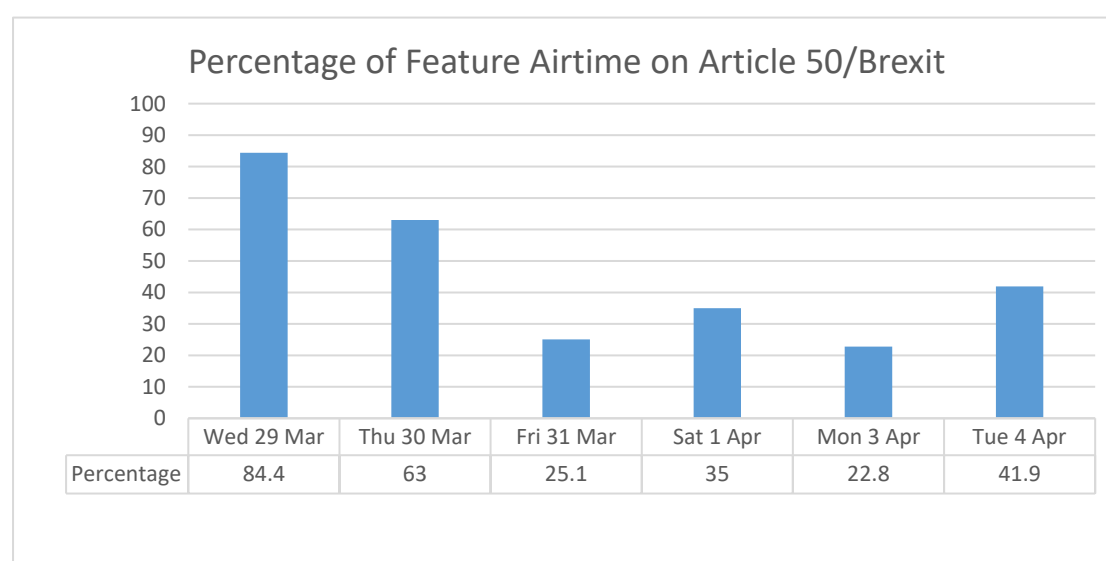
During the six programmes, the total space available on Today for feature reports was 11 hours and 7 minutes. Of this, exactly 5 hours and 5 minutes (46%) of the total available airtime – was Brexit or EU-related. The table provides data on the 25 individual Today monitoring projects undertaken by News-watch between 2002 and 2017

	Survey Date	Weeks	Total Airtime (minutes)	EU Airtime	Proportion of EU coverage
1	September 2002 – July 2003	47	31,255	1750	5.6%
2	September – December 2003	12	7,980	455	5.7%
3	March – June 2004	13	8,216	871	9.8%
4	October – December 2004	10	6,650	365	5.5%
5	March – June 2005	15	9,975	1082	10.8%
6	October – December 2005	9	5,985	489	8.2%
7	February – June 2006	16	10,640	437	4.1%
8	September – December 2006	14	9,310	275	2.9%
9	March – June 2007	14	9,310	326	3.5%
10	September – December 2007	14	9,310	386	4.1%
11	March – June 2008	12	7,980	263	3.3%
12	September – December 2008	14	9,310	384	4.1%
13	April – June 2009	6	4,206	228	5.4%
14	September – December 2009	13	8,577	442	5.1%
15	March – May 2010	6	3,961	245	6.2%
16	September – December 2010	13	8,493	444	5.2%
17	March – June 2011	13	8,617	532	6.2%
18	October – December 2011	11	7,298	1639	22.5%
19	April – June 2012	12	7,938	1112	14.0%
20	September – December 2012	13	8,640	540	6.2%
21	April – June 2013	12	7,929	538	6.8%
22	September – December 2013	14	9,207	470	5.1%
23	April – June 2014	6	3,979	412	10.3%
24	Jun – Dec 2016 (Business Slots only)	26	n/a	759	n/a
25	Mar – Apr 2017	1	667	305	46%

The **5 hours and 5 minutes** of Brexit-based features over the six days in the latest survey was greater than in the three surveys highlighted above: the Winter 2006 survey (14 weeks, 4 hours 35 minutes total EU coverage); the Summer 2008 survey (12 weeks, 4 hours 23 minutes of EU coverage); and the 2009 European Election survey (6 weeks, 3 hours 47 minutes of EU coverage).

In previous reports, News-watch has repeatedly made the point that the airtime Today has devoted to the coverage of EU politics has regularly been too low to generate adequate analysis of EU affairs. There has been consistent ‘bias by omission’, leading to a limited range of guests and poor-quality discussion. This, in turn, may have significantly affected audience understanding of significant EU themes. The amount of data from the latest Article 50 survey brings into focus just how inadequately EU issues have been covered by Today during many periods in the past.

The amount of EU material varied across the six editions of Today broadcast between 29 March and 4 April 2017, as shown in the chart.



The volume of Brexit-related discussion was highest on the first day of the survey, with 98 minutes of Today’s features devoted to coverage of Article 50. There were only four items in this edition that were *not* on the Brexit theme: a Parliamentary report on the Northern Ireland power-sharing agreement, a discussion on the use of video games to assist PTSD treatment, an item about the re-sentencing of Sergeant Alexander Blackman, and a sequence on Iraq, which, combined, accounted for the remaining 18 minutes.

1.6 Guest Speakers

For the first time in any News-watch survey undertaken to date, there were difficulties producing an accurate total for the number of guest speakers who contributed to EU-related discussion on Today.

This was because of a report from Sunderland at 7.45am on the first day of monitoring, Wednesday 29 March. It included a number of overlapping Brexit-supporting voices with similar accents. News-

watch coded each new voice in this particular sequence as a separate speaker. 124 individual speakers were catalogued during the weeklong survey, but the true number of appearances may have been only 121 and therefore the number of pro-Brexit speakers listed below may thus have been artificially inflated.

Speakers were categorised according to their viewpoint on Brexit or EU politics. Although the positions held by speakers during the June 2016 Referendum were, on occasion, taken into consideration, coding was not based solely upon a speaker's known previous position: in News-watch's methodology the actual contents of the contributions has always been the determining factor. Obvious examples were the appearances by the Prime Minister and Chancellor, Theresa May and Phillip Hammond, who both campaigned for Remain during the referendum, but since taking on their new government roles, had committed to triggering Article 50 and making a success of the Brexit negotiations. They, and others like them, were therefore coded as being pro-Brexit.

In total, and with the proviso mentioned above, News-watch coded 124 speakers across the six programmes, 52 interviews and 72 soundbites.

61 speakers (49%) were pro-EU, anti-Brexit, or bolstered arguments to suggest that Brexit had been a mistake. **42 speakers (34%)** were anti-EU or pro-Brexit, or bolstered arguments to suggest that Brexit was something positive for the UK. **A further 21 speakers (17%)** offered a neutral or factual viewpoint.

As such, there was a **15% differential** between the numbers of broadly pro-EU and broadly anti-EU speakers, and **pro-EU speakers outnumbered anti-EU speakers by a ratio of 3:2.**

Comparisons with earlier News-watch surveys are problematic. This is because News-watch previously used a 'Eurosceptic' category that encompassed all speakers voicing who spoke negatively towards the EU, ranging from those who opposed particular legislation or wished to see reform, to those who were calling for outright withdrawal. When the argument became binary in June 2016, many regular interviewees previously coded as 'Eurosceptic' – including David Cameron, George Osborne and William Hague, for example – were shown to be fundamentally in favour of Britain remaining in the EU and strong advocates of Remain. The 'Eurosceptic' category was thus, over many years, artificially bolstered. Despite this, pro-EU speakers still heavily outnumbered Eurosceptics in News-watch's long-

term monitoring. For the full period between 2002 and 2015 the ratio was 4:3, in the period before the Wilson Inquiry in 2005, the ratio had been 2:1 in favour of Pro-EU guests.¹⁵

In terms of contributors identifiably withdrawalist in their viewpoints, the proportion was exceptionally low: only 3.4% of guests between 2002 and 2015 were in favour of leaving the EU, and only 5 guests in total (just 0.1% of speakers) were advocates of Brexit from the political left.

1.7 Interviews and Soundbite Contributions/Wordcount Analysis

Today carries two distinct types of contribution from its invited guests: interviews (which can be either live, or pre-recorded) and ‘soundbites’ (including vox pop contributions) which are wholly pre-recorded, and are generally shorter in length. During the Article 50 survey, as well as the overall 3:2 imbalance towards those speaking against Brexit, there were even greater inequalities when the live interviews were investigated in isolation. Over the six days there were **27 interviews with pro-EU or Anti-Brexit guests**, compared to just **14 interviews with those speaking in favour of Brexit**¹⁶, a ratio of almost **2:1**. Further, only 7 of the 14 interviewees were firm supporters of Brexit in that they had either campaigned for Leave or made extended cases for it.

A further word count analysis showed that the Pro-EU guests, in both interview and soundbite sequences, were allocated **1.4 times** the amount of words as those supporting Brexit. Pro-EU speakers contributed 14,246 words (49.3%); Anti-EU speakers 10,090 words (34.9%); and Neutral speakers 4,555 words (15.2%).

1.8 Brexit-Supporters in Detail

42 speakers during the current survey (34% of total guests) were identifiably in favour of Brexit or anti-EU in their stated opinion. 13 were interviewed and a further 28 featured by way of pre-recorded soundbites. In addition, there was a somewhat unusual sequence presented by Labour MP Gisela

¹⁵ 5,037 guest speakers contributed to the EU debate on the Today programme in the surveyed editions between 2002 and 2015. Of these, 1950 (38.7%) were in favour of the EU or its legislation, 1458 (29.1%) were against the EU or its legislation and 1619 (32.1%) expressed a neutral opinion or provided a factual overview. This equates to an approximate ratio of 4:3. Before the Wilson inquiry, the inequality had been even worse. In 485 individual editions of Today between 2002 and 2004, 63% of those who offered political opinions were broadly pro-European, compared to 37% who were broadly Eurosceptic – a ratio of approximately 2:1.

¹⁶ There were actually 13 ‘traditional’ interviews, but for coding purposes an extended monologue by Labour MP Gisela Stuart, discussed below, was included as an ‘interview’.

Stuart, who provided a timetable for the Brexit negotiations in an extended monologue, interspersed with soundbites from other speakers.¹⁷

Only 24 of the total were ‘firmly’ pro-Brexit, in that they had been part of the Leave campaign or had voted Leave. **In total, those firmly in favour of Brexit made up just under one fifth of contributors during the week-long survey interval.**

However, exactly a third of this subset were vox pop contributors who appeared in the report from Sunderland (four of the cohort only spoke 12 words between them, confirming simply that they had voted in favour of Britain leaving the EU)

The significant Brexit-supporting contributions numbered only eight: John Longworth, former head of the British Chambers of Commerce; Helena Morrissey from Legal and General; Tim Martin of Wetherspoon’s; David Starkey, Historian, Iain Duncan Smith and David Davis from the Conservative Party, together with the contribution from Gisela Stuart. In addition, Chancellor Philip Hammond has also been included in this category, even though in the Referendum campaign he was a supporter of Remain. There were no contributions at all from UKIP over the six-day interval.

Conclusion

The statistics indicate that the grave imbalances established over many years in Today’s EU coverage continues as the government moves into its two-year Brexit negotiation, and despite the Leave vote.

Nick Robinson, in his article for the *Radio Times* and his subsequent debate with Charles Moore published in *The Spectator*, confirms something that News-watch has long suspected: that senior BBC staff no longer believe that balance between the two sides of the EU debate is an objective, that journalistic freedom is paramount, and that any permutation of guests should be allowed on air, however this may disadvantage one side of the debate. Mr Robinson’s article demonstrates a fierce resistance to any attempts to monitor and track the corporation’s news programming, and yet the university departments and academics who regularly undertake this sort of work using similar methodologies, during the referendum, and previously on behalf of the BBC itself, appear reluctant to engage in any sort of public critique of this new BBC orthodoxy.

¹⁷ For the purposes of the analysis, given its length, Ms Stuart’s contribution was coded as an interview.

The coming General Election will produce its own set of problems. The BBC will be legally required to provide the various political parties with coverage appropriate to their levels of national support. And yet, with Brexit right at the heart of the debate, and with the majority of sitting MPs and party leaderships having previously been fervently pro-EU, it is difficult to see how that balanced election coverage in terms of airtime given to the various parties will not significantly favour those who formerly voted to Remain. Once again, the disconnect between Westminster and the views of the voting public will be very difficult to reconcile, and it would seem that the BBC's approach is simply to suggest that they know best, and to deny altogether that issues of balance should be considered.

SECTION TWO – CONTENT ANALYSIS

This survey was highly unusual. The evidence is that the BBC was engaged in what can only be described as a partisan mission: to make the Brexit negotiations appear as difficult as possible. The Today editorial operation focused disproportionately on exploring the negatives. As is outlined in Section One, this was a relatively short survey period, covering only six editions of Today, but the EU-related material added up to almost half the programme feature time (five hours) and would have been expected to include a range of voices in favour of Brexit as well as those raising doubts about exit itself, or the exit process.

Fundamental Imbalance:

As is noted in Section One, there was a fundamental imbalance in programme appearances of 3:2 (61 to 42) in favour of interviewees who made points against Brexit (and government policy towards Brexit). The discrepancy – despite the Brexit vote – was broadly in line with the Today programme's long-term imbalance since 2000 in its coverage of EU-related material.

But as Section One also shows, this headline total masked a much deeper discrepancy. Only eight contributions in which the speakers made substantive points in favour of Brexit were included.

The pro-Brexit input becomes even less significant when the treatment of guests is taken into account. The bulk of the 'anti' contributions (around 4,000 words) was in two 'front page' interviews, of Brexit secretary David Davis and Chancellor Philip Hammond. Though both men ably put their respective pro-government and pro-Brexit arguments, this was in the face of the toughest adversarial questioning from Today presenters. The points of Hammond and Davis were thus strongly challenged as the sequences unfolded with anti-Brexit/anti-government points. Their respective cases were not, of course, cancelled out, but in these key sequences the contrary points put by the presenters were at strongly if not equally as prominent.

By contrast, few of the anti-Brexit speakers were challenged with the same level of toughness; indeed, the aim of Today presenters was to encourage their negativity, as is outlined in the sections below.

The other six of the eight pro-Brexit guests in the main body of the programme were John Longworth, from Leave Means Leave; Tim Martin, the chairman of Wetherspoon's; Helen Morrissey, from Legal and General; Gisela Stuart, the Labour MP; MP Iain Duncan Smith; and David Starkey, the historian.

Between them, they spoke around 3,000 words. But only John Longworth and Iain Duncan Smith made points strongly and directly about Brexit or post-Brexit prospects.

The other contributors were closely constrained in what they were actually able to say about Brexit. Helen Morrissey attacked the EU for not allowing the dynamism, flexibility and entrepreneurship that would lead to future success, but was then tied down in answering which exit model she wanted, and by an observation by Nick Robinson that the people who would suffer if the wrong approach was chosen would be the poorest in a place like Sunderland. Tim Martin said he was pleased to be leaving the EU, that it would improve his business prospects, and that it could lead to lower electricity bills in his company, but was then strongly challenged over whether the EU had influence over excise duty levels in the UK. David Starkey made an important constitutional point comparing Brexit with Henry VIII's break with Rome. Gisela Stuart, clearly a prominent Leaver, outlined the Brexit timetable, and was optimistic that it would go according to plan, but her description was procedural rather than partisan. Thus overall in the Article 50 coverage, Today contained only four interviews which substantially presented the case for leaving.

This minimal pro-withdrawal input meant that coverage was heavily skewed towards both the EU perspective and those who disagreed with the government's post-Article 50 negotiating position.

This brings into focus another key feature of the coverage. The analysis which follows of the role of the various BBC correspondents and presenters, the handling of guests and the structuring of bulletins points to a deep, fundamental bias. In a nutshell, the Today programme editorial operation was on what can only be described as a calculated mission to portray the post-Article 50 phase in as negative a light as possible.

This is a strong claim and must be backed by clear evidence. A condensed summary of the running log is presented in Section Four, and a breakdown of the pro-Brexit, and anti-Brexit (and pro-EU) contributions in Section Three. Also in Section Three is a break-down and analysis of the BBC's core journalistic input. It records pro-Brexit points on the relatively rare occasions they were made – but mostly demonstrates the Today programme's overwhelming editorial negativity.

What follows is a summary of some of the key points.

First, bulletins in the six programmes were written to bring to the fore the complexity of leaving, especially in correspondent reports. The bulletins also contained a variety of material elevated to bulletin level to reinforce the negativity. One was the decision by Lloyds of London to move 'tens' of jobs to Brussels in order to circumvent perceived problems of passporting in the post-Brexit

environment. A second was a call by the British Hospitality Association to be able to have access to high numbers of EU immigrants to prevent serious staff shortages in the tourist industry. This was the subject of a voice report by economics editor Kamal Ahmed, underlining the inflated importance attached to a story that arguably was not even new – a version of the same concerns had been published by pro-EU The Mail on Sunday six months previously.¹⁸ The third story placed in the bulletins to make an anti-Brexit point came on March 29, with an extract from a sequence from the previous evening's Newsnight featuring Marine Le Pen was played. She warned that the EU would 'punish' the UK for leaving. It was included seemingly only to make that point.

Second, a large number of features were structured to underline and exaggerate a range of negativities about the Brexit process. A pivotal contribution came from Nick Robinson in an edited package broadcast at 7.31am on March 29. First he created a false contrast, broadly between what he said were the celebrations of joining the EEC in 1973, against the bald formality of the government handing in a letter in order to leave. Then, he assembled a cast of strongly pro-EU contributions, from the Prime Minister of Malta, the Romanian Foreign Secretary and former Cabinet Secretary Lord O'Donnell, to illustrate what they said were the severe complexities of leaving. Together, they added up to a grossly biased picture, carefully-edited to suggest that Brexit would lead to disaster, would be deeply regretted, and was the equivalent of jumping out of an aeroplane without a parachute. There was no equivalent report in favour of Brexit.

Third were high-profile interviews (at 7.09am on 29/3 and 30/3) of Jonathan Faull, said to have been the UK's highest-level employee of the European Commission, and Lord Lisvane, the former Clerk to the House of Commons. Both – from men not normally at the centre of the Brexit developments – were designed editorially to show that the Brexit negotiations, despite what the government said, would take much longer than two years, and probably up to ten. Both men were strongly pro-EU. Lord Lisvane, for example, had called in July for a second referendum to ratify the UK's exit.¹⁹ Mr Faull, when he retired in February, was very negative about the UK's post-Brexit prospects.²⁰

A core point here relates to and why how guests are invited to appear. The observations in Section One about John Redwood and John Longworth are of key relevance. They were both being considered for appearances but turned down because their responses to the programme researchers/producers

¹⁸ <http://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/news/article-3794237/As-700-000-leisure-staff-face-Brexit-curbs-industry-s-leader-stark-warning-PM-Don-t-push-business-cliff-edge.html>

¹⁹ <https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/constitution/house/77065/lord-lisvane-parliamentary-approval-brexit-absolutely-essential>

²⁰ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-38523368>

did not match programme requirements in terms of the points they wanted to make. Lord Lisvane and Jonathan Faull clearly *did* meet those requirements.

Fourth, a number of strongly pro-EU figures with trenchant views were invited on specifically to attack post-Brexit prospects, and the decision to leave. The editorial handling was that (in stark contrast with the pro-withdrawal guests), they were encouraged almost without challenge to make their negative points. They included French ambassador to the UK, Sylvie Bermann; Manfred Weber, from the German People's Party; Welsh First Minister Carwyn Jones; former Nick Clegg adviser Polly McKenzie; Bartosz Wielinski, from the *Gazeta Wyborcza* Polish newspaper; Stefanie Bolzen from *Die Welt*; Hubertus Vöth, a representative of the city of Frankfurt; and Sadiq Khan, the Mayor of London. Between them, they warned of labour shortages, the collapse of sections of the economy, the erection of new 'walls' between countries, of the drain of 10,000 jobs from the City and maintained that the vote to leave had been ill-advised and based on deep prejudice. These contributions were much more detailed in their attacks on Brexit and in favour of the EU than the equivalent interviews of withdrawalists.

Fifth, a series of live broadcast on March 29 from Sunderland by Matthew Price, though projected as a balanced look at the prospects for Brexit, was anything but. From the start, there was a strong emphasis on the uncertainties facing what was said to be the area's largest employer, Nissan. A sequence from the local centre of high tech jobs – said to be vital to the local economy – featured only figures who were negative about the future (who had previously appeared on the programme making similar points). Their doubts were given a prominent airing. By contrast, Matthew Price's interviews of those in favour of Leave were very short soundbites (mainly vox pops) and contained no coherent argument. A local businesswoman said she was optimistic about the future, but her reasoning was not explored and she was finally asked what uncertainties she faced, thus editorially almost cancelling out her positive approach.

The Sunderland broadcasts also featured a series of so-called 'fact-checks' by BBC correspondent Chris Morris. His approach was emphatically not neutral, however, despite the editorial claim to the contrary. As is detailed below, he failed to clarify that 'EU money' for local arts projects actually came from the UK taxpayer and was only distributed by the EU. In addition, he painted a mainly gloomy picture of the post-Brexit future in terms of the availability of grants for the arts and the availability of EU football talent for local clubs.

Sixth, was the role of BBC correspondents who appeared during the survey interval. They displayed what can only be described as a strong common editorial bias against Brexit. They were on the

constant look-out for snags and negativity, but not for optimism. This was evident from the start. In the first bulletin, political editor Laura Kuenssberg, projected in her defining sentences the negotiations as 'fraught'; Europe editor Katya Adler was focused on the 'many across Europe' who thought the UK's expectations were unrealistic. Norman Smith, deputy political editor, spoke of the problems of dealing with mountains of EU legislation and the fog of 'legislative soup'. Chris Morris in his role as 'fact-checker', as well as outlining problems in the Sunderland context, also rubbished the idea that a reversion to WTO trading rules would be a comfortable option for the UK if no deal could be reached with the EU. Then, despatched to Malta to cover the EU leaders' response to the UK's Article 50 letter, he focused most on an immediate snag: they would not accept the UK's hope that negotiations could be conducted over departure arrangement and trade at the same time. His pessimism was in sharp contrast to the verdict of Iain Duncan Smith, who the following day suggested that the reaction if European leaders had been more moderate and constructive. Another correspondent who poured cold water on post-Brexit prospects was Justin Rowlatt, who emphasised most in his despatches that a British trade mission to India (reported on 4/4) was most unlikely to reach a deal

Seventh, in line with the News-watch recent survey of Today's Business News, the regular daily sequence – apart from on March 29 - was seriously biased against the pro-Brexit perspective. On day one (29/3), John Longworth appeared, along with two other guests who were ambivalent or sanguine about Brexit prospects, but he was the only strongly pro-Brexit figure to do so. The editorial set-up in his sequence also included a strongly pro-EU figure. The Business News commentary was thereafter throughout the survey period peppered with mentions of uncertainty, the actual and future movement of jobs away from the City of London, the need for continued access to the single market and the importance of free movement of labour. Missing were mentions of optimism about post-Brexit economic prospects on the lines suggested by John Longworth. Most prominence, as already noted in the bulletin section above, was given to the story about Lloyd's of London creating a small new Brussels office. This was trailed by presenter Dominic O'Connell heavily on March 29, then again on March 30 at 6.15am before being allocated its own slot in Business News update at 7.20am and then being elevated to the main bulletins at 8am. On the same City jobs drain theme – underlining vividly the relentless Business News quest for negativity - Hubertus Vöth (4/4) was given his own slot to explain why, because of Brexit, 10,000 jobs would move from London to Frankfurt. It was not 'news' at all, but rather an unalloyed PR plug for the German city – as the story about Lloyd's was for the insurance group. Also included in Business News (30/3) was a heavily negative assessment of the regulatory difficulties ensuing from Brexit by former George Osborne advisor Rupert Harrison, and about the plight of the pound from a currency expert.

Eighth was the mindset and outlook of presenters. With a few exceptions – for example John Humphrys’ joint balanced interview of Sir Vince Cable and Iain Duncan Smith, or Mishal Husain’s interrogation of Hilary Benn’s demand for an inquiry into what the ‘no deal’ option would mean – the Today presenters were focused relentlessly on looking for and accentuating the negativities of Brexit. As already noted, Nick Robinson’s package about the alleged contrast between the UK’s EEC accession in 1973 and the activation of Article 50 in 2017 typified the approach. In the same vein, the presenters pushed correspondents towards maximum negativity in their assessments of post-Brexit prospects and were most engaged in prompting pro-EU and anti-Brexit guests such as Manfred Weber of the German People’s Party, or former House of Commons Clerk Lord Lisvane towards expressing their worst fears. Conversely, with the few pro-Brexit guests, Nick Robinson and John Humphrys, for example, were toughly adversarial.

An over-arching point to emerge from the coverage is that the BBC, at this crucial moment in EU-UK relations, did not explore *why* the UK was leaving. There was no editorial effort to examine, for example, whether the ‘single-market’ and ‘customs union’ and the concept of ‘free movement’ of labour/people’ were EU rules/conditions that were restrictive, outmoded, inefficient or ideologically-mandated and had been rejected by the British people as part of the ‘Leave’ vote.

Part of the same equation, there was no editorial attempt to examine whether the EU itself was structurally or procedurally unsound, unreasonable or unduly biased against the UK. The over-riding assumption instead was that the UK government might not be able to meet EU requirements, or fit in with its dictates, and – if that this was the case – it would be the UK’s fault and to the UK’s detriment.

Contrast:

A sharp contrast to the all-pervading negativity to Brexit above is contained in the News-watch archives in a report from 2002 about the introduction of euro notes and coins on January 1 of that year²¹.

The summary noted that the BBC reporting:

- grossly over-exaggerated levels of enthusiasm for the new currency
- seriously underplayed doubts and euro-scepticism

²¹ <http://news-watch.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Launch-of-Euro-Notes-and-Coins-2002.pdf>

- did not include enough facts and figures for the audience to make a balanced judgment
- were too focused on the centres of capital cities
- contained vox pops that had voices favourable to the euro in a ratio of 5:1
- mixed political opinion with logistical practicalities
- breached the BBC's guidelines on balanced reporting, particularly in the use of vox pops.

. . . The political dimension of the event was treated as a lesser theme and overwhelmed by reporting of the public's reaction at midnight on New Years Eve – a traditional time for celebration.

The News-watch report added:

The enthusiastic tone greeting the euro was exemplified most in a special edition of the Today programme on January 1 in which a total of 22 out of 33 programme items were devoted to topics linked to the introduction of the notes and coins, with presenter James Naughtie in Paris to augment the sense of occasion.

...Whether the introduction was really as smooth as painted is hard to discern, because most of the reports came from the centre of the main capitals of the eurozone, in interviews with ordinary people (out celebrating New Year's Eve) and spokesmen for organisations wholly in support of the new currency, or with a vested interest in its complete success. The few reports from elsewhere – for example one from Greece on the Ten O'Clock News on January 2, where it appeared that the existence of the euro was scarcely being acknowledged by local business people – suggested that the picture outside the main areas might have been less smooth than that painted in the vast majority of reports.

Angus Roxburgh (for example) reported:

They had a massive party, tens of thousands of people turned up at a park in the centre of the city for a show that had specially-composed music, a sound and light experience and fireworks on the stroke of midnight. The nicest part, I think, was during the countdown to midnight, when laser beams that were picking out the names of the old currencies on a building had them disappearing off into the dark sky and then being replaced by the euro.

The News-watch survey thus shows that the BBC Today programme enthusiastically greeted at all levels (presenters, correspondents and in the tone of interviews) the introduction of euro notes and coins. Although a few questions were asked about the viability of the new currency, the overwhelming focus was that its introduction would benefit the EU countries. The UK's 'wait and see' stance was also noted but this was not used in editorial terms to dampen the overall enthusiasm for the occasion.

What relevance has this to the BBC's coverage of Article 50 developments? The analysis of 2017 – mounted at a crucial, symbolic phase of the Brexit process, the activation of Article 50 - shows that Today's attitude was overwhelmingly negative about the UK's future prospects, paid only minimal attention to the pro-Brexit case, and pulled out all the stops to give a platform to the doubt about leaving the EU. These were deliberate editorial choices. In 2002, almost exactly the reverse applied. The Corporation's coverage welcomed the introduction at street level of the new currency with open arms, expended very significant resources in sending correspondents to European capitals to record the alleged jubilation and made only minimal effort to examining the negativities when they had virtually a whole edition of Today to do so.

This brings Nick Robinson's argumentative contribution to *Radio Times* centre stage again. The BBC's version of 'due impartiality' then, as now, is to put enthusiastically pro-EU opinion at the forefront. Those who disagree are firmly at the back of the queue – if they are mentioned at all.

SECTION THREE – ANALYSIS

Pro-Brexit Contributions

March 29

John Longworth - Business News (March 29), who stated that Brexit would create strong opportunities, and that there was no need to worry about not being in the single market.

The intro said there was a palpable feeling of shock in the City about Brexit, and before that, Matthew Price surveyed the Leave vote in Sunderland in the context of the dominant local employer's dependence on EU trade.

At 6.47am, the owner of Sunderland electric car parts company said he was optimistic about the future. MP summarised that he needed 'clarity'.

At 7.21am, Nick Robinson spoke to City leave campaigner, Helen Morrissey. Nick Robinson said she was 'unusual' and that in truth, she had no idea about what would happen next. HM said the ingredients of success needed to be grasped and the UK needed to make its own trading arrangements, including the WTO option. Mr Robinson suggested those that would suffer as a result of uncertainty would be poor people in places like Sunderland.

At 7.45am, the leader of the Sunderland Leave campaigners said attitudes towards Brexit were hardening. There were vox pops to that effect. MP asked what they wanted from the 'difficulty of leaving the EU'.

At 8.10am, Philip Hammond, Chancellor of the Exchequer, said it was an exciting pivotal moment for Britain – the emergence of a new global Britain and new relationships. He said the EU wanted good sensible discussion. There were plans to deal with all outcomes including 'no deal' but he was confident there would be one. It was in no-one's interest to have lines of trucks at Dover. The future would not include the single market and not part of the customs union, either. Immigrants from the EU could still come here for two years. There would be business-like negotiations over what was owed by the UK to the EU, and the EU's current demands were an aggressive starting point.

In another report from Sunderland, Jacqui Miller, an exporter of heavy machinery, said she was 'very optimistic about post-Brexit prospects, and hopeful that the negotiations would allow her company to continue to work internationally. She confirmed that there was uncertainty but hoped it could be sorted out.

David Starkey argued at 8.55am that Parliamentary sovereignty was being exercised to ensure a clean break with the EU – as it had been in Henry VIII's day.

March 30:

Gisela Stuart presented at 6.37am 'Brexit milestones' – she outlined the likely course of negotiations.

In yesterday in Parliament, Jacob Rees-Mogg compared Theresa May to Gloriana. There was an extract from Theresa May's Commons statement – the UK was leaving the EU but not Europe.

At 7.09am figures from a steel-works in Christchurch argued that exiting the EU would lead to less bureaucracy.

Inga Beale, chief executive of Lloyd's (7.19am) revealed in one sentence that 95% of Lloyd's business was done in London.

At 7.35am, Sylvie Bermann, the French ambassador in London, said that France was keen to achieve bilateral deals with the UK over the status of immigrants and security.

At 8.10am, David Davis was interviewed. He said his counterparts in the EU wanted a deep and special relationship with the UK. The Prime Minister was saying that a deal over security issues was required as part of that, and that was a reasonable point to make. He said that Amber Rudd was reasonable in raising issues related to Europol, it was not blackmail. The EU figures ranged against the UK such as Guy Verhofstadt were not negotiators, what counted was those who were. Mr Davis insisted it would be possible to negotiate on trade and departure terms at the same time because they were linked. The first things that would be deal with was the status of EU immigrants from and in the UK. He said he wanted the UK to enjoy the same EU benefits as currently. Mr Davis said he did not recognise that 'troublesome' backbenchers would get in the way of a deal. The goal on immigration was not so much about numbers as getting the British Parliament to be in charge of policy. David Davis said he believed a deal could be achieved in two years, despite what was being said. The UK Parliament would decide which EU laws it wanted to improve and change. He was excited for the future of his country.

At 8.45am, Tim Martin of Wetherspoon's said he was relieved about the Great Repeal Bill, because it would be clear in future who was responsible for legislation. Regulation was costing his business £40m imminently and there was also EU climate change rules to worry about. Mr Martin said that many taxes were the result of EU legislation, and a £4m increase in electricity increases could now be changed.

March 31

In Yesterday in Parliament, David Davis said that the Great Repeal Bill would provide initially clarity and certainty for business, workers and consumers, and would ensure that standards were the same as in the EU. Christopher Chope wanted the Bill to go further.

At 7.17am, Sven Mikser, the Estonian Foreign Minister, said he was sure there could be a good bilateral arrangement between the UK and his country, and was hoping for a good outcome from the EU negotiations.

At 7.49am, Sir Michael Fallon, defence secretary, said that NAT exercises in Estonia would not be part of future EU negotiations.

April 1

The 7am bulletin said that the government had said – in the face of the EU giving Spain special input into the EU negotiations – that the future of Gibraltar was secure.

At 7.20am, Chris Morris noted that David Davis had sought 'to rally the troops' and said he wanted a really good deal to take back control of the UK borders and 'stand on our own two feet'. He concluded that the UK had hopes of an 'ambitious partnership' with the EU.

Iain Duncan Smith spoke in favour of the government's approach to the development over Gibraltar. He saw no reason why it should have mentioned in the Article 50 letter. It was no more necessary than Dover. He claimed that the tone of the EU's negotiating letter was otherwise good. He added that he did not believe that the UK would have a high departure bill to Brussels because also in the equation were cumulative contributions to EU assets. He added that he didn't want WTO or sector-specific trade deals, he wanted a bespoke one for the UK. This was in the EU's interests because a successful City of London generated cheap capital. He disagreed that an exit deal would take more than two years.

April 3

Bulletins again said that the government had said it would refuse to allow Gibraltar to be used as a bargaining chip.

At 6.38am, John Pienaar said that the aim Theresa May's Middle East visit was so that the UK could continue to punch above its weight after Brexit.

At 6.45am, in an item about the Irish border, a local farmer said he hoped that leaving the EU would reduce bureaucracy.

In the 8.10am interview about Gibraltar, Jack Straw accepted that difficulties over Spain would not scupper an EU deal.

April 4

In Yesterday in Parliament, Lady Anelay for the government, had insisted that the UK would negotiate the best possible deal for the UK family.

In the 7.08 interview sequence of Hilary Benn, it was noted that several members of the Brexit Committee had rebelled against the report findings.

In a feature about comedy and Brexit (7.42am) the performer James Carey said that people in London should be careful about seeing England as backward and nationalistic or patriotic or racist.

Thus the pro-Brexit contributions came from John Longworth, Helen Morrissey Philip Hammond, David Davis, Iain Duncan Smith. Tim Martin had points to make but was not really allowed to do so. Most of the others listed were one-liners or simple single sentences.

Anti-Brexit contributors

March 29:

Marta Kuprinska (Business News), Mike Amey. MK stressed the importance of the single market and free movement, and MA the need for 'compromise' (away from a full EU exit)

7.09am - Jonathan Faull predicted negotiations would take years.

In Business news update (7.14am), Caroline Simmons (UBS) said the City was nervous about passporting and predicted an exodus of jobs.

At 7.17am, Matthew Price spoke in Sunderland to three software firms who all said that Brexit was causing problems.

At 7.31am, there was a package in which the Prime Minister of Malta, Gus O'Donnell and the Romanian Foreign Secretary all underlined how difficult the negotiations would be.

The Rev. Sam Wells, Thought for the Day, compared Brexit to divorce and said betrayal could be devastating.

In a report from Sunderland (8.38am) Rebecca Ball was concerned about the impact of Brexit on funding of culture. Paul Dobson was worried whether Sunderland would be able to continue to employ EU-based footballers.

Emily Thornberry and Nick Clegg (8.47am) both attacked the government's approach to Brexit, talked about the lies of the Leave side and said the process of leaving would take years.

March 30

In Business News Kathleen Brooks (City Index) said there were already record numbers of short-selling positions on the pound. Former George Osborne adviser Rupert Harrison attacked the government's negotiating stance and the cutting and pasting of EU rules as a means of regulation.

Yesterday in Parliament (6.45am) included reactions to Theresa May's Article 50 letter. Jeremy Corbyn said that the government wanted to change the UK into a low-wage tax haven, Tim Farron that voters had not opted for a hard Brexit, Ed Miliband that Theresa May was threatening national unity, and Angus Robertson that the Scots had not voted for Brexit.

At 6.53am, Welsh First Minister Carwyn Jones attacked every aspect of the government's approach to the EU negotiations.

At 7.09am, a report by Ross Hawkins on the potential impact of Brexit included comment from a paintmaker that the UK needed a direct voice in making regulations. There was a warning that many paint makers were thinking of leaving the EU.

Lord Lisvane (former Clerk to the House of Commons), 7.15am, warned that the Brexit moves could lead to a shift of executive powers to the government and that the process could take 10 years.

In Business News update (7.19am) it was explained at length why Lloyd's was opening a Brussels office.

At 7.35am, French ambassador to London Sylvie Bermann warned that the UK would not get better conditions out of the EU than in, and that the 27 would stick together in protecting mutual interests. Manfred Weber, of the German People's Party said he cared only about the rights of EU citizens and not at all about British interests, so negotiations would be tough. .

Stefanie Bolzen, London correspondent of Die Welt, and Bartosz Wielinski, foreign editor for the Polish newspaper, Gazeta Wyborcza, were interviewed at 8.54am. Both attacked the decision to leave as a disaster.

March 31

In Business News, Lucy McDonald of Allianz Global said she did not think sterling was going to be strong and there could be a much extended period of uncertainty for the UK economy.

Yesterday in Parliament contained a warning from Kier Starmer of sweeping new powers to the executive and from Nick Clegg about the wholesale drafting in of EU law. The SDLP had called it 'the great download and save until delete bill'.

At 7.09am, Sven Mikser, the Estonian Foreign Minister, warned that the EU 27 would stick together in negotiations and that any deal would not be as good as membership.

At 7.17am, Ufi Ibrahim of the British Hospitality Association, warned that it would be 10 years before the demand for EU workers fell.

At 8.45am, Polly McKenzie, a former adviser to Nick Clegg, suggested that the title of the repeal bill was spin and the whole exercise did not have the right ring about it.

April 1

At 7.50am, Labour MEP Clare Moody was interviewed about Gibraltar, and maintained that the local people wanted to stay part of the EU. She thought it had been a bad mistake for Gibraltar to be missed out of the Article 50 letter.

At 8.33pm, Vince Cable said that a hard Brexit would not be in Gibraltar's interests. He said the EU would demand a large divorce payment, the government would have to explain why they were paying out rather than getting money back. He said it would be hard to get a sector-by-sector trade deal.

April 3

At 6.45am, in a report from Ireland, Gerry Temple, a former customs officer said he did not want to go back to the days of border checks. The MD of Nuprint Technology said the main problem was that tariffs would be introduced. Denis Bradley, a former peace negotiator said customs posts had been a source of trouble and should not be reintroduced.

At 6.49am, in an item about Gibraltar, Rafa de Miguel, from El Pais, said that the Spanish government was being milder in its reactions than Spain's. The government wanted the EU to side with it in its shared sovereignty claims.

At 8.10am, Jack Straw said Gibraltar was an affront to the Spanish sense of identity and what was happening was a downside of Brexit. He warned that the negotiations over its future would be very difficult and complex.

April 4

In Business News, Hubertus Vöth explained how he was planning to attract 10,000 jobs from the City to Frankfurt over the next five years. He claimed that 100 out of 200 foreign banks in London were planning to move staff over passporting rights.

In Yesterday in Parliament, Lady Northover said that the Article 50 letter should have included Gibraltar. Lord Hannay claimed that those who had engineered Brexit were to blame for Gibraltar's woes.

Hilary Benn claimed at 7.08am that there must be an assessment of the 'no deal' Brexit possibility. The consequences of no deal could be serious, including healthcare for Britons abroad, tariffs and passporting issues.

At 7.34am, Sir William Patey, a former UK ambassador to Saudi Arabia, said the UK had embarked on a difficult relationship with its European trade partners and would therefore (to compensate) be more careful about who it offended.

At 8.10am, Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London, warned that the government must give EU citizens a cast iron guarantee that they could stay in London, that it was impossible to reach a deal in two years and there would be a 'cliff-edge'. A special high immigration quota was needed for London so that it could meet its needs.

Sir Andrew Cahn, former head of UK and Investment (8.35am) warned that getting a trade deal with India quickly was unlikely and could take ten years. There was likely to be uncertainty over the next couple of years.

Running summary:

March 29:

Bulletins - said the EU negotiations would be fraught and included a warning from Marine Le Pen that the UK would be punished. Laura Kuenssberg pointed to tensions within the Conservative party, between London and Scotland, and among the public. Katya Adler said that 'many across Europe' thought the UK's expectations were unrealistic.

Matthew Price – in a series of reports from Sunderland – mentioned in the initial framing that there was doubt about Nissan, issues with tariffs, and about the ability to continue to trade with EU.

Business News opened with news that businesses were fearful about the future and a Polish woman Martina Kuprinska who was demanding continuation of the single market, free movement and passporting rights. Mike Amy said the City of London was looking mainly for compromise in the Brexit negotiations. Sarah Croucher, a lawyer, said that the City would not change suddenly said its advantage was the British law system that could not be replicated, John Longworth, by contrast painted a positive picture. Dominic O'Connell spoke of the 'palpable feeling of shock' when Brexit was confirmed, experienced by many campaigning to stay in, and added that tomorrow 'the great City landmark' Lloyd's would announce a new European base, 'it's all about keeping the European business that it fears may be lost after Brexit'. His first question to John Longworth was what he would say to those who were fearful. He said the message from JL was 'quite different' from business trade bodies who wanted to stay in the single market, or have the best possible access to it. He asked Martina Kuprinska what had attracted her to London, and her answer was the opposite of what Mr Longworth said, the availability of so-called EU benefits.

Overall, this was strong pessimism in the links, combined with one enthusiastic Brexit supporter, a Polish woman who wanted to stay, in effect, in the EU, a lawyer who said that London's main advantage was English law, and a market analyst who said that the markets would be looking for concessions. Was it balanced – probably but the tone was highly sceptical.

At 6.33am, Norman Smith looked at the compromises in the Article 50 letter and noted the FT had raised 'all sorts' of prospects. He said Mr May could give ground in paying a Brexit Bill in return for tariff free access to the single market, preferential treatment for EU nationals in return for single market access and flexibility towards 'transitional arrangements' to avoid 'falling out' (of the EU).

At 6.47am, Matthew Price, from Sunderland again, said a question was whether Brexit would affect Nissan's ability to operate there. There could be 'knock-on effects' for tens of thousands of jobs. His first question to the owner of Hyperdrive how he felt 'because the uncertainty now begins'. All MP's questions were about the potential negative effect of Brexit, 'the knock-on effect of sterling' and whether Nissan would leave. Stephen Irish of Hyperdrive, said his outlook was positive but conceded that his company wanted would happen in respect if tariffs. MP concluded:

And that sense of the need for clarity, that sense of the need for a deliberate actual decision to be made and for business to know what the environment they're working in is coming through from other sectors, and we're talking to some of them in about half an hour.

At 6.51am in what was called a 'reality check', Nick Robinson noted that a BBC correspondent (presumably in a piece about the EU negotiations) had said that if the UK could not make a trade deal with the EU, then it would default to WTO rules and tariffs. But he added that the director of the WTO had observed that this would not be automatic – was he right that a renegotiation of rights and responsibilities would be needed? Chris Morris said that the UK, contrary to impressions sometimes given, was subject to WTO rules through the EU. He added:

So, when we leave, we need a new deal for trade with the rest of the EU, and if we can't get that straightaway, the default position will be to impose the same tariffs on each other that we impose on other members of the WTO. So, for example, the US doesn't have a free trade deal with the EU at the moment, so, an American company wanting to sell its goods to the UK or France or Latvia has to pay an average of about 5.5% as a border tax, some sectors hire, some sectors lower, but about 5.5% on average. And that's what could happen to our trade with the EU, and theirs with us.

After a break in the line, Mr Morris added that Mr Azvedo, director general of the WTO had warned that the UK could not simply cut and paste the WTO in place of the agreement with the EU, because it was far more complicated than that in terms of tariffs and agricultural subsidies. He concluded:

So I think what he was doing is warning you've got to pick fiendishly complex negotiations that have taken years and years to resolve.

In the 7am bulletin were the same points as at 6am, with the addition that the newsreader said in a link that 'many in Europe' were saying that a deal was unlikely in two years. Katya Adler said that

‘leading voices’ across the EU viewed the government’s aim as unrealistic. There was also a sequence from Emily Maitlis in which she fleshed out the Le Pen punishment warning.

In the interview at 7.09am with Jonathan Faull, Sarah Montague observed:

It’s a process that supposed to take two years. But after more than four decades of being part of the EU, it could take considerably longer, because we not only need to untangle our ties, but also work out what our new relationship should look like. Well, someone who is well-placed to know how these things might work is Jonathan Faull who, until he retired in January, was the most senior British official in the European Commission.

The first question was whether the timescale could be met, and Mr Faull answered that a full deal would not be reached.

At 7.14am, in the intro to an interview with Caroline Simmons, fund manager with UBS (‘the largest manager of rich people’s money in the world’), Nick Robinson first observed that the City had been ‘amongst the most nervous about Brexit’. Dominic O’Connell said that financial services on the whole had campaigned to remain, then that there had been a trickle of jobs out of London, with big banks and other setting up offices in places like ‘Frankfurt and Luxembourg, and finally that Lloyd’s of London would announce the next day that Lloyd’s of London ‘were setting up a new European HQ’. Mr O’Connell, noting again that ‘some jobs would leave’, asked why the City was so nervous about passporting. CS said in response that some services would not be ‘permissible’ out of London. Mr O’Connell said that the current movement was a ‘trickle’ and was thus because people were making contingency plans. Ms Simmons agreed, but then warned that up to 20% of banking and commercial property jobs could be involved.

At 7.17am, Matthew Price again reported from Sunderland. Sarah Montague in her intro, noted that when the Sunderland result had been announced on June 23, the penny had dropped ‘that we might be leaving the EU’. Mr Price said that some in Sunderland were now ‘already noticing an impact on the work they do’. He spoke to two software designers who said their business was being negatively impacted, and then finally to Herb Kim, ‘one of the figures behind this tech boom’. Mr Kim was heavily concerned (‘the biggest thing killing us right now’) by uncertainty and was worried about the status of EU workers.

At 7.21am, Nick Robinson introduced Helen Morrissey, who, he claimed, was another of the voices ‘from the different views, different voices when it comes to the great Brexit debate’. He said she (her Brexit support) was relatively unusual in the City of London ‘where many of the big corporations at least, big banks, were warning about the consequences’. He asked her whether she was worried that

the government had turned its back on the Norway and Swiss models 'that involves having to adopt some of EU laws and to contribute as a matter of course'. Mr Robison noted she had used 'uncertainty' a couple of times and added:

The truth is, we haven't a clue what our relationship will be in two years' time.

And he then said:

The people who lose from uncertainty, some of those voices we're hearing in Sunderland, people who can barely make ends meet, they are the people who will suffer if we don't know what our principal economic and foreign policy is?

At 7.31am, Nick Robinson presented a long item drawing attention to the contrast between the circumstances and process of the Article 50 letter and the day the UK had joined the EU. He said there would be 'no fanfare today' but claimed back 44 years ago, there was and pointed out that The Prime Minister (unnamed – Edward Heath) had spoken of 'joy in his heart' and had been accompanied by HM The Queen to the premiere of Fanfare for Europe.

Mr Robinson said there were still those who believed the UK's exit might never happen, and there was a quote from Joseph Muscat, the Prime Minister of Malta, to that effect. He claimed that this is why Theresa May had 'endlessly repeated' the phrase Brexit means Brexit. Mr Robinson added that 'for all the confident talk' no one knew what happened next. The Romanian Prime Minister, Mircea Geoana, claimed it was of 'epic consequence' and a 'major realignment of the world order'. Former cabinet secretary Gus O'Donnell (said to be this country's former 'top civil servant') said it was the equivalent of jumping out of a plane with a parachute designed by the people flying the plane, designed to deter anyone else jumping out. Nick Robinson said MG had warned that many had underestimated 'how complex these (sorts of) negotiations can be'. He added:

This is far from just ripping a membership card. This will take painful, long hours at night and day, two years of exceptionally complex negotiations. Where again, like in the case of Romania, a number of years ago, politics at home and abroad, geopolitics, local constituencies, will try to basically interfere in this exercise. You'll have a busy time, my friends.

Mr Robinson said that back in 1973, they had sung Mozart to celebrate joining hands across the Channel. What was in prospect now was a divorce – from 27 partners 'their cabinets, their parliaments, and tens of millions of voters who'll demand that this deal is in their interests'.

There was a warning from Joseph Muscat that the countries would combine to meet the European interest (for example protecting the car industry) and the interests of most member states was 'one and the same'. Mr Robinson said:

There is one issue above all others that will have those smaller countries punching very hard: it's their fight to hold on to what someone once famously called, 'our money.'

He said Mrs Thatcher had spent five years fighting for the British rebate; 'the battle about the British bill for leaving' could prove to be much more difficult. He added that GOD believed there would be a trade-off, but the more concessions the UK wanted, the bigger the bill would be.

Mr Robinson concluded:

It is hard to overstate the significance of this day. It represents the tearing up of British foreign and economic policy as pursued by all the main parties for more than half a century. It represents the end of an idea our leaders, all of them, once believed in rather passionately.

After this, Sarah Montague interviewed Katya Adler, who said there would be spoonfuls of sugar, but before there was a future relationship, there would be divorce. The underlying message was not to push the European Commission. It was expected that the Union would act as one 'so that's kind of a veiled warning' not to try divide and rule. She stressed that the EU, the Commission, and the rest of the EU, were insisting that there were outstanding bills and commitments to pay.

In 7.45am, back in Sunderland, Matthew Price spoke to the leader of the referendum Vote Leave group and Brexit supporters. One expressed the view that immigration was putting huge pressure on the NHS. MP said that people in the NHS said it was actually foreign workers who were keeping the NHS going.

8.10am, Philip Hammond He claimed that it was an exciting pivotal moment for Britain – negotiating the exit from the EU and the delivery of a global Britain and a changed Britain in terms of the way the economy worked. Mr Robinson said he had warned before the vote that it would be a leap in the dark, and then stated that he had made that as a prediction. Mr Hammond replied that everyone was now getting what was best for Britain. Mr Robinson said Gus O'Donnell had described as like jumping out of a plane without a parachute – another way of saying a leap in the dark. Mr Hammond said he did not accept that. There had been hurt after the vote, but people were now thinking rationally and sensibly, and those in the EU wanted a deep and special relationship with the UK. The overwhelming majority of 'our counterparts' wanted sensible, constructive discussion about a mutually strengthening pragmatic future relationship. Mr Robinson said that the point was that the clock was

now ticking and if no agreement was reached the UK would be out without a deal. He asked if Boris Johnson had been speaking for the government when he had said it would be okay to be out without a deal. Mr Hammond said there were plans in the pipeline to deal with a large number of possible outcomes. Mr Robinson asked if it would be fine if the markets heard him saying it would be fine without a deal. Mr Hammond said he was absolutely confident that a deal would be negotiated, and that it would be the best possible. Mr Robinson said others, such as the FT were not confident there would be a deal. There was a need to know what would happen if there was not, and the head of the port of Dover had now predicted that if there was not, there would be lines of lorries queuing up, and in doing so he was echoing what chief negotiator Michael Barnier had warned. Mr Hammond said everyone would seek to protect their own interests, and it was not in anyone on the continent of Europe to have such lines of trucks. Equally it would not help French farmers. He was confident that the worst case scenario would not happen. He repeated there would be a deal to protect UK national interests.

Mr Robinson suggested that there would have to be compromise and that would be based on that the EU could say 'you are worse off than when you were in'. Mr Hammond said that the Prime Minister had said from the beginning there would be give and take on both sides. Britain had already made it clear that the UK would not be part of the single market or full members of the European customs union. Mr Robinson suggested 'full' was an interesting choice of words. Mr Hammond said the UK was clear it could not cherry pick and there would be certain consequences. Mr Robinson asked if he still wanted to be a not 'full' member of the customs union. Mr Hammond said the UK couldn't be, and would negotiate an agreement that was as frictionless as possible and at the same time kept the Northern Ireland border open.

At 8.26am, Laura Kuenssberg said Philip Hammond had 'hinted at a lot of compromise' and had tried to rebuff suggestions that it would be fine and dandy for the UK to walk away from the EU without a deal. He had discounted the idea of £50bn exit bill. He could be heard –above all – straining to put behind profound disagreements in the Tory party and the country. The delay in triggering Article 50 had happened because the government was figuring 'what on earth to do' and so both sides of the Channel would calm down. The Chancellor had tried to send a 'steady, calm down' message but there were doubts about 'how realistic the government's goals are, politically and legally'. She concluded:

So whether or not you see this as a joyous day, a huge opportunity, as some people do, or as a potential catastrophe, as others feel, this is starting.

At 8.26am, Sarah Montague said that Chris Morris had been given the task of fact-checking. The first question was whether EU grants would continue. He replied:

... the biggest fund that cultural organisations use is something called Creative Europe - youth orchestras, independent films, you name it, you can get grants ranging from a couple of thousand to a couple of million, and we'll continue to have access to that until the day we leave, and then the Treasury has said that if there are multi-annual funding projects that are supposed to continue for a couple of years after we left, then it will cover the missing money. So the funding won't simply disappear overnight. But after that, I guess this falls into the category of, it depends what the government negotiates. We're going to hear a lot over the next few months. Now, some non-EU countries do have access to the Creative Europe fund, but they pay a financial contribution in order to participate. So, are we going to do that? Or will the government increase arts funding on its own to make up for the loss? Or will they just be less money to go around? That's the choice we have.

A little later, Jacqui Miller, a Sunderland businesswoman asked what was the potential for the EU to damage the UK and what consequences that would have on the EU itself. Chris Morris replied:

... it depends how you define 'damage', I mean, I believe most EU leaders, when they say that in an ideal world, they want an agreement that works for everyone, for them and for us, because you're right, I mean, a bad deal or no deal would damage both sides. And, you know, Jean-Claude Juncker has said the EU's not in a hostile mood, but there will be a price to pay, and I think we all know what he means – the UK can't accept the same access to the single market as it gets as an EU member. We will have access, it's not going to just break down, but it won't be quite as easy, precisely because we've said we don't want such a close relationship. So I don't think they are setting out to punish us, but I don't think they are going to roll over either, and we have to remember, just as our government has red lines and domestic pressures, so do all the other governments. I mean, in terms of numbers, what are the odds that it might feel like damage, like a punishment? It might feel like it, but I don't think that's the intention.

Chris Morris observed that although Ms Miller was 'optimistic', there was uncertainty about and wondered how that bothered her. Matthew Price noted that Paul Dobson, editor of a fanzine for Sunderland was there. He asked whether his club would still be able to employ EU players. Mr Morris replied:

... to be honest, we don't really know what kind of immigration changes the government might introduce. At the moment, as you know, any player from any EU country can play in British football with no restrictions, but let's suppose the government might decide to treat players from EU countries like it does players from the rest of the world, then they would need to get a work permit by proving that they are international players who have played roughly 75% of their international matches for a FIFA top 50 ranked national team over the past two years. So, most of the big clubs wouldn't be affected by any change, because they sign big international superstars anyway. But, you know, if you take a player like N'Golo Kanté at Chelsea, he wasn't an international when first signed for Leicester, and took the Premier league by storm. So a

future Kanté might never be able to come here in the first place. So, I think the bigger effect of leaving the EU could be felt by clubs in the lower leagues who at the moment sign less well-known European players. So I don't want to rub it in Paul, but that might make Sunderland fans staring relegation in the face a little bit worried just now, or you might think 'fair enough, we'll just give home-grown talent a chance instead.'

Nick Robinson said that many listeners were asking whether, when the Article 50 process was started, it could be stopped. Chris Morris replied:

... this is the subject of genuine legal dispute. I mean, the government, of course, says it's got absolutely no plans to change course, and it's operating under the assumption that you can't reverse Article 50 anyway. But it's hard to find a cabinet minister being explicit about that. The justice secretary, Liz Truss has said 'my understanding is that it's irreversible', and David Davis the Brexit Secretary has said, 'Is it irreversible? I don't know.' On the other hand, when Donald Tusk, the European Council President was asked if the UK could change course in the next two years, he said, 'Technically, legally, yes.' And the man who helped write this blessing Article 50, the former British diplomat Lord Kerr, says there is absolutely nothing in it to stop you changing your mind, except – and this is a big but, that there might be a political price to pay. And I think that's the point. The politics of a screeching handbrake turn would be extremely difficult to navigate. In theory, I think, you could do it, or if you could do it, you wouldn't have to reapply, because you wouldn't have left, but legally, this is a piece of European law, so in the end the ultimate arbiter on this point would have to be our old friend, the European Court of Justice, and there is a legal case underway in Dublin at the moment, Nick, trying to refer precisely this question to the ECJ.

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Bulletins said the government would reveal how it intended to convert 'thousands of EU rules into British law'. Eleanor Garnier noted that Jeremy Corbyn had said he would not allow Parliament to be over-ridden. There was also mention that Work and Pensions secretary Damian Green had denied that the government was trying to 'blackmail' Europe by linking trade and security in the EU negotiations. It was noted that European leaders, led by Angela Merkel, had said that trade talks would have to wait until after a 'divorce settlement' was reached.

At 6.10am, Chris Morris, from Malta, noted that MEPs like Guy Verhofstadt were talking about blackmail and that there was concern that the 'sentiment' in UK's letter did stand out. He added that overall, there was relief that the main message was one of conciliation. There was also a sense of determination among the 27 to stick together. John Humphrys asked if at any stage they could 'scupper' the process. Mr Morris replied:

They can certainly put extremely large obstacles in the road. I mean, in the end the agreement on a divorce settlement has to be done by qualified majority, so you don't need to have all 27,

but I think it would be extremely unusual not to have 27 in the circumstances. And, you know, it's been an article of faith for a while that one of the UK's best negotiating tactics will be divide and rule, pick off other . . .

JOHN HUMPHRYS: Hmm.

CHRIS MORRIS: . . . EU countries with tempting offers one by one, but, you know, I'm sure some people would disagree with me on this, but it strikes me that the other 27, the issue of Brexit are as united as they've been on any issue for the past five years, and it may just be that Brexit was the wake-up call they needed to get on with trying to fix the other problems of the EU. And, you know, Angela Merkel, I think, a lot of people in Downing Street seemed to have held up hope that she was the person that was going to agree with the way they wanted to move forward, parallel talks on the divorce and on trade at the same time – she made very clear yesterday, and she'll be speaking here in Malta lately (sic, means 'later'?) she agrees with European Commission line, we need to sort out the terms of separation first, before any talk about future relationships.

In the link to Business News, John Humphrys observed there hadn't been turmoil in the markets over Article 50, despite expectations. Dominic O'Connell said there certainly had not been a repeat of June, when with some good reason 'perhaps' there had been fear that sterling would suffer. He said the tone of Mrs May's letter had been conciliatory enough to keep sterling where it was. Mr O'Connell asked his first guest if there had been a 'muted' market reaction because the language had not been 'quite as confrontational' as might have been the case. Another guest, Kathleen Brooks from City Index, suggested that people were record short positions on the pound already and Mr O'Connell asked if this meant people were betting that the pound would go down.

Later, Mr O'Connell asked:

And Kathleen, it's worth, it's worth thinking that erm, in that letter, Theresa May did hint at some kind of special deal for The City, it was only a hint, she talked about certain key sectors in a free trade agreement, (*inhales*) do you think there's any way politically though that, that, the government could allow Europe still to have some regulatory holdover The City, through the ECJ or something like that? That would be a very difficult thing politically, I suspect?

Ms Brooks said that the government had been pushed into a corner and were getting special treatment because Theresa May wanted to keep jobs in London.

Mr O'Connell said that later, they were going to hear about the relocation of people (only a few people) to Brussels, which 'will be an interesting move, really, because of Lloyd's...symbolic importance'. Ms Brooks replied that she agreed. Mr O'Connell then turned to his other guest, former George Osborne adviser Rupert Harrison, and observed:

Rupert, what about that free trade deal, it will, you know, if we're talking about The City, it will have to encapsulate services, and free trade deals in services are pretty rare on the ground, are they? And not . . . I mean, the European Union doesn't really have one, does it, as it stands?

Mr Harrison said it was 'total nonsense' that the City could be regulated by simply cutting and pasting EU laws. Dominic O'Connell chipped in that 'they' would hate that. Mr Harrison responded that the uncertainty about such 'fragile equivalence' was leading to 'activity at the margins' increasingly starting to move.

At 6.31am, Norman Smith described the Repeal Bill as a 'legislative mountain' which was transposing into British law all the thousands "and I do mean thousands' of pieces of EU law which cover pretty much every nook and cranny of our daily lives. He said the thinking was that when the UK left the EU, 'we will be good to go without sudden disruption'. He said the issue was not that the move was contentious, but rather 'the sheer legislative soup' it seemed to open up. NS said he did not think that the Great repeal Bill would itself be a flashpoint, but other separate legislation covering immigration, trade, agriculture and customs could be. He said these may be on the backburner for a while so the focus would switch to Brussels and there, Theresa May was 'absolutely in the market to do a deal'. She was reluctant to walk away, so was not in the same place as Brexiteers who thought differently. NS said a second point was that the UK would have to make 'big concessions' because Theresa May wanted a generous deal including the same conditions as being in the single market. He added:

That means we are going to have to give a lot if we want a lot. And we got a sort of tantalising sense yesterday of some of the areas where we might give: money – it's clear we are going to pay a Brexit bill, it seems also likely to me we will be prepared to pay money to ensure access to key sectors of the British economy, the letter talks about financial services and so-called network industry. There was no mention of the European Court of Justice, possibly there could be a continuing role for them, and most fascinating of all, there was no mention of immigration. And you just wonder whether there is possibly some sort of room for compromise over freedom of movement, because to date ministers have also been very careful in saying 'we want to end freedom of movement as it currently operates' – does that provide a little chink to negotiate?

At 6.53am, John Humphrys stated that Scotland had been causing troubles for Theresa May on the Brexit front, then added 'what about Wales? He asked Welsh first minister Carwyn Jones what he wanted. Mr Jones attacked the bracketing of security with the negotiations, saying it was the equivalent of a threat to jump off a cliff. Mr Humphrys said she (Theresa May) 'hadn't quite said that'. Mr Jones said it was being spun that way. Mr Humphrys said that was going to happen, then asked if 'a deal for everybody' (mentioned by Mr Jones) was all he wanted. Mr Jones cited access the single market and Mr Humphrys said it had already been said that he would not get that. Mr Jones

elaborated further but stuck to the point. Mr Humphrys did not challenge further, and then asked if he was thinking about farming subsidies. Mr Jones replied it was, and Mr Humphrys then wondered how he was going to handle the demand. Mr Humphrys asked if he was demanding separate votes for each of the national parties, and then what would happen if each Parliament wanted something different. He suggested that would be unrealistic, and challenged whether 'being like Belgium' was a good campaign. Mr Humphrys finally observed that Wales was in the United Kingdom, that the government was negotiating on that basis, and Wales was not going to break away.

AT 7.09am, Ross Hawkins, in a piece about what business wanted from the EU, first spoke to figures from a steelworks in Christchurch. They both said they wanted out of the EU, less bureaucracy and a re-birth of British standards to be applied to output. Mr Hawkins then visited a paint factory in Northampton, and an employee said they had to comply with the EU's Reach regulations without having any influence on how they were set. Ross Hawkins commented:

And even *if* Ministers wanted to, they couldn't just copy and paste those rules into British law, but as the system relies on an EU regulator and EU data, it would have to be negotiated alongside, well, everything else. The uncertainty's such, the chemical industry trade body says a fifth of its members are looking into leaving the UK. The demand in this factory . . .

The factory owner said he wanted the British system to stay the same as the EU system, 'both now and in the future'. Ross Hawkins said these contrasting views – ditch rules and keep them the same meant that someone would have to lose out in post-Brexit Britain.

In his piece, Ross Hawkins cited what the EU-paint-related regulations were (REACH).

Sarah Montague then interviewed Lord Lisvane, who, she said, was now a cross-bench peer but had been clerk to the House of Commons. He said Britain had never relinquished the actual sovereignty of Parliament and could have repealed in the European Communities Act of 1972 at any time. In two years there would be big questions about future sovereignty would be exercised when an enormous body of EU law was brought across, but there would be opportunity to amend or repeal elements of that law. Ms Montague suggested there were 80,000 items, but despite that, there would be gaps. Was that his concern? Lord Lisvane replied that in passing across laws – for example relating to drugs – there might be the need to create a UK drugs authority to replace the EU one. Any changes introduced in that process could be contentious. Patent law also came to mind. Ms Montague asked whether this was the Henry VIII clause applied.. She stated:

And this is where there is a suggestion that we have, it's been referred to this sort of Henry VIII clause which allows erm . . . ministers to use . . . well it allows secondary legislation to amend

primary legislation, so this is . . . gives powers to the executive, which some people are uncomfortable about – it's who's deciding what you fill . . . what you replace that EU body with?

Lord Lisvane said that it gave powers to the executive in a way in which primary legislation did not. He added:

And I think it would be a supreme irony, after all we were told in the referendum campaign about taking back control of parliamentary sovereignty, if the result of the process were actually two . . . affect a major shift of power to the executive.

Ms Montague asked if that would be because Parliament would just have too much to do. LL said it would be complex because not everything could be neatly parcelled. It would also be a huge drain on resources. And in terms of negotiations, A and Z might depend on each other, even though they were separate areas, so dealing with changes would be complex. Ms Montague asked if it would be 'doable' in two years. LL said it would take 10.

At 7.17am, John Humphrys noted that since June 24 there had been a trickle of jobs out of London (he posited that 'it hasn't been a flood?') and asked where Lloyd's was going to set up its new base. Mr O'Connell replied that it would be in Brussels. He observed:

An interesting choice for Lloyd's of London, given most had thought perhaps Frankfurt or Luxembourg more likely, and interesting reading for Number 10 of course, given the drama yesterday, from London to Brussels. Inga Beale, Dame Inga Beale, is the chief executive of Lloyds, she's here. Erm, just to go back a bit, Inga, why, why do you have to move these people in the first place, or why do you have to set up on the continent in the first place?

Dame Inga Beale said it was because when the UK exited the EU, it would lose the ability to issue and provide insurance for customers in the EU. So this was not moving the London HQ, it was setting up an EU subsidiary to service EU customers. Mr O'Connell asked how much of existing turnover was from the EU. Dame Inga said it was around 11%, though half of that could still be dealt with by London, to around 5%. She said the numbers would be 'minimal', that is, in the tens out of 34,000 in the London insurance market. She said:

It'll be minimal. We are expecting Lloyds to have people numbering in the tens, er, in the London insurance market at the moment there's about 34,000 people, so it's really minimal impact.

Mr O'Connell suggested that Lloyd's employed only about 1,000 – Dame Inga confirmed this. He asked why Brussels had been chosen. She replied it was the best place. Mr O'Connell also noted the Lloyd's annual results, which showed a flat profit of £2.1bn on slightly increased turnover. Dame Inga said margins had tightened, but the increase in the dollar had been a strong boost. Mr O'Connell wondered

if Lloyd's 'still had a future' in London 'despite the Brussels base'. Dame Inga said that it definitely would with 95% of business still written out of London.

At 7.35am, Mr Humphrys said:

It's tempting to talk about Brexit as a divorce, tempting, but misleading for all sorts of reasons, one of which is that in some divorces the two sides never want to set eyes on each other again, and another is there is no time limit in divorce proceedings, they drag on, but not Brexit – two years and that's it. So, So, Mrs May wants to speed things up by having two sets of negotiations going on simultaneously. The terms of the breakup and the terms of the new deal.

In the 8am bulletin was a voice report from Norman Smith. Zeb Soanes first said that the Great Repeal Bill had been described as one of the largest legislative processes ever undertaken in the UK. Norman Smith reinforced that this was a massive undertaking that could provide scope for critical MPs to cause Mrs May grief. He added that much of this had been reduced by Mrs May's pledge not to repeal or amend existing EU laws, including those covering the environment or employment. He added that Lord Lisvane had warned the process could take a decade. Chris Morris, reporting from Malta, said that Donald Tusk had pledged to respond to Mrs May by Friday, but meanwhile Angela Merkel had insisted again that divorce arrangements would have to be agreed before a new deal could be reached. Dominic O'Connell then reported that Lloyd's had confirmed it was setting up a base in Brussels. He said the company could claim a place in the national consciousness, and was a bedrock of Britain's financial services industry. He said that Lloyd's had said that it had been 'forced' to set up a new base because after the UK left the EU it would lose the right to sell across the single market, He added:

It has chosen Brussels, something of a surprise, given that many had thought Luxembourg Frankfurt more likely. It's chief executive, Dame Inga Beale said the new office would only employ a few dozen people, but the significance of Lloyd's of London planting a flag in the heart of Europe, the day after Article 50 was invoked, will not be lost on other people in the Square Mile.

At 8.10am, John Humphrys interviewed David Davis. He first suggested that the sentence, 'a failure to reach agreement would mean our cooperation in the fight against crime and terrorism would be weakened' sounded in Theresa May's letter like blackmail. Mr Davis said it did not. He had spent yesterday talking to his opposite numbers in Europe and they all stressed they wanted a deep and special relationship. In the section concerned, the prime minister was saying simply that if there wasn't a deal it would be not good for both sides. There were security issues that needed sorting out such as Europol, they would need a new deal, and this was what was being said. It was a reasonable point to make. Mr Humphrys asked what Amber Rudd meant when she had said that the UK was the

largest contributor to Europol and if 'we get thrown out', the UK would take 'our information' with us, and the legislation. He asked if that wasn't a touch of blackmail, what was? Mr Davis denied it was. The simple truth was that unless a parallel deal was made, the UK would not be in Europol or part of the European Arrest Warrant, which Theresa May had helped negotiate. Mr Humphrys said all she would have had to do (for it not to sound like blackmail?) was to say that everything possible would be done towards reaching agreement. But she did not and it was a blackmail threat, and had been interpreted as such by many in Europe. Mr Davis suggested Guy Verhofstadt. Mr Humphrys said that Manfred Weber had said the same thing on the programme. Mr Davis said neither were direct negotiators. Mr Humphrys said Mr Verhofstadt was going to be. Mr Davis said that was with the European Parliament. He repeated the words were not a threat, simply a statement. The UK was after a fully comprehensive deal that covered all aspects of our existing relationship including security.

Mr Humphrys shifted focus to the timing of the talks. He suggested that Mr Davis would like to deal with departure and new arrangements together. Mr Davis confirmed that he would. Mr Humphrys said he was being told that could not happen, the money 'we give to Brussels' had to be sorted out first. Mr Davis said that Article 50 stipulated both, and suggested that for practical reasons, they could not be separated. Mr Humphrys said he wanted to keep his trump card. Mr Davis denied that. Mr Humphrys said if he wanted a lot he would have to give a lot. Mr Davis said they agreed with the Commission that the first thing that had to be dealt with was European and British citizens. Then there was the Irish border, but that should not hold up trade and security negotiations. Mr Humphrys suggested there was not a lot of give, Mrs Merkel was being tough. Mr Davis said it was the beginning of the negotiation and people would take strong positions. His job was to keep things on an even keel and not get in tit-for-tat – the first negotiations would not be for about a month after the European Council meeting that set terms. Mr Davis repeated he wanted to secure good terms. Mr Humphrys said he had stated in January that he wanted to deliver the same benefits as the UK currently has – was that conceivable? Mr Davis said he made no apology for being ambitious. He wanted to secure the ability to do deals in the biggest markets in the world. Mr Humphrys said he knew very well if he got, the signal it would send to the 27 was that they could have the same benefits without paying a penny. That was not going to happen. Mr Davis replied that he would try for the best. Things had calmed down – a reason for delaying applying for Article 50 – and it had emerged that Britain's position in the world was unique, others didn't have the same strengths to go it alone. This was not the start-up of a break-up of the EU, and the UK wanted a strong powerful EU.

Mr Humphrys asked if some of his 'troublesome' backbenchers were prepared to accept less than had been originally promised. Mr Davis said he was aiming for a good deal and they would be able to

decide whether it was at the end. He wanted to get control back of laws and borders and so on, there was focus on numbers in the economy, but a lot of this was our standing and our ability to stand on our own two feet. He was not sure who was troublesome. If he got a good deal, they would support it. Mr Humphrys asked how important immigration – those already here and Brits overseas – was. Mr Davis said it would be the first thing on the agenda, a deal had already been attempted, and now it was a moral duty to sort out the anxieties of the individuals involved. Mr Humphrys asked in terms of numbers the issue was control rather than rigid numbers. Mr Davis said the task was to make the British Parliament responsible for decisions about immigration, and then numbers would be brought down smoothly. Mr Humphrys asked whether this would take a very long time. Mr Davis did not define a period of time, but stuck that it would take time.

Finally, Mr Humphrys suggested it was a joke to claim that the negotiations could be complete in two years. Mr Davis denied this. He said it took time to sort out standards related to trade deals – that is why European standards were initially being incorporated into British law because it gave certainty in the negotiating base. Mr Humphrys suggested it would take years to cut red tape. Mr Davis said it was a two stage process – the first to adopt EU law, and then for Parliament to decide what it wanted to improve and change. Mr Humphrys said that ‘the powerful Europeans’ had said they were sad (over and over again) to have received the Brexit letter. What did he think? Mr Davis said ‘excited for the future of our country’.

Laura Kuenssberg was asked to assess Mr Davis’s contribution. She said normally governments played expectations down, but this government was playing them up. She said some would say this was preparing the ground for ‘pesky opponents’ (to be dealt with when they were difficult across the table), but others were saying they were being honest and believed it could be done. She claimed that Mr Davis had changed one thing – that he was now saying that achieving the ‘exact same benefits’ was an ambition, not a promise, ‘clearly suggesting he doesn’t want to be held to that’. Ms Kuenssberg added that all around the government had opportunities, but they also had problems - that the EU wasn’t interested in parallel talks and of the sheer complexity of ‘getting all this done’.

Mr Humphrys asked if the Labour party could put spokes in wheels. Ms Kuenssberg replied that after having several positions, Labour now had gone through internal agonies and arrived at one. There were six tests on which they would hold the government to account. Ms Kuenssberg added that, however, most of the pressure on Theresa May was coming from the ‘right’ in her own party – the eurosceptics in her own party were very powerful and the most difficult thing to deal with.

In an interview with Tim Martin of Wetherpoon's (8.45am), Mr Humphrys asked if he was relieved or worried about the Repeal Bill, and this allowed Theresa May to explain why Brexit would be positive in terms of legislative accountability, and to attack the EU regulatory regime. Mr Humphrys then suggested he was wrong in attributing blame to the EU for levels of alcohol duty. In the interview that followed of journalists Stefanie Bolzen, London correspondent of Die Welt, and Bartosz Wielinski, foreign editor for the Polish newspaper, Gazeta Wyborcza, Mr Humphrys gave them, in effect, free rein to attack Brexit.

March 31

Bulletins said that Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, would set out how the EU wanted to handle the Brexit negotiations. Kamal Ahmed reported on a British Hospitality Association (BHA) claim that they relied on 60,000 workers from the EU every year and had warned that tourism would be damaged if strict immigration controls were introduced. Mr Ahmed said BMW had called for a retention of labour mobility, and now the BHA had said they were facing a 'recruitment crisis' if the ending of freedom of movement meant a drop in the number of EU citizens coming to work in the UK. He added that a KPMG report said that it would take 10 years to reduce the need for EU workers by training UK workers.

At 6.10am, Chris Morris, reporting from Malta, outlined how the EU response to the Article 50 letter would be announced. He said the talks would be in three phases, the terms of the divorce, trade agreements and then the future relationship. He added:

At each of those three stages there are going to be severe stumbling blocks I think and you may have noticed that one party that isn't being consulted about what's in these guidelines is, of course, the United Kingdom and that is significant. Until Wednesday the British government was in charge of the timing of this whole process because it was the Prime Minister who decided when Article 50 was to be triggered, now that's been done control of the timing moves to Brussels and other EU capitals.

Mishal Husain asked whether the news that talks over trade could start in a few months was a relief. Mr Morris said not because the UK would like that to happen immediately, because the future trading relationship was of great importance. But the chief negotiator insisted otherwise. He said the UK could challenge the framework but once it was agreed by the 27, it was hard to unpick.

At 6.15am in Business News, Katie Prescott spoke to Lucy McDonald. From Allianz Global Investors. She asked whether, because of Brexit she was balancing portfolios away from the UK. KMcD said her funds did not have much exposure to the UK domestic market, they did not think sterling was going

to be strong and that it could be a much extended period of uncertainty for the UK economy and the countries dependent on it. Ms Prescott asked if everyone was a bored (with Brexit) 'as you are'. Lucy McDonald repeated it was a problem that was going to go on for a long time.

At 7.08, in the interview with Sven Mikser, the Estonian Foreign Secretary, Mishal Husain tied hard to get him to say that the UK's position in the EU negotiations was weak and at odds with what the EU would permit. He was circumspect in avoiding negative remarks, but did finally warn that it was hard to see the EU putting in the table anything more positive than had been offered to David Cameron.

At 7.17am, in Business News update, Mishal Husain's intro link stressed the BHA warning about a shortfall of EU workers. Katie Prescott outlined again the warning from the BHA about UK tourism being at risk and it being 10 years before the need for EU workers would be reduced. Ms Prescott said the spread of the numbers across the UK and outside big cities was 'quite surprising'. Ufi Ibrahim from the BHA agreed and said in Llandudno, for example, 60% of relevant staff were from the EU. Ms Prescott asked if that was because of a failure to train homegrown workers and enjoying cheap labour. UI said there were 4.5m employed in her industry and with UK employment at record levels, there were not enough people to fill vacancies. Ms Prescott asked if their 10-year plan to attract train local staff was long-overdue.

At 8.29am, Chris Morris reported from Malta on the EU response to the Article 50 letter, having seen the draft guidelines. He said it was a nine-page document that outlined a phased approach in line with what had been predicted. Only when the 'divorce' phase had been dealt with could there be progress to the next phase. The document also laid out second and third phases. He added that it would be rather difficult to initiate parallel negotiations on trade if the other 27 countries did not want to do it that way. Mr Morris noted that the document did not contain specific reference to more difficult issues such as the Irish border.

At 8.45am, Mishal Husain pondered in her intro if the title of the Great Repeal Bill was political spin in that it could be better described as the Great Incorporation Bill, 'given that it was making a body of EU law British'. Polly McKenzie, former adviser to Nick Clegg said she thought the title was spin in that it was jurisdictional transfer 'that didn't have the right ring about it'. It was simply transferring every gram of 'offensive' (apparently) Brussels legislation on to the UK statute books. She added that it could not be called 'great' either, because legislative words had to have relevant meaning. Michael Cockerell noted that the Great Reform Act of 1832 (opposed by the Tories) was only called that at the bill stage. He said the current bill was 'great' in that in that 43 years' of legislation from Brussels was being cut and pasted into British legislation. There was discussion about the Theresa May picture accompanying

her Article 50 letter (was she trying to be like Thatcher?) Mr Cockerell said the Bill would not go down well in Scotland because of the Henry VIII provisions – he had never been king there.

April 1

The 7am bulletin said that Downing Street had sought to reassure Gibraltar that the UK would stand up for its interests. After Donald Tusk had said that a deal between the EU and the UK would not apply to Gibraltar without an additional agreement between Spain and the UK. Mark Lobel said that Gibraltar's first minister had accused Spain of launching a predictable, selfish, rancid, medieval sovereignty claim to the Rock. Mr Lobel said that Spain had a 'long-standing territorial claim on Gibraltar'. There was a quote from the first minister saying Gibraltar had not chosen Brexit and would not be the victims of Brexit.

At 7.10am, Damian Grammaticas said the inclusion in the draft negotiating guidelines of Gibraltar was a surprise. He added that an official had explained that the clause applied in the first instance to a future trade deal – so not the Brexit deal itself – but a future deal could not be applied to Gibraltar without Spanish agreement, and that was what had raised concerns. John Humphrys asked if they could do this. Mr Grammaticas said that an EU official had explained that any deal needed the approval of all 27 EU countries, so negotiations had to reflect Spain's interests. He added that the official had also pointed out that when Spain had joined the EU, the British position on Gibraltar had been reflected in negotiations; now the boot was on the other foot. Mr Grammaticas said that the difficulty had caused upset but was what was likely to happen now that the UK was at the other side of the negotiating table – one country facing 27. Mr Humphrys asked if the EU were rowing back from this. DG suggested not, and the UK could not now influence the negotiating stance.

At 7.20, Chris Morris looked back at the week since the Article 50 letter was sent, and developments in consequence. He said the day would be remembered in history as 'the long goodbye, a rollercoaster, two-year process finally began'. A quote from Theresa May was played:

Perhaps now more than ever the world needs the liberal democratic values of Europe. Values . . .

Mr Morris said that at least gave the Liberal Democrats 'something to smile about', but this was Theresa May's day, and 'her big gamble'. She had also said that the UK was not leaving 'Europe', but this had not impressed Labour. Jeremy Corbyn had rather described her actions as 'reckless and damaging'. Mr Morris said the Brexiteers had been cock-a-hoop, but Donald Tusk had looked and sounded stunned by the ending of the phoney war, with the UK now on the other side of the table.

Mr Morris said that on Thursday the government white paper to adopt ‘thousands and thousands of EU laws, had been wheeled out, with Lord Lisvane, former clerk to the House of Commons warning that an ‘awful lot’ of tidying up could go on for a decade. Mr Morris said that also on Thursday – with the magnitude of the task beginning to show – David Davis had sought to rally the troops. There was a quote from him saying he wanted a really good trade deal and to get back control of laws and borders in pursuit of being able to stand ‘on our own two feet’. Mr Morris said that on Friday, Donald Tusk had set out the EU’s draft negotiating position which laid down that there would be no trade talks until ‘priority issues’ such as separation and divorce had been addressed. The message was no parallel talks, and ‘behave and thou shalt be rewarded’. He concluded:

So what did we learn from this momentous week in Brexit? Well, point one – blimey it’s complicated, but we knew that already. Point two: both sides, the UK and the EU really do want an ambitious partnership in the future, but getting there from here is going to be a big ask. And finally, this was a turning point. After this week, nothing in relations between the UK and the EU will ever be quite the same again.

At 8.33am, in the interview sequence involving Sir Vince Cable and Iain Duncan Smith, John Humphrys gave Mr Duncan Smith the opportunity to explain why the Tusk letter was more reasonable than had been expected. Mr Humphrys brought into the equation the German negativity about the car industry, and gave Sir Vince a clear platform to outline at length the complexities of leaving and how much it would cost.

April 3

Bulletins said that Theresa May had said she would not allow Gibraltar to be used a bargaining chip. Tom Burridge said that Gibraltar’s low tax regime had been a constant subject of complaint from Madrid.

In Business News at 6.15am, Philippe Waechter, chief economist of the French bank Natixis, said that Marine le Pen’s policy of wanting to leave the EU would, if she won the presidential election be a ‘very strong shock on France’. Later Dominic O’Connell said that the British economy had done amazingly well in creating jobs ‘since the financial crisis’. Alan McIntosh, chief investment strategist at Quilter Cheviot, said the UK economy had been ‘quite robust’, and ‘to the surprise of many, particularly robust in the aftermath of the vote Leave’.

At 6.32am, Tom Burridge explained the Gibraltar arguments. He said:

I think, you know, for the Spaniards, you know, I don’t think the assertion by the European Union in this document, which is only a desire, it’s only a sort of a plan, a proposal, that Spain could have the final say, erm, I don’t think it really alters the debate over Gibraltar’s sovereignty, you know, Britain and Spain have long disagreed on that, and, you know, there’s

no sign that there will be any agreement in the coming years or that will change. But I think, you know, it does sort of question the Gibraltarian way of life, if you like, the relationship. And it's been a distinctive relationship that Gibraltar has enjoyed with the European Union. There are low taxes here, and the Spanish grievance in recent years has always been on a predominantly economic argument, the fact that corporation tax here in Gibraltar is very low, that attracts financial companies to come here, and then you just go over the border into La Linea, a pretty depressed town on the Spanish side, and unemployment is sky high, the economy is pretty stagnant, and here in Gibraltar there's a, there's a hell of a lot of money, there's a lot of wealth, and the economy here booms, but it does depend, of course, on the free movement of labour, people coming back and forth across that border.

At 6.45am, Mr Humphrys said that one of the most difficult issues in Brexit talk would be the Irish border. Chris Page presented a package that included reference to 75% in Derry wanted to Remain in the EU, 'border brainteasers', three figures (a former customs officer, a businessman and a former 'peace negotiator') and who were worried about the re-imposition of the border and one who was not (a farmer). Last word went to the 'peace negotiator', who warned of bitter memories of what had happened when the borders applied.

At 6.49am, Justin Webb interviewed Rafa de Miguel, the national desk editor at El Pais, who said Spain wanted the EU to side with its shared sovereignty concerns over Gibraltar.

At 8.10am, Tom Burridge mentioned that there was now uncertainty because of Brexit over Gibraltar's way of life and the low tax economy that had been the centre of Spanish grievances for many years. He added that the UK could defend its position over Gibraltar and ignore Spain, but it was another dimension 'to an already complicated process'. Jack Straw suggested the UK government was over-reacting to the mention of Spain, and also observed:

I'm afraid, as we get into the reality of the negotiations, all sorts of problems are popping up. One is . . . is this: as long as we were in the European Union, we held equal cards with Spain, and indeed, when they wanted to join, they joined in 1986, we held many more cards than they did. The situation and I reversed. We are leaving, we're going to have to get an agreement on all sorts of issues not just Gibraltar, with 27 other member states. Guess what: they hold the cards. This is going to be really difficult. This is one aspect of a whole series of very, very complex negotiations, which Britain now faces.

Mr Straw agreed with Mr Humphrys that this complication would not scupper the Brexit deal.

April 4

The 6am bulletin led with that the Commons exiting the EU committee was challenging the government to prove the Prime Minister's claim that no deal was better than a bad deal on Brexit. It

had also said that Parliament should be consulted before ministers walked away without a deal. Alex Forsyth said:

The report by Parliament's Brexit committee stressed the importance of the UK and the EU reaching agreement on future relations by the end of the two-year negotiating period. It accused the government of making unsubstantiated claims that no deal was better than a bad deal, and said economic and legal assessments of that eventuality should be carried out. Some Brexit-backing committee members refused to support the report, saying it was rushed, skewed and partisan. The government said the 'no deal' scenario was not wanted or expected, but it would be better than a deal which sought to punish the UK, and insisted it was preparing for all potential outcomes.

At 6.15am, Justin Rowlett, reporting about the UJK's trade mission to India, said:

I have to say, and I don't want to pour cold water on this event, but, er, I would suggest that it is very unlikely that a deal would be available for Britain. The European Union, India's biggest trading partner, has been negotiating with India now for more than . . . for almost 10 years, and has not achieved a trade deal. Now that's a market of 400 million people, and as I say, India's biggest trading partner, and if India won't do a deal with the European Union, you got to ask yourself what kind of concessions would Britain have to make in order to get a deal on its own? So, I must say, the long-term hopes of a deal may be not great, but in the short-term I'm sure they'll pulling all sorts of deals between companies out of the hat and saying that relations between the two countries are, are fabulous.

At 6.15am, Dominic O'Connell, noted the previous week's news that Lloyd's of London would set up in Brussels after the Brexit vote as part of a steady trickle of jobs out of the City since June 23. He said that Frankfurt was hoping to be one of the 'big beneficiaries'. He asked Hubertus Văth, the head of Frankfurt Main Finance how many jobs would come to his city. He said there was a trickle and it was expected there would be 10,000 over five years. Mr O'Connell asked who was leaving and why. Mr Văth replied:

Well, at the moment, there are more exploratory teams. Why is that the case? Like, like you said, everybody is right now looking, and what is the post-Brexit world looking like? As London is Europe's leading financial centre, and 100 out of the 200 foreign banks located in London said they mainly serve the common market out of London. In the post-Brexit time, they will lose these opportunities to do that, at that ease as they do it now, by losing the passporting rights.

Mr O'Connell asked if the big US banks were looking. Mr Văth said they were, and they were also looking at Asian banks, and Russian ones. Mr O'Connell asked if the choice was between Frankfurt, Dublin, Paris or Luxembourg. Mr Văth said it would be a multipolar world, and some might go to two places.

At 6.32am, Ellie Price said the Commons Brexit committee had challenged the Prime Minister's Lancaster House speech in which she had said no deal was better than a bad deal. It wanted a thorough assessment of what would happen if there was no agreement and wanted a Parliamentary vote if a no deal impasse was reached. Mishal Husain suggested that David Davis had 'admitted' that there had been no such assessment. She replied that this was right but the government had said they were preparing for all outcomes and insisted that the plan was to get at a deal. She added that the report questioned whether two years was enough time to get a deal. She noted that the EU had said that divorce terms would have to be agreed before trade could be discussed. Ms Husain asked who supported the report. Ms Price said it was crucially not all MPs on the committee – there were six who did not support the findings. She added that one of them, Dominic Raab, had claimed the report was rushed, skewed and partisan.

At 7.08am, Mishal Husain interviewed Hilary Benn, chairman of the Commons Brexit Committee, about his report. She asked him what he meant by a full assessment in relation to no deal. Mr Benn suggested that if tariffs were imposed, passporting issues arose and healthcare provision in Europe to UK citizens ended, there would be consequences, but David Davis had confirmed that this had not been done. Ms Husain asked if such an assessment was made and was made public, it might get in the way of doing an actual deal. She asked if he would be happy if it were not made public. Hilary Benn accepted a balance had to be struck, but he expected the work to be done. At the same time, no-one had defined what a bad deal would be, Ms Husain repeated if he would be happy for a deal not to be made public. Hilary Benn said he wanted the assessment to go ahead and as much as possible of it to be shared. Ms Husain said the report was supported by only 10 of the 16 members of the committee. And Dominic Raab had called it rushed, skewed and partisan. Hilary Benn said he did not agree, his committee was simply holding the government to account. Ms Husain wondered if they might work harder in future to get consensus. Hilary Benn replied they were doing a vital job.

At 8.10am, Mishal Husain interviewed Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London. She asked if he was concerned to protect London as a financial centre after Brexit, and how many assurances he had been given by the government to stop jobs moving out of London 'in a way we are already seeing, from banks, from people like Goldman Sachs and Lloyd's of London', which, she said, was opening up an office in Brussels. Mr Khan replied that the government must give a cast-iron guarantee that they needed to EU citizens that they could stay. He claimed that it would be impossible to reach a deal in two years, that the UK could fall off a cliff-edge, so an interim deal was needed because businesses, especially the financial sector, needed certainty. If that didn't happen, they would make plans to have offices across Europe.

Ms Husain noted that he had called for a flexible immigration system and wondered what that entailed. Mr Khan said a special quota was needed for London to meet its actual needs. He said he accepted that some parts of the country did not want immigrants, but London needed them.

At 8.35am, Justin Rowlatt said he had asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if there was a contradiction in wanting to limit immigration from India and better trade links. He said PH had replied that the UK would in future want skilled immigrants. In the studio, Didar Singh, from the Indian Chamber of Commerce, said that Brexit brought 'uncertainty' to UK-India relationships. Sarah Montague asked if businesses were being put off and needed reassurance. He confirmed that they did – both those Indian companies (800+) who had invested in the UK, and those who traded. He said an agreement would improve the 'investment scenario'.

Ms Montague then asked Sir Andrew Cahn, former head of UK and Investment, what were the chances of a trade deal. He said the government was making good initiatives, but getting a deal quickly was unlikely. The EU had been negotiating for nine years. That was partly because India wanted to protect its manufacturing and service industries from competition. There was already two-way traffic and the door could be opened further. But a deal could take 10 years. Mr Singh also confirmed that a deal could take time, but in the meantime, trade could continue to happen. Sir Andrew concluded that for the next couple of years there was going to be uncertainty, and warned that the government must do more to provide finance and intelligence so that longer term prospects could improve.

At 8.43, Mishal Husain, noting the Brexit Committee's demand for an assessment of 'no deal', asked Chris Morris what no deal might look like. He replied that the most dangerous scenario was if a deal fell apart at the last minute and a last minute hitch 'blew the whole thing out of the water'. If there was six months to plan, it might not be so bad, there could be a more structured response. He observed that what a deal was needed to be defined (with laughter in his voice) because multiple deals would have to be negotiated, covering (in the draft guidelines) separation, trade and the future. Chris Morris said that in that context, 'no deal' meant no deal on the terms of separation and if that happened the whole negotiating process would collapse and 'we could crash out of Europe'. There was a danger of short-term chaos that everyone was keen to avoid. Mishal Husain asked about what falling back on WTO rules would mean. He said:

Well, there are obviously numbers out there that they could use, so I mean, yes, falling back on World Trade Organisation rules, that would mean that on average tariffs on manufactured goods would be about 5%, on some things they'd be considerably higher, some agricultural produce they would be 40%. There would be the sudden imposition of customs checks, it's hard to quantify exactly how much that would cost, how much that would cost businesses, all

sorts of other barriers to trade. I mean, a serious impact on financial services, because companies would lose their passporting rights to sell services across the single market. There are also, I think, I mean, a host of practical issues, which again are pretty hard to quantify in terms of a number to do with the common rules that regulate all parts of daily life. So, for example, if we were very suddenly no longer part of European aviation agreements, the next day, planes taking off from the UK would probably not be able to land at airports in the EU, because we would have fallen out of the rulebook. And you, you know, you can paint a very apocalyptic picture of many things right to halt. How you put a number on them is difficult, but the . . . manufacturers' association, EEF, has certainly said 'no deal' would be major economic shock.

Breakdown and analysis of BBC contributions:

Bulletins:

Problems with the bulletins began on the first day (March 29) and recurred throughout. The hallmark of the treatment was a mixture of negative language and inclusion of items that underlined the difficulties of the negotiations, with virtually nothing to balance this. These were matters of editorial choice and showed the Corporation's underlying negative mindset. On day one, March 29, Laura Kuenssberg described the negotiations as 'fraught' and pointed to the tensions within the Conservative Party, between Westminster and Holyrood and among the public. Europe editor Katya Adler added that 'many across Europe' thought the UK's expectations were 'unrealistic'. Also included was a prediction from Marine Le Pen – taken from an interview on the previous night's edition of Newsnight – that Front National leader Marine Le Pen had predicted that the EU would be determined in the negotiations to punish the UK.

Why was this included? The BBC normally treats the remarks of Ms Le Pen as 'far right' and therefore suspect. Here, they chose to give her observations credibility in order to provide a stark illustration of negativity.

On the second day (March 30), the main EU-related item was that the government was intending to convert thousands of EU rules into English law through what was being called the Great Repeal Bill. It was followed by a 'denial' by Work Pensions Secretary Damian Green – again taken from the previous night's edition of Newsnight – that the government was trying to 'blackmail' the EU by bracketing trade talks and issues of security together.

Why was that story elevated to bulletin level? Iain Duncan Smith later (in his Today interview) said that the reception for the Article 50 letter by the key EU figures had been notably positive, and that this was not an issue. BBC correspondents (such as Chris Morris at 6.10pm) noted that those who had drawn attention to the alleged conditionality were EU 'hawks' such as Guy Verhofstadt. By contrast, the actual negotiators (in line with what IDS said) were more relaxed. The inference must be that there was a clear desire to include in the bulletins material which showed the negotiations in as negative as possible light.

On March 31 – with Donald Tusk's formal response to the Article 50 letter expected during the morning – Today's main EU-related bulletin item was a warning from the British Hospitality Association that the UK industry relied on EU labour and if that immigration rules were introduced,

there would be negative consequences. There was a voice piece from business editor Kamal Ahmed, who said the Association had called for continued labour mobility and had warned that the ending of freedom of movement could result in a 'recruitment crisis'.

This story was elevated to this level by the BBC. It did not appear widely in the UK press. The main usage was in the Independent, who interpreted it as an example of how unrealistic the demands of Brexiteers were. The BBC, therefore, by this time seemed to be on a clear mission to show at headline level the difficulties of Brexit on its flagship news and current affairs programme.

On April 1 and April 3, the main EU-related bulletin items were that the government had sought to reassure Gibraltar that the UK would stand up for its interests in the face of Donald Tusk's insistence that a deal between the EU and the UK would not apply to Gibraltar without an additional agreement between Spain and the UK. The aim here seemed to be to show again the negative consequences of the Article 50 letter.

Finally, on April 4, the key EU-related item was that the House of Commons Brexit Committee was challenging the government to prove the Prime Minister's claim that no deal was better than a bad deal on Brexit, and had called for an independent assessment.

Overall, the bulletins were focused heavily on looking for negative points about Brexit and the Brexit process. There was no corresponding positive material, nothing elevated to headline level that suggested that Brexit would lead to positive outcomes for the UK.

Correspondents/Presenters:

In general, the various BBC correspondents were most focused during the survey period on looking for negatives in the negotiations and as consequences of Brexit. Of course, it is their job to be cynical and challenging, to root out cant and government doublespeak.

But the News-watch survey of 2002 covering the introduction across the EU of euro notes and coins showed that sometimes also, BBC correspondents see their role as accentuating the positive. Then Newsnight correspondent Paul Mason, said, for example on January 3:

As the midnight hour approached, a giant inflatable euro tree blossomed into life. For once, the Ode to Joy seemed exactly the right tune.

And on January 1, on Today, James Naughtie, from Paris, observed:

everyone was rushing to a cash machine last night, there was a sense of occasion, a genuine excitement. A sense of peculiar new notes, a sense of change in the air (sic) especially among young people, a sense of breaking away from the past.

The feeling that this was a Europe-wide celebration was augmented later in the Today programme when Mr Naughtie said there had been “streets strewn with revellers”.

The contrast with correspondents’ reactions to the Article 50 letter was stark, if not startling.

Laura Kuenssberg: It has already been observed that in bulletins, the Corporation’s political editor had stressed at the outset the fraught nature of negotiations, and pointed to the tensions that would now ensue. Later that same morning, commenting on Philip Hammond’s interview by John Humphrys, she noted that he had hinted at a ‘lot of compromise’, that there were doubts about what the government was trying to do ‘politically and legally’ and stressed that while some saw Brexit as an ‘opportunity’ others thought it was a ‘potential catastrophe’. On March 30, she reacted similarly to an interview by David Davis, the Brexit Secretary. She pointed to the ‘sheer complexity of getting all this done’, said he was preparing the ground for ‘pesky opponents’ and had reduced getting ‘exact same benefits’ from a promise to an ambition.

Dominic O’Connell: On March 29, Mr O’Connell confirmed that there had been a ‘palpable feeling of shock’ in reaction to Brexit on June 23. The world had not ended but there had not been much celebration, then pointed to a steady trickle of jobs lost to the continent and pointed out that it was expected that Lloyd’s would set up a European base to keep European business ‘that it fears may otherwise be lost after Brexit’. With his first guest, the pro-Leave John Longworth, he suggested that his message was ‘not to worry about the single market’ and to look at new opportunities. He said that Mr Longworth’s message was ‘quite different’ from ‘some business trade bodies’ who wanted access to the single market. He later suggested to him that ‘quite a few companies’ were ‘fearful about the future’. His second guest, Martina Kuprinska, a start-up entrepreneur, confirmed to him that she was worried about the single market, the availability of EU labour, and agreed that she was disappointed about the Brexit vote and would not have set up her business in London had the Brexit vote already happened. Mr O’Connell, having first observed that the City contained ‘thousands of professional service employees’ asked his third guest, Sarah Croucher, if they were worried about the jobs. When she replied they were taking a ‘measured approach’ he suggested that this was ‘spoken like a true lawyer’. She added that English law was an advantage of London. Mr O’Connell wondered if this would ‘ebb away’ because he had heard that Goldman Sachs ‘and some big insurance companies were moving away to the Continent. His fourth guest was Mike Amey, from Pimco, which Mr O’Connell said were the world’s biggest investors in government debt. MA said that the markets were looking for

compromise in the negotiations. He said that sterling would be a safety valve in the negotiations. Mr O'Connell's final question was to MK. He asked what her advice would be to the Brexit negotiators. She said access to the single market and the availability of digital skills (meaning free movement of labour).

Thus in the first edition of Business News, Mr O'Connell had one pro-Brexit guest who made several optimistic points. But this was strongly offset – first by comments that the City remained unhappy about Brexit, that there was significant momentum of jobs away from London, and a major announcement on that front due; and second by a guest who was strongly against the Brexit vote and who wanted continued access to the single market and free movement. The questions and commentary he provided were strongly, on balance, negative in terms of the prospects for the City and jobs. Two of the guests could be regarded as neutral in their contributions, but Mr O'Connell pushed negative points at them, and their neutrality was despite that. Clearly there would have been thought given to balance in this sequence in the choice of guests; there was no indication that the editor was looking for a positive approach, other than through one of the four guests.

In Business Update, at 7.14am, Mr O'Connell first observed that the City had been 'among the most nervous' about Brexit, that the vote had caused 'consternation' and on the whole that financial services had campaigned hard to Remain. He said again that there had been a steady move out of London 'with big banks and others' setting up offices in Frankfurt and Luxembourg. He added (for the second time) that Lloyd's would announce that it was setting up 'a new European HQ'. He asked his next guest, Caroline Simmons of UBS (which, he said, was the largest manager of rich people's money in the world) why the City was 'so nervous' about financial passporting. She replied that this was because it meant that some services would not be permissible out of London and would thus need to move. Mr O'Connell asked if people were making contingency plans. CS agreed and noted that 20% of investment bank functions could be affected and the property sector might also be hit.

The fifth Business News guest of the morning thus strongly agreed with Mr O'Connell in his prevailing theme of the morning, that the City was under threat from Brexit, that jobs were under threat, and confirmed that plans were being made in earnest to set up new operational centres in EU cities.

In the second day's Business News on March 30, Mr O'Connell first commented on March 30 that despite expectations, the markets had not reacted with turmoil to the Article 50 letter even though the possibility of a stand-off might have triggered one'. He asked his first guest, Kathleen Brooks, of City Index, if there had been a 'muted' market reaction because the language had not been 'quite as confrontational' as might have been the case. Her response was that there had been no problems but

only because already there had been record numbers of short selling positions on the pound. Mr O'Connell asked if this meant that people were betting the pound would fall. Ms Brooks replied that those who did not like the pound because if Brexit had had nine months to short it and were now doing so 'in droves'. Mr O'Connell asked his second guest, Rupert Harrison, of Blackrock (a former adviser to George Osborne) what he thought of Theresa May's bracketing of security and trade. Ross Hawkins said it was 'punchy' but warned it was a difficult card to play. Mr O'Connell asked if her bluff could easily be called. Ross Hawkins confirmed it could. Mr O'Connell then asked Ms Brooks whether – although it would be 'difficult politically' – the government would allow the ECJ to have a regulatory hold over the City. Ms Brooks claimed that in order to keep investment banks and the financial sector, and jobs in London it was in Theresa May's best interests to do so. In response, Mr O'Connell asked if Ms Brooks thought that Lloyd's announcement that they were relocating some people to the continent was a move 'of symbolic importance'. She agreed that it was. Mr O'Connell then turned to Ross Hawkins again and suggested that it was 'pretty rare' for a free trade deal to encapsulate financial services, and that the European Union currently did not have one. Ross Hawkins responded that there should be a deal on goods, but with services 'we have to be much more pessimistic'. He said a deal, which would probably have to include the ECJ and British Courts working together was 'going to be very difficult for both sides'. Mr O'Connell suggested it would be the Germans and the French setting the rules. Ross Hawkins responded:

there are two big problems, one is if you are the Bank of England or the regulator in The City, the idea that you can manage the world's, one of the world's largest financial centres by essentially cutting and pasting regulation that someone else is coming up with is a total nonsense. And then, from the point of view of the banks and other institutions making location decisions, if you're making long-term investment decisions on the basis of a kind of fragile equivalence concept that might be taken away at any minute, it's very, very hard to make those long-term commitments, so I think we are going to see activity at the margins increasingly starting to move.

At 7.17am, after John Humphrys noted there had been a move of jobs out of the City, and that Lloyd's was announcing a new base in Europe. Mr O'Connell said the choice was Brussels, and asked Inga Beale, the chief executive why she had to move to the continent. She said it was because when Britain left the EU, Lloyd's would lose the ability to issue and provide insurance for customers in the EU. She confirmed that the numbers involved would be 'minimal', that was 'tens' out of the UK insurance market of 34,000. Mr O'Connell asked if Lloyd's still had a future in London. Dame Inga said it 'definitely would'. In the 8am bulletin, the story was also included. Mr O'Connell said the company could claim a place in the national consciousness, and was a bedrock of Britain's financial

services industry. He said that Lloyd's had said that it had been 'forced' to set up a new base because after the UK left the EU it would lose the right to sell across the single market, He added:

It has chosen Brussels, something of a surprise, given that many had thought Luxembourg Frankfurt more likely. It's chief executive, Dame Inga Beale said the new office would only employ a few dozen people, but the significance of Lloyd's of London planting a flag in the heart of Europe, the day after Article 50 was invoked, will not be lost on other people in the Square Mile.

Overall, therefore, Mr O'Connell set a relentlessly negative tone in the Business News on day two of the Article 50 coverage. Even though Lloyd's was moving only 'tens' of jobs to Brussels to deal with a small fraction of its business, the story was elevated to bulletin status, with Mr O'Connell claiming portentously and dramatically that the 'significance of the move' – 'Lloyd's of London planting a flag in the heart of Europe' - the day after Article 50 had been invoked would not be lost. The earlier interviews with Kathleen Brooks and Rupert Harrison were designed to show that the City was under continued pressure from a falling pound and to give the two guests the opportunity to argue that continued regulation by the EU was essential for the City – that suggestions that it could exist on its own were, in effect, unrealistic nonsense. That must have been the editorial intent, and negativity about post-Brexit prospects was delivered in spades, and without balance. Inga Beale – who before June 23 was a strong Remain advocate – actually played down the importance of the Lloyd's move, but editorially, Today moved in the opposite direction.

Dominic O'Connell on April 4, the final day of the survey, returned to the Lloyd's story. He said that Frankfurt was hoping to be a big beneficiary of the move out of London of jobs. He asked Hubertus Vöth, the head of Frankfurt Main Finance, how many jobs would come to his city. He said there was already a trickle and it was expected there would be 10,000 over five years. Mr O'Connell asked who was leaving and why. Mr Vöth replied:

Well, at the moment, there are more exploratory teams. Why is that the case? Like, like you said, everybody is right now looking, and what is the post-Brexit world looking like? As London is Europe's leading financial centre, and 100 out of the 200 foreign banks located in London said they mainly serve the common market out of London. In the post-Brexit time, they will lose these opportunities to do that, at that ease as they do it now, by losing the passporting rights.

Mr O'Connell asked if the big US banks were looking. Mr Vöth said they were, and they were also looking at Asian banks, and Russian ones. Mr O'Connell asked if the choice was between Frankfurt, Dublin, Paris or Luxembourg. Mr Vöth said it would be a multipolar world, and some might go to two places. Later in the sequence Mr O'Connell asked the chief executive of GoDaddy – which was

acquiring a UK tech firm for \$1.8bn – if the Brexit vote had given him any pause for thought and ‘made it a bit cheaper to buy’. He replied it had slowed the takeover process down because of hesitation on behalf of the banks.

There was one, sequence, on April 3, in which Mr O’Connell was less negative. After his guest Philippe Warchter, from the French Natixis bank, had warned that Marine Le Pen’s of wanting to leave the EU would be ‘a very strong shock on France, Mr O’Connell said that the British economy had done amazingly well in creating jobs ‘since the financial crisis’. Alan McIntosh, chief investment strategist at Quilter Cheviot, said the UK economy had been ‘quite robust’, and ‘to the surprise of many, particularly robust in the aftermath of the vote Leave’.

He was not, however, of course, framing post-Brexit as a positive period, but post-2008.

In summary, Mr O’Connell’s contribution towards generating Article 50 gloom, in tandem with the overall editorial process, was outstanding. Apart from a few positive asides and the interview of John Longworth, most of what he said and asked about was negative about the City’s prospects. There was a big imbalance towards the pro-EU side. The best measure of that was that the story about Lloyd’s moving ‘tens’ of jobs to Brussels was dragged out over the entire survey period and thus grossly inflated in importance. Strong Remain campaigner Inga Beale carefully played down the significance of the move for Lloyd’s (in terms of both numbers and the volume of business) but Mr O’Connell ploughed on regardless, and three days later gave a spokesman for Frankfurt, a strong rival to London, an open goal to warn that the jobs drain would reach thousands.

Chris Morris: He first appeared at 6.51am on March 29, where as part of Matthew Price’s reports from Sunderland that morning, he gave the first of a number of what were called ‘reality checks’. Nick Robinson noted the director the World Trade Organisation (WTO) had claimed that (despite what the government was saying) a default to WTO rules and tariffs if there was a failure to agree a deal with the EU would not be automatic. Mr Morris first observed that ‘contrary to impressions sometimes given’ the UK was already subject to WTO rules via the EU. He explained:

So, when we leave, we need a new deal for trade with the rest of the EU, and if we can’t get that straightaway, the default position will be to impose the same tariffs on each other that we impose on other members of the WTO. So, for example, the US doesn’t have a free trade deal with the EU at the moment, so, an American company wanting to sell its goods to the UK or France or Latvia has to pay an average of about 5.5% as a border tax, some sectors higher, some sectors lower, but about 5.5% on average. And that’s what could happen to our trade with the EU, and theirs with us.

After a break in the line Mr Morris added that Mr Azvedo, director general of the WTO, had warned that the UK could not simply cut and paste the WTO in place of the agreement with the EU, because it was far more complicated than that in terms of tariffs and agricultural subsidies. Mr Morris concluded:

So I think what he was doing is warning you've got to pick fiendishly complex negotiations that have taken years and years to resolve.

The next contribution from Morris was at 8.26am, when he was asked to “fact-check” on what would happen to ‘EU funding’ – the source of which had not been explained – for the local arts. It was said that cultural sectors had been ‘huge beneficiaries’ of funds from EU funds. Mr Morris replied that the biggest ‘such fund’ was Creative Europe, which he claimed, ‘you name it’ funds could be obtained from a ‘couple of thousand to a couple of million’, and the UK would still have access to that until ‘the day we leave’. He added that the Treasury there were ‘multi-annual’ funding projects that were ‘supposed to’ to continue after the UK left ‘then it will cover the money’. He added:

But after that, I guess this falls into the category of, it depends what the government negotiates. We're going to hear a lot over the next few months. Now, some non-EU countries do have access to the Creative Europe fund, but they pay a financial contribution in order to participate. So, are we going to do that? Or will the government increase arts funding on its own to make up for the loss? Or will they just be less money to go around? That's the choice we have.

His ‘fact-checking’ was, in fact, far from clear. What he emphatically did not say at the outset was that the source of this ‘EU funding’ was actually the British government, or that there was controversy over the way the EU disbursed such funds. Nor was there any attempt to put into context how much money actually came to the UK from the EU from this source; it was left as being ‘huge’ without qualification. Mr Morris also did mention that funding for the arts also came from a wide variety of (public and private) other sources, including the Arts Council, and the National Lottery. The impression given was that unless the government stepped in to replace money withdrawn or not available from EU sources, there could be an awkward funding gap.

Mr Morris accentuated the potential problems of leaving the EU a short time later in the next visit to Sunderland. His ‘fact-checking’ this time related to a local exporter of heavy machinery, Jacqui Miller, who – though optimistic about leaving the EU – asked what was the potential ‘out of a hundred’ for the EU to do damage to the UK. Mr Morris first noted that he believed the EU wanted an agreement that worked for both sides. He noted that Jean Claude Juncker had said there would be a price to pay

and this meant that the UK could not expect the same access to the single market as 'it gets as a EU member'. He added:

We will have access, it's not going to just break down, but it won't be quite as easy, precisely because we've said we don't want such a close relationship. So I don't think they are setting out to punish us, but I don't think they are going to roll over either, and we have to remember, just as our government has red lines and domestic pressures, so do all the other governments. I mean, in terms of numbers, what are the odds that it might feel like damage, like a punishment? It might feel like it, but I don't think that's the intention.

This was not a clear statement, and contained heavy qualification about what he thought would happen. If anything, it muddied the waters. He raised the possibility that there would be damage, and it might be 'like a punishment' (even if not actually intended). He also postulated that the key issue would be more limited 'access to the single market' – which in the Brexit debate was the subject of hot debate. He also suggested that the reason for the 'price to pay' would be because the UK did not want 'such a close relationship', implying that the difficulty in the equation was leaving the EU. Overall, this was a very narrow, EU-centric way of answering the question and did not bring in at all that a part of the government strategy was to forge new relationships that ensured that any deficit from not being part of the EU single market would be compensated for by other arrangements.

Matthew Price, after Mr Morris had spoken, and thus attempting to take into account what he had said, suggested to Jacqui Miller that although she was optimistic 'there was uncertainty about ' and wondered if that bothered her.

The next 'fact-check' related to whether EU football players would be allowed to play in such numbers for clubs like Sunderland. Paul Dobson, the editor of Sunderland fanzine wanted the negotiators to get the best possible deal. Mr Morris said he did not know, but if the EU was treated like the rest of the world, the current unrestricted access would cease. Top flight players would still be able to play under FIFA rules, but lesser players such as N'Gola Kante of Chelsea who had come to the UK as a lower quality player 'might never be able to come here in the first place'. Mr Morris added:

So, I think the bigger effect of leaving the EU could be felt by clubs in the lower leagues who at the moment sign less well-known European players. So I don't want to rub it in Paul, but that might make Sunderland fans staring relegation in the face a little bit worried just now, or you might think 'fair enough, we'll just give home-grown talent a chance instead.'

Thus Mr Morris suggested that there could be a problem. Was he correct? Only time will tell. But Mr Morris placed firmly on the agenda that this was a potential problem. At this stage, Matthew Price

returned to Rebecca Ball, who had asked the question about EU funding for the arts and asked what she needed to hear from the government to settle her concerns. She replied:

There's a huge amount of uncertainty, uncertainty around what this will mean further the cultural sector, what it will mean for colleagues who are EU nationals, what it will mean for investment and ability to work internationally, so, I think it's really, as everyone's said this morning, it's about starting the negotiation process and looking for answers.

Back in the studio, Nick Robinson said the many listeners were asking whether once Article 50 was triggered, the government could change its mind and stay in the EU. Mr Morris said there were differing opinions among politicians, but that both David Davis and Donald Tusk seemed to think it was possible. He then observed that former British diplomat Lord Kerr (an ex-UK ambassador to the EU), who had helped draft Article 50, that there was nothing to stop a change of mind other than that there could be a political price to pay. Mr Morris concluded:

And I think that's the point. The politics of a screeching handbrake turn would be extremely difficult to navigate. In theory, I think, you could do it, or if you could do it, you wouldn't have to reapply, because you wouldn't have left, but legally, this is a piece of European law, so in the end the ultimate arbiter on this point would have to be our old friend, the European Court of Justice, and there is a legal case underway in Dublin at the moment, Nick, trying to refer precisely this question to the ECJ.

Was this the most pressing issue that the Today audience was asking Mr Morris to 'fact-check'? Only the Today editors know that. What is certain' however, is that Lord Kerr was highly partisan in his opinions about the UK leaving the EU, as is outlined in this report. Mr Morris used his comments to introduce from yet another angle that the Brexit process was 'fraught' and in this context was used by him to introduce the possibility of a 'screeching handbrake turn' and serious political consequences – on top of the others he had envisaged and emphasised.

On March 30, Chris Morris reported from Malta, where EU leaders were meeting and expected to give their response to the UK's Article 50 letter. In a report at 6.10am he first noted that Guy Verhofstadt, the MEP had mentioned 'blackmail' in connection with the bracketing together of trade and security, but then observed that what mattered was the reaction of the leaders – who had also noted the same point. He added that, however, they were relieved that the tone of the UK letter was 'conciliatory'. In response to a question from John Humphrys whether any could scupper the deal, Mr Morris said they could put 'large obstacles in the way'. They believed that the UK would attempt to 'divide and rule' but said that he believed (and maybe others would disagree) that the 27 were as united in this issue as any other in the past five years'. He opined:

...and it may just be that Brexit was the wake-up call they needed to get on with trying to fix the other problems of the EU. And, you know, Angela Merkel, I think, a lot of people in Downing Street seemed to have held up hope that she was the person that was going to agree with the way they wanted to move forward, parallel talks on the divorce and on trade at the same time – she made very clear yesterday, and she'll be speaking here in Malta lately (sic, means 'later'?) she agrees with European Commission line, we need to sort out the terms of separation first, before any talk about future relationships.

In the 8am bulletin, Mr Morris repeated the latter point. The following day at 6.10am, again reporting from Malta, said that the EU response to the Article 50 letter would determine that there would be three separate phases of the negotiations, covering the divorce, trade and then the future. He speculated:

At each of those three stages there are going to be severe stumbling blocks I think and you may have noticed that one party that isn't being consulted about what's in these guidelines is, of course, the United Kingdom and that is significant. Until Wednesday the British government was in charge of the timing of this whole process because it was the Prime Minister who decided when Article 50 was to be triggered, now that's been done control of the timing moves to Brussels and other EU capitals.

Later in the programme (8.29am) he confirmed that the EU's nine-page response was on the lines he had earlier predicted. He added that it would be rather difficult to initiate parallel negotiations on trade if the other 27 countries did not want to do it that way. He also said that the document did not go into any detail about the more difficult issues such as the Irish border – something that was concerning many people not just in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland but also in London and elsewhere.

The following day, at 7.20am, Mr Morris looked back at the week in which the Article 50 letter had been sent. He said the day would be remembered in history as 'the long goodbye, a rollercoaster, two year process finally began'. A quote from Theresa May was played:

Perhaps now more than ever the world needs the liberal democratic values of Europe. Values
...

Mr Morris said that at least gave the Liberal Democrats 'something to smile about', but this was Theresa May's day, and 'her big gamble'. She had also said that the UK was not leaving 'Europe', but this had not impressed Labour. Jeremy Corbyn had rather described her actions as 'reckless and damaging'. Mr Morris said the Brexiteers had been cock-a-hoop, but Donald Tusk had looked and sounded stunned by the ending of the phoney war, with the UK now on the other side of the table. Mr Morris said that on Thursday the government white paper to adopt 'thousands and thousands of EU laws, had been wheeled out, with Lord Lisvane, former clerk to the House of Commons warning

that an 'awful lot' of tidying up could go on for a decade. Mr Morris said that also on Thursday – with the magnitude of the task beginning to show – David Davis had sought to rally the troops. There was a quote from him saying he wanted a really good trade deal and to get back control of laws and borders in pursuit of being able to stand 'on our own two feet'. Mr Morris said that on Friday, Donald Tusk had set out the EU's draft negotiating position which laid down that there would be no trade talks until 'priority issues' such as separation and divorce had been addressed. The message was no parallel talks, and 'behave and thou shalt be rewarded'. He concluded:

So what did we learn from this momentous week in Brexit? Well, point one – blimey it's complicated, but we knew that already. Point two: both sides, the UK and the EU really do want an ambitious partnership in the future, but getting there from here is going to be a big ask. And finally, this was a turning point. After this week, nothing in relations between the UK and the EU will ever be quite the same again.

Overall, Chris Morris thus presented a highly negative picture of where Brexit, and the Brexit negotiations, would lead. His 'fact-checking' was selective (in, for example, not spelling out where EU money was coming from, and deliberately sought to put centre stage conjectural outcomes of Brexit-related changes. Clearly, a shift to WTO rules could cause issues. But equally, it could be positively expedient. The withdrawal of the Creative Arts EU project – funded by UK taxpayers – would remove one line of arts cash support, but the UK arts scene currently receives money from a wide variety of sources including the UK taxpayer and the National Lottery, and these would continue. The rules regarding EU football players might revert to them being treated more strictly in terms of entry to the UK, but the issue is not yet settled and there has been extensive talk of immigration quotas being set more to take regard of necessary skills.

From Malta, his negativity was even more pronounced. He was most focused on telling the audience that Brexit was highly complex and would take years to achieve.

Matthew Price: His reports from Sunderland are already partly covered in the Chris Morris 'fact-checking' detailed above. Mr Price's own first observation was that the Brexit supporters in the area were as hardcore as ever and were adamant they had made the right decision. They wanted control of borders, sovereignty and law-making. Nick Robinson observed that one of the reasons that the area was 'interesting was the tension between that view and that of powerful businesses in the area 'that depend on trade with Europe'. Mr Price replied:

Absolutely, not least of course the Nissan factory, this huge employer, 7000 and more, directly employed by Nissan's car factory, 28,000 or so in the connected supply chain in the region, and there are concerns, even after that . . . private deal was done with government, encouraging Nissan to stay, even after that has happened there are still concerns in that area about what a complete break with European Union would mean. What if tariffs come in to play, with Nissan moving so many parts and vehicles across the British border into the rest of the European Union. We'll be talking to someone in Nissan's supply chain later, we'll be hearing from some of those Vote Leave campaigners, will be talking to people in the tech sector as well, who are already seeing parts of their business change as a direct result of the referendum result.

He thus planted at the beginning of the sequence the strong impression that local jobs would be at risk. Mr Price repeated at 6.47am (the next item from Sunderland) that a key question was whether Nissan, the city's largest private employer, would continue to be able to operate there in consequence of the Brexit decision. He declared:

It could have a knock-on effects, not just for Nissan's employees, but for tens of thousands of jobs that depend on the sands presence in the area.

His first question, to Stephen Irish, who made electric car parts through his company Hyperdrive, was how he felt 'because a lot of uncertainty now begins'. Mr Irish said he was 'still very optimistic'. Mr Price asked if there was confidence that Nissan would stay 'whatever the terms of the deal'. Mr Irish said that there was no sign in a slow-down. Mr Price asked if there had been 'any impact' as a result of the referendum on his business. Mr Irish said he was always aware of potential impacts and this was 'good business practice anyway'. Mr Price suggested that 'presumably' there was an impact from the fall of sterling. Mr Irish replied that they had taken steps through good business practice to mitigate the impact. Mr Price suggested a positive impact of Brexit was already an attempt to source supplies locally. Mr Irish agreed. Mr Price concluded:

And that sense of the need for clarity, that sense of the need for a deliberate actual decision to be made and for business to know what the environment they're working in is coming through from other sectors, and we're talking to some of them in about half an hour.

The next visit to Sunderland was at 7.17am, when Mr Price reported from the Sunderland Software Centre. He observed that some in the area were already noticing the impact of the moves towards Brexit in the work they did. He spoke to representatives of two companies there, one of who said he worked all over the European Union. He did not now know what the future would hold. Mr Price observed he was from one of the companies driving forward the digital economy, then spoke to Adam Hill from the Consult and Design company. Mr Price said a lot of his work as with the European institutions. AH confirmed the total as around 30%, but said this was getting 'less and less' and as no

longer a line if new business because they worked with EU member states and the UK would no longer be one of those. He added:

And also, we know from our friends in Brussels, there's not a very positive vision of working with UK companies at this moment in time.

Mr Price asked what this meant for the future of the company. AH replied it meant moving away from trans-national work and looking locally again; they would no longer to get involved in the same kind of projects. Mr Price then spoke to Herb Kim 'one of the figures behind this tech boom'. He declared:

The biggest thing that killing is right now is just the uncertainty. So if you're, say, an American investor thinking about investing in Britain into a company, you're thinking 'Well, what's the future like?' and the clearer . . . the faster we can make that clear, whatever Brexit actually is, so that's one really big key concern, erm, it's the status of EU workers that are residing here, I know there has been some positive words recently, but some real specific clarity, that's critical as well. I mean, when I talk to people in the industry, the basic answer is, 'Just let us know what the rules are, how they've changed, so we can get on with doing what we need to do.' So there is genuinely a lot of psychological resilience, although a lot of frustration knowing that this process could take, will take years.

Matthew Price in this sequence gave three local businessmen significant space to posit that uncertainty over future trading arrangements was seriously damaging one of the most important local tech sectors. He did not challenge any of them, and his questions and structuring of the sequence suggested he wanted give them maximum space to make negative points.

The next sequence from Sunderland was at 7.45am. Mr Price asked Richard Elvin, introduced as leader of the Sunderland Leave campaign, that he reception was to the triggering of Article 50. RE replied that people simply wanted to get on with it – there had been a hardening in favour. There was then a sequence of vox pops. The participants mostly confirmed they favoured Brexit and that there was no change if mind. Phrases they used were:

It's control of our borders and sovereignty, over our own law and order.

Our own laws brought back, sovereignty, immigration, give parliament more power, it's as simple as that. We need to rule our own country.

I think it's probably going to lead to a better Britain, or better UK. Erm...

More independence, at the end of the day, but it's all about negotiations from now on. I think the whole country has been conned that it was just Yes or a No. Nobody really knew what was going to happen, but we've got to have faith in the negotiations.

There's a few other little issues that need to be looked at, it's not just the trade, the trade side of things. People are frightened to talk about certain things, you know, with erm . . .

The immigration and all that, you know, erm, erm, but I think it's the right thing that we leave and, and er, build our better Britain back, to where, to where it used to be. You know, make Britain great again.

A further speaker suggested that immigration was putting huge pressure on the NHS. MP responded that 'people in the NHS' said it was foreign workers who were actually keeping the NHS going. The vox pop participant replied:

But that's not the problem. It's the amount of people that coming into the country that's creating the pressure on the NHS.

The sequence conveyed in simple one-sentence responses some of the opinion reflected in the Leave vote; that their concerns were centred on immigration and sovereignty. There was one partially dissenting voice out of the six who suggested that the electorate had been conned by the vote.

The final sequence from Sunderland was the one described above (8.38am) in the material presented by Chris Morris. Speaking to the businesswoman Jacqui Miller, he asked whether her post-Brexit optimism might be affected by 'the uncertainty' that was now around. The next guest was Paul Dobson, editor of the Sunderland FC fanzine. Matthew Price asked him if Chris Morris's reply to his concerns about EU players would put his club in a 'tricky position'. Finally MP asked arts worker Rebecca Ball if hat Chris Morris had said about EU money made her feel that the whole process would be OK. Ross Hawkins responded that there as a huge amount of uncertainty about.

Summing up, Matthew Price brought into his Sunderland broadcasts voices who supported the Brexit process. But in the intros and the questioning, far more emphasis was placed on the various concerns about 'uncertainty' and the highly negative 'fact-checking' perspective provided by Chris Morris. The editorial focus was predominately in bringing to the fore the potential difficulties of local businesses, including those affecting the biggest local direct and indirect employer, Nissan – suggesting from the outset that thousands of jobs could be at risk. Two contributors were optimistic about the future, but MP asked them most about their uncertainties. With the three who were pessimistic, by contrast, he made little effort to challenge them, and gave each ample space to put across their concerns about lost contracts and shrinking markets. The vox pop section conveyed in the very short contributions that local voters were concerned about immigration, pressures on the NHS, and the powers of the UK Parliament. But these were scatter-gun points, and did not balance the more detailed arguments by the contributors who were worried about negative consequences. The pro-Brexit points in the vox

pops were also countered by MP's challenging point about the NHS and by the contributor who claimed the electorate had been misled by the referendum.

A further significant point here is that the BBC had been filing special reports from Sunderland since at least July 8 when Katie Prescott, in a report for Today's Business News section, also spoke to Adam Hill, who in the sequence above claimed that he was losing EU-related contracts. Eight months previously, he had been equally gloomy with Ms Prescott about the decision to leave the EU. Thus MP chose as one of his main interviewees someone from the area who (as the BBC knew) was committed towards spreading post-Brexit gloom. Another key issue here is that the Sunderland Technology Centre has been funded by EU grants – and was thus perhaps not the best place to choose to get an independent cross-section of views about post-Brexit prospects. The impression given was this was a representative section of views from Sunderland. But it was not.

Norman Smith: In his first report, at 6.33am On March 29, Norman Smith said that the Article 50 letter clarifying where before Theresa May had been 'conspicuously vague'. He was asked about the 'key issues' where Theresa May might 'give ground'. He suggested that she might pay a Brexit bill and soften the approach to EU nationals to gain access to the single market and be flexible about 'transitional arrangements' to avoid falling out. The next day, Mr Smith talked about the Great Repeal Bill, which he said was a legislative mountain, and would lead to 'legislative soup' with the potential for some MPs to cause 'grief and difficulties' at the same time the government as trying to negotiate with the EU. Mr Smith said he did not think that the Great repeal Bill would itself be a flashpoint, but other separate legislation covering immigration, trade, agriculture and customs could be. He said these may be on the backburner for a while so the focus would switch to Brussels and there, Theresa May was 'absolutely in the market to do a deal'. She was reluctant to walk away, so was not in the same place as Brexiteers who thought differently. Mr Smith said a second point was that the UK would have to make 'big concessions' because Theresa May wanted a generous deal including the same conditions as being in the single market. He added:

That means we are going to have to give a lot if we want a lot. And we got a sort of tantalising sense yesterday of some of the areas where we might give: money – it's clear we are going to pay a Brexit bill, it seems also likely to me we will be prepared to pay money to ensure access to key sectors of the British economy, the letter talks about financial services and so-called network industry. There was no mention of the European Court of Justice, possibly there could be a continuing role for them, and most fascinating of all, there was no mention of immigration. And you just wonder whether there is possibly some sort of room for compromise over freedom of movement, because to date ministers have also been very careful in saying 'we want to end freedom of movement as it currently operates' – does that provide a little chink to negotiate?

In the 8am bulletin, Mr Smith also filed a voice piece. Newsreader Zeb Soanes first said that the Great Repeal Bill had been described as one of the largest legislative processes ever undertaken in the UK. Mr Smith reinforced that this was a massive undertaking that could provide scope for critical MPs to cause Mrs May grief. He added that much of this had been reduced by Mrs May's pledge not to repeal or amend existing EU laws, including those covering the environment or employment. He added that Lord Lisvane had warned the process could take a decade.

Overall, Norman Smith thus suggested that the Brexit process was going to be very difficult, very complex, and would create legislative mountains and 'soup', together with backbench rebellion, and would probably take 10 years to complete. He also predicted that it was likely that Theresa May would make major compromises in the areas of access to the single market, the exit bill and immigration. By contrast, there was little indication of causes for optimism in his report.

Nick Robinson: (March 29) at 6.10am, in the intro to the Matthew Price first Sunderland report, said:

... one of the reasons that Sunderland was interesting was because the tension between that view (what Leave voters wanted) and the view of powerful businesses in the area that depend on trade with Europe?

At 7.14am, in the introduction to Business News, he noted that among those most nervous about Brexit had been the City of London. At 7.21am, he spoke to Helen Morrissey, who he said, had been 'relatively unusual' in the City of London, where 'many of the big corporations at least, big banks, were warning about the consequences'. He asked her if she was worried that the government had turned on adopting the Norwegian or Swiss models for being outside the EU and then asked her to explain what her uncertainty was in the equation. Mr Robinson put it to her that 'we hadn't a clue' that the relationship with the EU would be in two years' time. Finally he observed that uncertainty was good for trade asset management (Ms Morrissey's 'profession') but the people who would suffer most from it were those who could barely make ends meet in Sunderland.

At 7.31am, Mr Robinson introduced his on package about how he interpreted the significance of the Article 50 letter. At its core was what he claimed was the national joy of joining back in 1973, compared with the unceremonious, unglamorous starkness and tension of the leaving process. Mr Robinson observed that if 'you feared' that the referendum result would not be allowed to stand, or that it would be blocked, today was the point of no return. It was the moment that the 'hard, unglamorous and exhausting work' of negotiating a new relationship with Europe started. Some would celebrate, some would mourn. This was very different when 44 years ago, the UK had joined the European club, 'a day that then Prime Minister spoke of the joy in his heart and was accompanied by the Queen and

Prince Philip at the premiere of the new Fanfare for Europe'. There was a news archive to that effect. Mr Robinson said that in stark contrast, the day that the UK began to leave, a single letter would be handed in. He added that there were still those who believed that exit would be blocked. Joseph Muscat, the Prime Minister confirmed in a soundbite that he thought the process could be short-circuited. Mr Robinson claimed that the reason that Theresa May had repeated 'Brexit means Brexit' was to convince other European leaders, and there was a soundbite in which she said she aimed to get the right deal. Mr Robinson added:

For all the confident talk on both sides of the channel about a deal, for all the speculation, no one really knows what will happen next, because, quite simply, this has never happened before...

There was a soundbite from the former foreign minister of Romania in which he said the EU was built on the assumption that it would 'grow for eternity', so this was not just a negotiation but a 'realignment of the world order'. Mr Robinson said that a former British cabinet secretary (Gus O'Donnell) agreed. GOD said what was involved was 'massive'. He said Article 50 was designed by the EU to prevent people jumping out of an aeroplane without a parachute. Mr Robinson said the former Romanian foreign secretary had warned that 'many in Britain' underestimated how complex the task would be. He was quoted:

This is far from just ripping a membership card. This will take painful, long hours at night and day, two years of exceptionally complex negotiations. Where again, like in the case of Romania, a number of years ago, politics at home and abroad, geopolitics, local constituencies, will try to basically interfere in this exercise. You'll have a busy time, my friends.

Mr Robinson embellished that further. He said:

Ah yes, politics. Back at that fanfare for Europe concert in 1973, they performed *Là ci darem la mano* from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, to celebrate the joining of hands across the channel. (*music*) What's in prospect now though is not a political marriage, but instead a divorce. Negotiating it will not be just two soon-to-be-former partners sitting at a table, on the one hand and EU negotiator, on the other a British one – no, instead, there'll be a chorus of other interested parties. The leaders of 27 other countries, their cabinets, their parliaments, and tens of millions of voters who'll demand that this deal is in their interests. Now, the most passionate backers of Leave sometimes seem to suggest that all that really matters is the interests of the biggest industry in the biggest country – in other words, German car manufacturers...

There followed another quote from the Maltese Prime Minister, who said that this was a 'romantic notion' and was not on. The German Employers' Federation wanted to preserve the single market –

and in this case, across the 27 member states, the national interest and the European interest were the same. Mr Robinson reinforced this by adding that the small countries would be punching very hard – it was their fight to hold on to what someone once famously called ‘our money’. There was a quote from Margaret Thatcher at Fontainebleau. Mr Robinson said she has spent five years fighting for the UK rebate, but the next stage could prove even more difficult, because poorer countries like Romania could lose huge sums if Britain stopped paying overnight. Mr Robinson said GOD believed that concessions would cost money, and added:

So we’re going to start off saying, ‘We don’t owe you anything’, and they will say, ‘You’ve been with us a long time, there are these ongoing commitments.’ In the end, the European Council, the big beasts, will be round the table and one of the things that will be outstanding will be money, the other one will be really tricky issues like agriculture, it’ll be free movement of labour. And so there’ll be a set of issues at the end, and it’ll be a big political deal.

Mr Robinson concluded:

It is hard to overstate the significance of this day. It represents the tearing up of British foreign and economic policy as pursued by all the main parties for more than half a century. It represents the end of an idea our leaders, all of them, once believed in rather passionately.

At 8.10am, Mr Robinson interviewed Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond. His opening question was whether the exit process was a leap in the dark, that there could be no deal (and whether Boris Johnson was speaking for the government when he suggested that could be a possibility). This was followed with how the markets would react if there was no deal, that the FT said there would be no deal, that Michel Barnier, the chief EU negotiator had warned there would be lines of lorries queuing at Dover, that the UK would have to make compromises that would lead to the UK being worse off, and that the government had conceded flexibility over immigration.

Nick Robinson thus played a pivotal role in setting the tone of the Article 50-related coverage. His questions in links and to Philip Hammond were aimed primarily at emphasising how difficult the exit process would be, and how worried the majority in the City were about the prospects. There was no corresponding interrogation, or observations, about possible advantages. His least negative question was perhaps to Philip Hammond concerning whether there were likely to be any surprises in the Article 50 letter. His negative approach was further emphasised and magnified in his specially-constructed package for Article 50 day. In the report, he assembled a cast of characters, the Prime Minister of Malta, the Romanian Foreign Secretary and former Cabinet Secretary Gus O’Donnell, who between them predicted serious, unqualified reasons for woe: administrative complexity, pain and uncertainty, potential for ‘short-circuiting’ and ganging up against the UK.

His central claim – and indeed, the fulcrum of the package – was that the misery now and in store as the negotiations unfolded could be contrasted against the joy that had prevailed in 1973 when Britain had joined the then Common Market. In fact, many at the time objected to the decision by the Heath government to do so, and although pieces of music had been commissioned to mark the occasion, the idea that they reflected the popular mood is open to strong challenge. Christopher Booker, for example, has argued that the process was shrouded in deceit, that the public was lied to about the core objectives of Brussels to achieve political union (then scheduled for 1980), and therefore that most in the UK were unaware about the true nature of what was being joined.

Nick Robinson's approach was thus fundamentally and very deeply biased. He manufactured the contrast involved and the contributions he assembled between 1973 and 2017 were designed to show that Brexit was at best foolhardy and at worst guaranteed to lead to immense self-harm (or even national suicide) in the face of a vengeful and spiteful group of former fellow members. There was no moderating voice in the package (not least from himself in the links) and his tone and approach throughout the morning of March 29 was in a similar vein.

Sarah Montague: Sarah Montague's input was less than that of Nick Robinson in that she conducted only interviews. Her first was on March 29 at 7.10am, when she spoke to Jonathan Faull, said to have been the UK's most senior official at the European Commission. A key question here is why he was chosen as a guest. John Redwood has noted (above) that Today producers endeavour to get guests to convey definite, pre-determined lines of opinion before they appear, and if they do not comply, they are not asked to take part. The goal here appeared for Mr Faull to say that – despite the government's expectations – the negotiations could take a 'very long time' and not cover everything required within two years. He also said he wanted the negotiations to succeed, but this was subsidiary to the main points about the complexity and length of time involved. Ms Montague did nothing in her questioning to challenge Mr Faull's main points, and the whole sequence as designed by her (and the producers?) to show the difficulties involved.

Ms Montague's next interview was of Europe Editor Katya Adler immediately after the Nick Robinson sequence analysed above. The aim was allow KA to say that – although some elements of the relationship between the UK and the EU remained constructive and cordial and Theresa May was hoping for a good deal – the EU side was expecting a 'softening of lines', that they were insisting that there were bills to pay and that the rights of EU citizens must be respected.

At 8.47am, Ms Montague interviewed Emily Thornberry, the shadow foreign secretary, and Nick Clegg, the strongly pro-Remain ex leader of the Liberal Democrats. With Ms Thornberry, her main point was

that a key point of Labour's six tests, to ensure that the terms for the UK after exit were at least as good as those currently enjoyed, had already failed. Ms Thornberry side-stepped answering, but Ms Montague did not press further. Nick Clegg, in his various answers put across that Leavers had lied about the benefits of Brexit, that the terms of Brexit would be damaging economically and that the government was attempting to achieve the impossible. Ms Montague did not challenge him (by saying, for example, that a good deal might be achieved) and the purpose of the sequence seemed to be show that although Labour and the Liberal Democrats had differences of opinion over how to respond to the triggering of Article 50, they were both agreed that the consequences would almost certainly be dire.

On April 30 at 7.15am, Sarah Montague interviewed former Clerk to the Commons Lord Lisvane about how he thought the post-Article 50 negotiations would go. Her most strenuous question to him was whether he was concerned that bringing across 80,000 items of EU law into British law would present problems, and would lead to 'gaps'. Lord Lisvane agreed it would. Ms Montague asked whether the so-called Henry VIII clauses would apply. Lord Lisvane responded that this could lead to a 'supreme irony', namely that the shift of powers back to the UK would boost the powers of the executive. Ms Montague asked him if Parliament would have too much to do. He replied that what was involved would be a huge drain on resources and would take ten years, rather than two, to achieve. Overall, the interview was framed simply to illustrate further the complexities of leaving.

The next day (March 31), Sarah Montague asked Simon Stevens, the chief executive of NHS England, how many NHS staff came from the EU and how worried he was about the impact of Brexit. Mr Stevens replied that 4% of nurses came from the EU and were highly valued, but there were many more people in the UK wanted to become nurses than there were places, and so there was a desire to expand UK training.

On April 4, the final day of the survey, Ms Montague spoke to Didar Singh, of the Indian Chambers of Commerce, and Andrew Kahn, a business investor in India, what the prospects were for an Anglo-Indian trade deal.

Overall, Ms Montague's approach in the interviews outlined above was simply to allow the respective speakers, including Katya Adler, to outline the problems in the post-Article 50 world. She did not challenge any of the negative views. Both suggested that the prospects for trade between the two countries were good, but the chances of reaching a formal deal were not, and could take up to 10 years. In the meantime, there would be a great deal of uncertainty because of Brexit. Ms Montague did not challenge this.

John Humphrys: On March 30, at 6.10am, John Humphrys asked Chris Morris (reporting from Malta about the EU leaders' meeting, also detailed above) whether any one of them could 'scupper the deal'. Mr Morris agreed that they could put large obstacles in the way. At 6.31am, he suggested to Norman Smith that 'an awful lot of stuff' was involved in the Great Repeal Bill. Mr Smith concurred and embellished the difficulties. At 7.17am, in the intro to a Business News update, Mr Humphrys noted that since June 23 there had been a movement of jobs out of London.

At 6.53am, Mr Humphrys interviewed Welsh First Minister Carwyn Jones. He claimed first that Theresa May's bracketing the negotiations with security ('terrorism' in his word) was akin to threatening to jump off a cliff if the UK did not get it wanted. Mr Humphrys said that this is not what had been said. Mr Jones said it was the way it was being spun. He claimed there was a fundamental battle going on in the Conservative government between pragmatists and English nationalists who saw the world as it was in the 19th century. He maintained that the EU was 'too big to intimidate, far bigger than we are' and a solution was needed that good for everybody. Mr Humphrys asked if Wales wanted anything specifically. Mr Jones said full and unfettered access to the single market was needed. Mr Humphrys said he would not get it. Mr Jones said membership and participation were different and it was vital that Welsh businesses could export on the same terms as before because 67% went to the EU. He also claimed that Leavers had promised that Wales would not lose any funding as a result of Brexit and he wanted this confirmed. Mr Humphrys asked if he meant farming subsidies. Mr Jones said £260m came into rural Wales through farming subsidies and at the moment there was no guarantee of continuation beyond 2020. He added that a joint negotiating position was needed covering all the Parliaments, it was important to note that in 2011, the Welsh Parliament had decided that the UK Parliament should have no role in Welsh Law development. Mr Humphrys asked whether he was advocating separate votes in each Parliament. Mr Jones said ratification should be in all the UK Parliaments, as had happened in Belgium. Mr Humphrys asked what would happen if, say, Scotland and Wales voted against. Mr Jones said there would have to be a new deal. Mr Humphrys said that was unrealistic. Mr Jones repeated Belgium did it that way. Mr Humphrys suggested that 'do it like Belgium' would not be a good phrase. Mr Jones said that Wales needed a voice. He added:

Why do I say that? If you look at areas like agriculture and fisheries, the UK doesn't exist, everything is either European or its devolved, so why then shouldn't we have a role in ratifying, an agreement that would've been reached in areas that we control entirely ourselves? It makes perfect sense, and it's only fair.

Mr Humphrys said the answer was that the UK was negotiating for the whole of the country. Mr Jones said that was true but unity was not guaranteed, it was not particularly secure. Mr Humphrys said

Wales was not going to break away. Mr Jones said that if you pushed people too far and Welsh people would be unhappy if they were not listened to.

In this sequence, Mr Humphrys gave Carwyn Jones a platform to attack Brexit from several angles. He was mildly adversarial in response to the Mr Jones points about 'jumping off a cliff', the demand for a veto for the British nations, and that adopting the same approach as Belgium in this respect would be a good idea. But overall, the main intent seemed to allow Mr Jones to express his severe reservations, particularly with regard to the need for a continuation of 'EU' subsidy.

At 7.35am, he interviewed Sylvie Bermann, the French ambassador to London, and Manfred Weber, of the German People's Party, about their reactions to the triggering of Article 50. Mr Humphrys was most focused in his questioning of SB to establish what issues and what problems the French would raise related to French nationals living in the UK, and whether this would create difficulties for the UK. It emerged that SB thought that progress in this area would be possible, but only in due course. With Manfred Weber, he also asked about whether immigrants should be dealt with 'now rather than later'. Mr Weber replied that he cared only about the EU rights involved and not about the UK's rights. Mr Humphrys brought into the equation the possibility of, and need for, co-operation over security. Mr Weber replied caustically that security was important but the UK also appeared to be saying it wanted to be part of Europol. That was a contradiction – the UK actually wanted to put up walls again. The UK would see how high the damage would be when the EU was brought into question. At the end, SB repeated that France wanted to make a deal with the UK, but warned that the priority was to strengthen the EU.

Overall, in this sequence, Mr Humphrys attempted to shed light on the EU negotiations. But it was entirely negative light. He must have known in advance how negative Manfred Weber would be, and his questioning provoked him into saying, in effect, that the EU goal was to make the British people suffer because they had dared to challenge the need for the EU. Although his questioning of SB showed she was being perhaps more productive in attitudes towards future relations, it also emerged that the future of the EU was more important. Of course, the respective views of these guests could not be altered. The problem was the set-up itself, the views of two such negative (towards Brexit) guests were included without the opportunity to challenge them sufficiently was bound to plant negative impressions about the post-Article 50 prospects. John Humphrys acted as simply a midwife to their respective warnings and doubts.

In his interview of Brexit Minister David Davis at 8.10am, lasting almost 20 minutes, Mr Humphrys was at his inquisitorially most stern. He explored first whether the UK was endeavouring to blackmail the

EU by bracketing positive outcomes about security with those of the UK's trading interests. Mr Humphrys then switched to exploring whether the UK could deal with trade and future arrangements at the same time as the divorce agreement, and pushed that it could not. He suggested that the UK could not achieve the same benefits outside the EU as were currently enjoyed, then whether troublesome backbenchers would force compromises in the government's negotiating position, whether control of immigration would take a long time to introduce, and finally that it was a joke to suggest that negotiations could be completed inside two years. Mr Davis was given time to respond to the questions, but the editorial intent was clearly to look for all the negatives of Brexit – there was no endeavour to examine potential benefits.

At 8.54am, Mr Humphrys interviewed Stefanie Bolzen, London correspondent of Die Welt, and Bartosz Wielinski, foreign editor for the Polish newspaper, Gazeta Wyborcza, about their reactions to the Article 55 letter. Both registered extreme gloom, including that Britain was living in 'Brexit La-La Land' and that the country, in leaving a peace project, was suffering from a kind of madness. They expressed fears about the future of EU nationals in the UK, predicted that the EU 27 would stick together in ensuring that the UK's economy would suffer and suggested that 'Berlin was not amused' about the UK's questioning of the size of the UK's Brexit bill. Mr Humphrys, in effect, provided a platform for the two strongly pro-EU and anti-Brexit guests to express the reasons for their doubts. His only mildly adversarial point was to suggest that there was no question that EU nationals already in the UK would be allowed to stay.

On April 1, Mr Humphrys, in a double interview of Sir Vince Cable and Iain Duncan Smith, said at 8.33am that the stage seemed set for tough negotiations over protecting specific British industries and the jobs they created. He first repeated that Theresa May had not mentioned Gibraltar in her Article 50 letter. Iain Duncan Smith said this was yet another attempt by Spain to force the Gibraltar issue. They had been doing it for years and would continue. He added that Theresa May had not mentioned Gibraltar in the same way she did not mention, say, Dover because it was part of her overall position. He added that the Tusk statement was otherwise 'a lot more reasonable than I had any expectation for'. Sir Vince Cable said that the Spanish had a claim on Gibraltar, it was a row that had been going on for 300 years and would continue. He added:

Gibraltar depends . . . as a functioning . . . entity on free trade, and free movement of people across its frontiers and that's difficult to reconcile with hard Brexit. Which is, of course, why the people of Gibraltar voted to stay in the European Union.

It was thus totally predictable that this problem would arise and it would be hard to resolve. Mr Humphrys then asked Mr Duncan Smith why the Tusk letter was reasonable. Mr Duncan Smith said

there had been a lot of talk, emanating mainly from the Commission, that the UK was going to be punished, Individual nations had been uneasy with that rhetoric and now figures such as Herr Schauble of Germany were saying they wanted a proper agreement with the UK, also wanted to remain a friend and wanted the City to thrive. Donald Tusk was also reasonable. Mr Humphrys asked Mr Cable if he agreed. Mr Cable said he did, insofar as that trade could be talked about before issues such as the divorce payment. He added:

it's very clear that the European Union, their top priorities to maintain their own unity. The idea that the British had, and a lot of the Brexiteers, that we can somehow pick off the Germans by . . . giving them what their car companies want, that's for the birds, that isn't going to happen. They are going to negotiate very solidly as a bloc, and there are going to be some very tough issues for the UK. They will want, and quite rightly, a proper financial settlement that will involve divorce payment, we can argue about exactly what the sum will be, but we will have to pay a sum of money, and it will be difficult for Iain and others to explain that we're not getting lots of money back for the Health Service, we're actually going to pay . . .

Mr Humphrys asked him how much that payment would be. Mr Cable suggested the figure of €60 billion, £50 billion might be negotiated down a bit. Mr Duncan Smith said he fundamentally disagreed with the estimate of the figure. There were ongoing commitments, but also part of the equation was the assets that the UK had invested in over the past 40 years. The Commission had quietly accepted this point. Mr Cable said there were big commitments to areas such as pension funds and regional policy. He claimed that the government would have to explain why money was being paid over rather than got back. Mr Humphrys then said that the Tusk letter had ruled out sector-by-sector trade deals that replicated the single market. Mr Cable said he thought it would be very hard to get such deals, for example covering cars, because the WTO also ruled such arrangements out. Mr Humphrys asked if this meant the UK could not operate under WTO rules and have sector deals. Mr Cable said it would be very difficult, a free trade agreement had to apply to everything across the board. Mr Duncan Smith said he had never been in favour of sector deals, but wanted an EU-UK free trade deal. This was in the EU's interests too – a strong City, for example meant that capital was much cheaper, and if it ever hit problems, London's trade would go to New York or Shanghai, not a European capital. Mr Humphrys asked if a deal could be done in two years. Mr Cable said absolutely not, there would have to be transitional arrangements and ECJ jurisdiction for many years. Mr Duncan Smith thought a deal could be done.

Overall, this interview sequence gave similar prominence to the completely opposed views of Sir Vince Cable and Iain Duncan Smith.

Mr Humphrys also interviewed former foreign secretary Jack Straw and a representative of Malta, along with BBC correspondents, about the decision by the EU in their Article 50 response letter to give Spain a say in the future of Gibraltar. Mr Humphrys's main focus was to show that the government had reacted strongly and to question whether the omission of Gibraltar in the UK's letter had been a foolish oversight.

Overall, John Humphrys was most focused on drawing attention to the potential problems of Brexit. His questioning of correspondents was designed to bring such issues to the fore, and so, too, with both Carwyn Jones and the EU-based guests. With David Davis, as already noted, he was on a solid quest only to push that the UK was on the back foot in the negotiations, and that there would be huge negative consequence.

Mishal Husain: At 7.09am on April 1, Ms Husain interviewed Sven Mikser, the Estonian Foreign Secretary about his response to the Brexit negotiations. He hoped for a good outcome, but warned that the 27 EU states would stick together; he did not think, however, that anyone was interested in punishing the UK. Ms Husain asked what he thought of the UK bringing security into the Article 50 letter. Ms Montague responded that the UK's role in the security of Europe was important. Ms Husain asked what he wanted in terms of Estonian immigrants to the UK. Ms Montague said it was difficult to know where the negotiations might lead, and did not discount the idea that trade and the UK's divorce could be discussed in parallel. At 8.45am, Ms Husain spoke to Polly McKenzie, a former aid to Nick Clegg, and Michael Cockerell, the BBC reporter, about the Great Repeal Bill. She pondered in her intro if the title of the Great Repeal Bill was political spin in that it could be better described as the Great Incorporation Bill, 'given that it was making a body of EU law British'. Polly McKenzie said she thought the title was spin in that it was jurisdictional transfer 'that didn't have the right ring about it'. It was simply transferring every gram of 'offensive' (apparently) Brussels legislation on to the UK statute books. She added that it could not be called 'great' either, because legislative words had to have relevant meaning. Michael Cockerell noted that the Great Reform Act of 1832 (opposed by the Tories) was only called that at the bill stage. He said the current bill was 'great' in that in that 43 years' of legislation from Brussels was being cut and pasted into British legislation. There was discussion about the Theresa May picture accompanying her Article 50 letter (was she trying to be like Thatcher?) Mr Cockerell said the Bill would not go down well in Scotland because of the Henry VIII provisions – he had never been king there.

Ms Husain's two main interviews on April 4 were of Hilary Benn, about his Brexit Committee report which demanded an independent assessment of what would happen if the UK left the EU without a formal agreement; and of London Mayor, Sadiq Khan, about what he wanted to ensure the City did

not suffer as a result of Brexit. In the former interview, Ms Husain challenged Mr Benn about the findings, and suggested that if such an assessment as he demanded was made public, it might get in the way of the deal. She also pointed out that six committee members had not agreed with the findings. It was thus a reasonably balanced interview. With Sadiq Khan, it was a different story. She gave him, in effect, a platform to say that immigration control in London was not appropriate and that it required special high quotas to meet the demands of the local economy. She did not challenge him.

Overall, Ms Husain handled two interviews – with Sven Mikser and Hilary Benn – that were broadly neutral, and two, that with Polly McKenzie and Sadiq Khan that presented the complexities of the government stance on Brexit in a highly negative light.

Justin Rowlatt: On the final day of the survey, he reported from India about a UK trade mission there. He observed, in a question about the prospects of a post-Brexit deal:

I have to say, and I don't want to pour cold water on this event, but, er, I would suggest that it is very unlikely that a deal would be available for Britain. The European Union, India's biggest trading partner, has been negotiating with India now for more than . . . for almost 10 years, and has not achieved a trade deal. Now that's a market of 400 million people, and as I say, India's biggest trading partner, and if India won't do a deal with the European Union, you got to ask yourself what kind of concessions would Britain have to make in order to get a deal on its own? So, I must say, the long-term hopes of a deal may be not great, but in the short-term I'm sure they'll pulling all sorts of deals between companies out of the hat and saying that relations between the two countries are, are fabulous.

He thus threw cold water on the idea of an Anglo-Indian trade deal.

SECTION FOUR – RUNNING LOG

March 29:

Bulletin item, Laura Kuenssberg said the negotiations would be ‘fraught’. There was a warning from Marine Le Pen that EU officials would make exit ‘painful’ and a ‘difficult divorce’ (an extract from Newsnight). There was a soundbite from Le Pen:

They don’t want a domino effect, blackmail didn’t work, Project Fear didn’t work either, so they have to try to make the separation as painful as possible.

The newspaper review noted that the FT had said the May letter ‘opened the way for compromise’ (and three of them were outlined). It was mentioned that The Sun carried a picture of the white cliffs of Dover with the legend ‘Dover and Out’, and that the Daily Mail had used the word ‘Freedom’ in its headline.

At 6.10am, Damien Grammaticus filed a neutral voice piece outlining how the Article 50 letter would be handed over.

Matthew Price reported from the town hall in Sunderland where one of the ‘decisive’ referendum results had been announced. He said voters in a local pub were as ‘hardcore’ as ever and had red lines including the control of borders and it was ‘about sovereignty of law-making’. Nick Robinson suggested that the reason that Sunderland was ‘interesting’ was the tension between that view and the view of ‘powerful businesses’ in the area that ‘depended on trade with Europe’. MP said that with Nissan employing 7,000 directly and 28,000 in the supply chain, there were concerns in the area about what a complete break with the EU would mean. He asked:

What if tariffs come in to play, with Nissan moving so many parts and vehicles across the British border into the rest of the European Union.

At 6.15am, Sarah Montague noted that the City of London had campaigned hard against Brexit, and asked how ‘it’ felt on the day of Article 50 being triggered. Dominic O’Connell confirmed that and said there had been ‘a palpable feeling of shock’. He observed the world had ‘not ended’ but then that ‘there is not much celebration’. He pointed to a ‘steady trickle’ of jobs lost to the continent and observed that Lloyd’s was expected to set up a new continental base and added:

it’s all about keeping the European business that it fears may otherwise be lost after Brexit.

Mr O’Connell, introducing John Longworth as co-chair of Leave Means Leave, observed that some companies would be ‘very fearful’ and others ‘very hopeful’. Mr Longworth said that companies, even those who had wanted Remain, now wanted to get on and make the best of it, there were huge opportunities from Brexit. The advantages of Brexit would far outweigh any ‘dis-benefits’ and they could be crystallised unilaterally, were nothing to do with the single market or the customs union. Even if the government failed to get an FTA with the EU it was not a disadvantage. Mr O’Connell suggested that his message was not to worry about the single market and look to the opportunities. Mr Longworth agreed and said the government’s job was to make the UK the best place in the world

to do business. That would lead to booming growth, create jobs and reduce the deficit. Mr O'Connell said his message was 'quite different' from 'some business trade bodies' who wanted access to the single market. Were they wrong? JL said they got it wrong before June 23 and were wrong again now. These bodies did not represent the whole of business. Mr O'Connell then spoke to Marta Kuprinska, who had founded the money trader site Azimo, and was a new start-up. He asked her what was important and special about London. She replied that it was easy to start a business there because of the FCA, passporting and the single market. Mr O'Connell said she had seen all the advantages of London but wondered if she still felt the same. Ms Kuprinska replied that she was disappointed with the Brexit vote. She thought the future Azimo would not be started in London because the advantages would go and there would no longer be access to 'digital talent'. He asked if she was thinking of leaving. Ms Kuprinska said not. Mr O'Connell then suggested to JL that he 'suspected' that quite a few companies were fearful about the future. JL replied that companies came to London because it was a great place to do business and it would be even better after Brexit. Mr O'Connell then spoke to Sarah Coucher, banking and finance partner of a City law firm, after he had noted that the City contained 'thousands of professional services employees'. She said nothing would happen until the UK actually exited the EU. Mr O'Connell asked if the 'thousands of professional service employees' were worried about their jobs, and asked whether some big law firms would move overseas. Mr Curran said they were taking a measured approach. Mr O'Connell said that was 'spoken like a true lawyer'. Mr Curran said she could not see the role of London changing anytime soon and it was difficult to replicate the law regime. Mr O'Connell noted that this was a competitive advantage that had built up that was a competitive advantage for London. Mr Curran said that English law brought advantages. Mr O'Connell wondered about the future. Would this ebb away – he had heard that Goldman Sachs and some big insurance firms were moving jobs to the continent. Mr Curran repeated that the UK had huge competitive advantage. Mr O'Connell then spoke to Mike Amey, who he said was portfolio manager at Pimco, one of the world's biggest investors in government debt. He asked what the markets were now looking for. Mr Amey said that they were looking for compromise and if that emerged then they would react positively. Mr O'Connell asked what the long term view of sterling was. It was now weaker and that was good perhaps for British companies. Mr Amey said that was the case, the low pound had been helpful to the economy. It would continue to ebb and flow as the negotiations continued and would be a bellwether and safety valve.

At the end, Mr O'Connell asked Ms Kuprinska what advice she would give to Britain's Brexit negotiators. She repeated that she wanted access to the single market and ensuring that digital skills could be found in the UK (hinting at free movement?).

At 6.33am, Norman Smith outlined what would happen on Article 50 day. He said it would be a vital letter in laying out where she had previously been conspicuously vague and where therefore she was prepared to negotiate. There may be clues on which issues she was prepared to 'give grounds' to get a deal. Nick Robinson suggested that every word would be studied closely; the FT had highlighted, for example, 'all sorts of compromises' that are allowed by certain phrases. NS said it was possible to identify some 'key issues' where Mrs May might give ground. One was money, where Mrs May might pay 'a Brexit bill' for tariff-free access to the single market. On immigration, would there be preferential treatment of EU nationals again in return for single market access, and with transitional arrangements, would she be flexible to avoid falling out?

At 6.46am, in Yesterday in Parliament, it was said that the SDLP former leader Alasdair McDonnell had claimed that the prospect of Northern Ireland leaving the EU had caused political instability.

At 6.47am, Matthew Price said that in Sunderland, a question was whether the Brexit vote would hit Nissan's ability to operate there. He observed that the company bought parts from the EU and sold vehicles back to it. He suggested that this could have knock-on effects for tens of thousands of jobs – including a company called Hyperdrive. He asked the founder of the company, Stephen Irish how he felt because 'a lot of uncertainty now begins'. SI agreed there was uncertainty but he was 'still very optimistic'. MP asked how important Nissan was to the area. SI confirmed it was important and was a large employer. MP asked if there was confidence among the business community that Nissan would stay. SI said he could not speak for Nissan, but the signs were that there was no slowdown in demand for electric vehicles, his company's main focus. MP asked if the referendum vote had impacted his business. SI said it had always been flexible and this continued, including buying locally. MP suggested there was a 'knock-on' impact of 'sterling changing'. SI said buying locally had helped with that. MP suggested that companies trying to buy domestically could be a positive impact. SI agreed, but then said his company needed to see what happened in terms of tariffs for importing components and exporting to customers. MP asked what was most important to him in the Brexit deal. SI replied it was getting the best deal to support companies such as Hyperdrive. MP concluded:

And that sense of the need for clarity, that sense of the need for a deliberate actual decision to be made and for business to know what the environment they're working in is coming through from other sectors, and we're talking to some of them in about half an hour.

At 6.51am, there was a 'reality check' with Chris Morris. Nick Robinson said that 'our BBC correspondent' had noted that if the UK could not make a trade deal with the EU, then it would default to WTO rules and tariffs. But the director of the WTO had observed that this would not be automatic – was he right that a renegotiation of rights and responsibilities would be needed? Mr Morris said that the UK, contrary to impressions sometimes given, was subject to WTO rules through the EU. He added:

So, when we leave, we need a new deal for trade with the rest of the EU, and if we can't get that straightaway, the default position will be to impose the same tariffs on each other that we impose on other members of the WTO. So, for example, the US doesn't have a free trade deal with the EU at the moment, so, an American company wanting to sell its goods to the UK or France or Latvia has to pay an average of about 5.5% as a border tax, some sectors hire, some sectors lower, but about 5.5% on average. And that's what could happen to our trade with the EU, and theirs with us.

After a break in the line Mr Morris added that Mr Azvedo, director general of the WTO had warned that the UK could not simply cut and paste the WTO in place of the agreement with the EU, because it was far more complicated than that in terms of tariffs and agricultural subsidies. He concluded:

So I think what he was doing is warning you've got to pick fiendishly complex negotiations that have taken years and years to resolve.

In the 7am bulletin, Laura Kuenssberg said that Mrs May would later promise to represent every person in the country 'during what are likely to be fraught negotiations, including those EU nationals who have made their homes in the UK whose future is still uncertain. She added that Theresa May would also urge the country to come together,' hoping this moment could spell the end of a fractious

debate between Leave and Remain'. Ms Kuenssberg said that her goals included withdrawing from European law, controlling immigration, and a free trade deal outside the single market. She concluded:

But there are tensions in Parliament, in the Prime Minister's own party, between Holyrood and Westminster and of course among the public over what Britain's future could or should look like outside the European Union. She – we – have two years to work it out.

The newsreader then said that many in Europe were saying that a deal was unlikely within two years. Katya Adler reported that there was a determination that any deal with the UK must be in the EU's interests. She contended that leading voices across the EU viewed the government's aim of reaching a divorce settlement as unrealistic.

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It was then repeated that Marine Le Pen had warned that EU officials would make the UK's departure 'as painful as possible'. In a voice piece, Emily Maitlis said the officials would also aim to punish the UK.

At 7.09am, there was an interview with Jonathan Faull, who was said to have been, until his retirement in January, the UK's most senior official at the European Commission. Sarah Montague asked if a deal would be possible in two years. Mr Faull said it would not be easy but everybody was hoping that it would be achieved, though it would not perhaps be final or comprehensive. He added that trade agreements 'took a very long time' and so it would not be possible to deal with every detail inside two years. Ms Montague suggested that two sets of negotiations needed to be in parallel – the divorce itself and the trade deal. Mr Faull said that would be a matter for the negotiators. Ms Montague suggested that the opening phase set the tone and asked what Mr Faull advised. Mr Faull said he hoped they would first agree the sequence and then move to the very big issue of 'people stranded after Brexit' and the 'always difficult issue' of money. Ms Montague said that figures from zero to €60 billion had been mentioned, and some in the UK wondered why anything had to be paid. Mr Faull replied that there were commitments to finance projects that needed to be respected. He said these commitments were binding and would be part of negotiations. Ms Montague, noting he had served on the Commission for 38 years, wondered how he felt. Mr Faull said he was sad but wanted the negotiations to succeed.

At 7.14am, Nick Robinson said that the City had been 'amongst the most nervous about Brexit'. Mr O'Connell said the Brexit decision had caused consternation and observed that financial services companies 'on the whole' had campaigned hard to Remain. He said that since then there had been a trickle of jobs out of London, with big banks and others setting up offices in places like Frankfurt and Luxembourg. Lloyd's of London would announce the next day that they were setting up a new European HQ. Mr O'Connell said that Caroline Simmons worked for UBS 'the largest manager of rich people's money in the world'. Ms Simmons said the day was a bit of an anti-climax and the triggering of Article 50 would not create a market impact. Mr O'Connell noting that 'some jobs will leave' asked why the City was 'so nervous' about the idea of financial passporting. Ms Simmons said it was not clear yet what was happening with this, but it would mean that some services 'would not be permissible' out of London and thus would need to move. Mr O'Connell noted that current movement was a 'a trickle' and was thus because people were making contingency plans. Ms Simmons agreed, but then observed that 20% of 'certain investment bank functions' might be affected and there could also be an impact on commercial property. Mr O'Connell asked Ms Simmons what people told her about their mood. She said that the further they were away from London, the less they worried about Brexit.

At 7.17am, Matthew Price said he was in the leisure pool of the hall where the referendum results were announced. In his edited package, he spoke first to a music composer for a software development company, Vincent Webb. He said he popped over to Europe regularly as part of his job and did not know what would now happen. Mr Price then spoke to Adam Hill, operations director of a computer gaming company, for whom 'a lot of their work is with EU institutions'. Mr Hill said Brexit had already caused a significant shift in their working patterns – they did around 30% for the EU but this would shrink, not least because 'our friends in Brussels' did not have a very positive vision' of working with the UK currently. Mr Price asked what this meant for the company. Mr Hill replied that they had moved their focus away from transnational work and had been 'looking locally again', so that they would not be able to get involved in the same kind of projects as in the past. Mr Price said that Sunderland had seen more tech-start-ups than anywhere else in recent years. He said that one of the figures behind this was Herb Kim, a Brooklyn-born entrepreneur. Mr Kim said the biggest thing that was 'killing' at the moment was uncertainty. That was because the rules relating to issues such as the status of EU workers living in the UK were unclear. He said there was 'resilience' but a lot of frustration that the process could take years.

At 7.21am, Nick Robinson interviewed Helena Morrissey, the former boss of Newton Asset Management, now with Legal and General, who was a vigorous Leave campaigner. This was 'relatively unusual' in the City where many of the big corporations 'were warning about the consequences'. Mr Robinson asked her how she felt. Ms Morrissey replied that there was uncertainty and 'we can't be complacent', but there was a need to look at the ingredients of success in the future, including dynamism, flexibility, and entrepreneurship. The EU did not fulfil those criteria. There was the big rest of the world out there. Mr Robinson said she had argued that the safest option would be an arrangement like Norway. Did it worry her that the government had rejected such possibilities? Ms Morrissey responded said she had proposed the Norway option as a logical first step – in response to Remain claims that Leave had not thought things through – but she had never thought the Norway model would be the ultimate British model. It was possible to make Britain's own arrangements. Mr Robinson said she had used the word uncertainty a couple of times - the truth was 'we haven't a clue what our relationship will be in a couple of years time'. Ms Morrissey said that the government had

said no deal was better than a bad deal, and that the WTO rules option was also a possibility – both suggestions were helpful. Mr Robinson responded:

Let me just put you that uncertainty, it's good for my trade, journalism, it's good for your trade, asset management, it's frankly good for people who are well paid. The people who lose from uncertainty, some of those voices we're hearing in Sunderland, people who can barely make ends meet, they are the people who will suffer if we don't know what our principal economic and foreign policy is?

Ms Morrissey responded that she understood, and it was important that uncertainties were dealt with. The reality was that life was full if uncertainties.

At 7.31am, Mr Robinson observed that if 'you feared' that the referendum result would not be allowed to stand, or that it would be blocked, today was the point of no return. It was the moment that the 'hard, unglamorous and exhausting work' of negotiating a new relationship with Europe started. Some would celebrate, some would mourn. This was very different when 44 years ago, the UK had joined the European club, 'a day that then Prime Minister spoke of the joy in his heart and was accompanied by the Queen and Prince Philip at the premiere of the new Fanfare for Europe'. There was a news archive to that effect. Mr Robinson said that in stark contrast, the day that the UK began to leave, a single letter would be handed in. He added that there were still those who believed that exit would be blocked. Joseph Muscat, the Prime Minister confirmed in a soundbite that he thought the process could be short-circuited. Mr Robinson claimed that the reason that Theresa May had repeated 'Brexit means Brexit' was to convince other European leaders, and there was a soundbite in which she said she aimed to get the right deal. Mr Robinson added:

For all the confident talk on both sides of the channel about a deal, for all the speculation, no one really knows what will happen next, because, quite simply, this has never happened before...

There was a soundbite from the former foreign minister of Romania in which he said the EU was built on the assumption that it would 'grow for eternity', so this was not just a negotiation but a 'realignment of the world order'. Mr Robinson said that a former British cabinet secretary (Gus O'Donnell) agreed. GOD said what was involved was 'massive'. He said Article 50 was designed by the EU to prevent people jumping out. Mr Robinson said the former Romanian foreign secretary had warned that 'many in Britain' underestimated how complex the task would be. He was quoted:

This is far from just ripping a membership card. This will take painful, long hours at night and day, two years of exceptionally complex negotiations. Where again, like in the case of Romania, a number of years ago, politics at home and abroad, geopolitics, local constituencies, will try to basically interfere in this exercise. You'll have a busy time, my friends.

Mr Robinson embellished that further. He said:

Ah yes, politics. Back at that fanfare for Europe concert in 1973, they performed *Là ci darem la mano* from Mozart's Don Giovanni, to celebrate the joining of hands across the channel. (*music*) What's in prospect now though is not a political marriage, but instead a divorce.

Negotiating it will not be just two soon-to-be-former partners sitting at a table, on the one hand and EU negotiator, on the other a British one – no, instead, there'll be a chorus of other interested parties. The leaders of 27 other countries, their cabinets, their parliaments, and tens of millions of voters who'll demand that this deal is in their interests. Now, the most passionate backers of Leave sometimes seem to suggest that all that really matters is the interests of the biggest industry in the biggest country – in other words, German car manufacturers...

There followed another quote from the Maltese Prime Minister, who said that this was a 'romantic notion' and was not on. The German Employers' Federation wanted to preserve the single market – and in this case, across the 27 member states, the national interest and the European interest were the same. Mr Robinson reinforced this by adding that the small countries would be punching very hard – it was their fight to hold on to what someone once famously called 'our money'. There was a quote from Margaret Thatcher at Fontainebleau. Mr Robinson said she has spent five years fighting for the UK rebate, but the next stage could prove even more difficult, because poorer countries like Romania could lose huge sums if Britain stopped paying overnight. Mr Robinson said GOD believed that concessions would cost money, and added:

So we're going to start off saying, 'We don't owe you anything', and they will say, 'You've been with us a long time, there are these ongoing commitments.' In the end, the European Council, the big beasts, will be round the table and one of the things that will be outstanding will be money, the other one will be really tricky issues like agriculture, it'll be free movement of labour. And so there'll be a set of issues at the end, and it'll be a big political deal.

Mr Robinson concluded:

It is hard to overstate the significance of this day. It represents the tearing up of British foreign and economic policy as pursued by all the main parties for more than half a century. It represents the end of an idea our leaders, all of them, once believed in rather passionately.

Sarah Montague then spoke to Europe editor Katya Adler. She described what was likely to happen that day and stressed that before reaching a deal, there would first have to be the divorce. She said the underlying message from Brussels was not to push the European Commission and that any big political decisions would be taken over the next two years in the European capitals. Big Brexit steps were not expected before the coming round of elections and that put pressure on timings. She added that there was a veiled warning for the UK not to try divide and rule, and that a first priority was to deal with what happens to the 3m EU nationals in the UK and the 1.5m UK nationals in EU countries. Ms Adler said the letter from Theresa May would express hopes that the talks be constructive and that there could be a good relationship between the UK and the EU. She said there had been unofficial talks between the PM and key EU figures and they had been open and friendly. She added:

Everybody knows what the priorities are, Theresa May wants to get the best deal possible for the UK, but Brussels is expecting a softening of lines though, as we heard there, referred to in Nick's report, this idea that, you know, the UK doesn't need to pay anything in order to leave the EU, the Commission, the rest of the EU, will insist that there are outstanding bills and outstanding commitments to pay, and there is a sense of softening which may be indicated in the wording today. Also, this insistence that EU citizens need to be looked after, wherever they live in the EU, and their rights respected.

At 7.45am, Matthew Price reported from Sunderland again. He spoke to Richard Elvin, who it was said had led Sunderland's leave campaign. He said they had always had a good reception at the Hetton-le-Hole social club. Since the vote, there had been a hardening towards Brexit, he had not met anyone who had changed their minds. Mr Price did vox pops in the social club. There were monosyllabic affirmative responses about support from Brexit with one exception. In more detail, different voices said they had no worries about the economy, that they wanted to take back control of borders and sovereignty, of immigration. Another said immigration that was putting pressure on the NHS. Mr Price said 'people in the NHS' said it was actually foreign workers that was keeping the NHS going. The VP said immigration was the problem. Mr Price asked what people actually wanted from Brexit. The respondent said that was difficult. Mr Price said:

What sort of deal do you want? You say we've had time to think about this and there's been enough debate about the pros and cons, about the difficulty of disentangling ourselves from the European Union.

Another VP respondent said it was probably going to lead to a better Britain, and there had to be faith in the outcome of the negotiations. Another contributor said trade would be involved and another that Britain would be great again.

In Thought for the Day (7.49am), the Rev Sam Wells said Brexit had been compared to divorce. He said that betrayal could be devastating and it was hard to think (in that context) of a more deflating experience. He said love could bring resurrection out of even the bleakest night.

In the 8am bulletin, Laura Kuenssberg repeated the 'fraught negotiations' line, and Katya Adler that it was unlikely that a deal would be reached inside two years. Finally, there was a quote from the Jonathan Faull earlier interview:

Whether within two years it's possible to deal with every last sector of industry, every last rule and arrangements for what happens afterwards, I think is going to be difficult. We know that trade agreements of that sort take a very long time, and this is going to be a very big trade agreement.

At 8.10am, Nick Robinson spoke to Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond (recorded just before he had gone into a cabinet meeting). He claimed that it was an exciting pivotal moment for Britain – negotiating the exit from the EU and the delivery of a global Britain and a changed Britain in terms of the way the economy worked. Mr Robinson said he had warned before the vote that it would be a leap in the dark, and then stated that he had made that as a prediction. Mr Hammond replied that everyone was now getting what was best for Britain. Mr Robinson said GOD had described as like jumping out of a plane without a parachute – another way of saying a leap in the dark. Mr Hammond said he did not accept that. There had been hurt after the vote, but people were now thinking rationally and sensibly, and those in the EU wanted a deep and special relationship with the UK. The overwhelming majority of 'our counterparts' wanted sensible, constructive discussion about a mutually strengthening pragmatic future relationship. Mr Robinson said that the point was that the clock was now ticking and if no agreement was reached the UK would be out without a deal. He asked if Boris Johnson had been speaking for the government when he had said it would be OK to be out without a deal. Mr Hammond said there were plans in the pipeline to deal with a large number of possible outcomes. Mr Robinson asked if it would be fine if the markets heard him saying it would be fine without a deal. Mr Hammond said he was absolutely confident that a deal would be negotiated,

and that it would be the best possible. Mr Robinson said others, such as the FT were not confident there would be a deal. There was a need to know what would happen if there was not, and the head of the port of Dover had now predicted that if there was not, there would be lines of lorries queuing up, and in doing so he was echoing what chief negotiator Michael Barnier had warned. Mr Hammond said everyone would seek to protect their own interests, and it was not in anyone on the continent of Europe to have such lines of trucks. Equally it would not help French farmers. He was confident that the worst case scenario would not happen. He repeated there would be a deal to protect UK national interests.

Mr Robinson suggested that there would have to be compromise and that would be based on that the EU could say 'you are worse off than when you were in'. Mr Hammond said that the Prime Minister had said from the beginning there would be give and take on both sides. Britain had already made it clear that the UK would not be part of the single market or full members of the European customs union. Mr Robinson suggested 'full' was an interesting choice of words. Mr Hammond said the UK was clear it could not cherry pick and there would be certain consequences. Mr Robinson asked if he still wanted to be a not 'full' member of the customs union. Mr Hammond said the UK couldn't be, and would negotiate an agreement that was as frictionless as possible and at the same time kept the Northern Ireland border open.

Mr Robinson switched tack and suggested that the government had conceded flexibility with regard to immigration, and that EU citizens could still come to the UK and have rights. Mr Hammond said they could still come here because the UK would remain a member of the EU for two years. Mr Robinson asked whether Mr Hammond agreed with a House of Lords committee that the UK owed nothing as it left the EU club. Mr Hammond responded that they had a point of view, but there would be business-like negotiations over the principles of how any bill would be settled. He added that the government did not recognise the large figures bandied about in Brussels. He was not surprised that they had, but this was an aggressive starting point for discussions. Mr Robinson asked if Mr Hammond had seen the Article 50 letter, and then if he had been marginalised. Mr Hammond said he had not been, and he had been working on the UK's position. Mr Robinson said the way he had changed his Budget suggested that him and the government were easy to push around. Mr Hammond explained why the proposals to tax the self-employed at a higher level had been dropped.

Mr Robinson asked if there were any surprises in the Article 50 letter. Mr Hammond said it built on the Lancaster House speech and was a very clear statement of where the government stood.

Laura Kuenssberg suggested that Mr Hammond had cooled the idea that walking out without a deal would be 'fine and dandy' and at hinted at a 'lot of compromise'. He had also ruled out that there would be a stop to EU citizens coming to the UK and that there would be a €50 billion exit bill to pay. She added:

But I thought above all else we could hear him sort of straining as the government's going to try to put these profound disagreements behind them, of course in the Tory party and in the country. And the delaying of today's trigger until this point was designed not just so the government could work out what on earth they wanted to do, but also so that politicians on both sides of the channel could essentially calm down.

At 8.26am in a 'fact checking' sequence from Sunderland, Rebecca Ball stated that cultural sectors had been 'huge beneficiaries of funds from the EU programmes and organisations and wondered what

would happen 'to that investment' and what would replace it. Chris Morris replied that the biggest such fund was Creative Europe. He said:

...youth orchestras, independent films, you name it, you can get grants ranging from a couple of thousand to a couple of million, and we'll continue to have access to that until the day we leave, and then the Treasury has said that if there are multi-annual funding projects that are supposed to continue for a couple of years after we left, then it will cover the missing money. So the funding won't simply disappear overnight. But after that, I guess this falls into the category of, it depends what the government negotiates. We're going to hear a lot over the next few months. Now, some non-EU countries do have access to the Creative Europe fund, but they pay a financial contribution in order to participate. So, are we going to do that? Or will the government increase arts funding on its own to make up for the loss? Or will they just be less money to go around? That's the choice we have.

At 8.38am, Matthew Price was again at the leisure centre swimming pool. He spoke to Jacqui Miller, which he said was an international, multinational exporter of heavy machinery parts and asked how she felt about 'this day'. Ms Miller said she was 'very optimistic in line with what business people do. Rebecca Ball from the earlier sequence said she was hopeful if a good negotiation that would result in her being able to still work internationally. Ms Miller then asked what the potential 'out of a hundred' what the potential was of the EU to do damage to the UK and what consequences that would have if they decided that route. Mr Morris said he believed the EU wanted an agreement that worked for them and us. He noted that Jean Claude Juncker had said there would be a price to pay and this meant that the UK could not expect the same access to the single market as 'it gets as a EU member'. He added:

We will have access, it's not going to just break down, but it won't be quite as easy, precisely because we've said we don't want such a close relationship. So I don't think they are setting out to punish us, but I don't think they are going to roll over either, and we have to remember, just as our government has red lines and domestic pressures, so do all the other governments. I mean, in terms of numbers, what are the odds that it might feel like damage, like a punishment? It might feel like it, but I don't think that's the intention.

Mr Price suggested to Jacqui Miller that although she was optimistic, there was uncertainty about and wondered if that bothered her. Ms Miller confirmed there would be such uncertainty, but hoped that negotiation would sort the issues out. Paul Dobson, from the Sunderland AFC Fanzine, wanted negotiators to get the best deal, then asked whether Sunderland would still be able to employ EU players. Mr Morris said he did not know, but if the EU was treated like the rest of the world, the current unrestricted access to the UK would cease and players would need work permits. That would not affect top-flight players from FIFA national teams, but might limit lesser players. He said:

you take a player like N'Golo Kanté at Chelsea, he wasn't an international when first signed for Leicester, and took the Premier league by storm. So a future Kanté might never be able to come here in the first place. So, I think the bigger effect of leaving the EU could be felt by clubs in the lower leagues who at the moment sign less well-known European players. So I don't want to rub it in Paul, but that might make Sunderland fans staring relegation in the face a little bit worried just now, or you might think 'fair enough, we'll just give home-grown talent a chance instead.'

MP then asked Ms Ball what she needed to hear from the government to make it OK. She replied that she was looking for answers. She said:

There's a huge amount of uncertainty, uncertainty around what this will mean further the cultural sector, what it will mean for colleagues who are EU nationals, what it will mean for investment and ability to work internationally, so, I think it's really, as everyone's said this morning, it's about starting the negotiation process and looking for answers.

Ms Ball said Brexit had monopolised the way that Sunderland had been portrayed nationally, but there was now a need to move on from that – lots was happening in terms of investment and culture and Brexit was not the whole story.

Back in the studio, Mr Robinson said that listeners were asking whether, once Article 50 was triggered, the government could change its mind and stay in the EU. Mr Morris said this was the subject of legal dispute. He added:

...it's hard to find a cabinet minister being explicit about that. The justice secretary, Liz Truss has said 'my understanding is that it's irreversible', and David Davis the Brexit Secretary has said, 'Is it irreversible? I don't know.' On the other hand, when Donald Tusk, the European Council President was asked if the UK could change course in the next two years, he said, 'Technically, legally, yes.' And the man who helped write this blessing Article 50, the former British diplomat Lord Kerr, says there is absolutely nothing in it to stop you changing your mind, except – and this is a big but, that there might be a political price to pay. And I think that's the point. The politics of a screeching handbrake turn would be extremely difficult to navigate. In theory, I think, you could do it, or if you could do it, you wouldn't have to reapply, because you wouldn't have left, but legally, this is a piece of European law, so in the end the ultimate arbiter on this point would have to be our old friend, the European Court of Justice, and there is a legal case underway in Dublin at the moment, Nick, trying to refer precisely this question to the ECJ.

At 8.47am, Sarah Montague interviewed Labour shadow foreign secretary Emily Thornberry, who had said her party would be holding the government to account and would not support any negotiated deal unless it met the party's six tests. She first suggested that negotiations had already failed on one of the conditions, that there should be the exact same benefit as being in the single market and customs union. Ms Thornberry said the White Paper promised everything to everyone but was full of contradictions. Labour thought the six conditions including security of the nation, the economy, were absolutely vital. Ms Montague repeated that she was trying to establish what Labour thought about the first test – exactly the same benefits – when Brussels had already said that was impossible to achieve. Ms Thornberry said that the government should be looking after the economy, and added:

No, no, listen, it's going to be difficult, but what we are trying to say is that more important than anything else is the economy. You know, the government ought to be looking after the economy, and if the economy goes south, then people who've only just got their heads above water will be the ones who will suffer most. It will not be Liam Fox's family, it will be people who are struggling at the moment. And it would be irresponsible for a government to make decisions knowing that it will have an effect on people's jobs, because nobody voted to lose their job, whether they voted to leave or to remain, and nobody voted to be poorer. So the priority has to be, first of all, the security of the nation and secondly the economy. And that's

what we're saying, and we're saying it very clearly, and we're saying, 'You promised this, and you said you could deliver it, and we're holding you to account on this.'

Ms Montague then brought in Nick Clegg and suggested that the argument he had been making was that people already thought they had been 'lied to'. Mr Clegg said that those who won the argument last summer, Nigel Farage, Boris Johnson and Michael Gove now had to be held to account for the hopes they had raised, including £350m every week to the health service, and that there would be a cornucopia of new trade deals from across the world. Ms Montague asked how. He said the government must be held remorselessly to account in Parliament. He claimed it was not possible to have the same benefits outside the single market as in it, as David Davis had claimed. Now was the time that they had to be held to account. Ms Thornberry agreed and said Labour was already doing so, by forcing a White Paper, and insisting on regular reports to parliament. Ms Montague asked whether Labour would vote against the government and suggested they would not. Ms Thornberry repeated she wanted the best deal. Ms Montague suggested to Nick Clegg that the government could do what it wanted. Nick Clegg suggested that they could vote against on a cross-party basis. Ms Thornberry said the Liberal Democrats would vote against come what may. Nick Clegg said his party did not feel there was the remotest chance of enjoying the same privileges and advantages outside the EU as in it. Ms Thornberry repeated he was voting against no matter what and wondered how that was holding the government to account. Nick Clegg said that Labour would not admit it, but they would also have to. The government was trying to achieve the impossible. She could not pontificate without being prepared to vote against. Ms Montague, noting a Matt cartoon which had a cat talking to a dog saying "I've shut my Lib Dems indoors, they get very distressed" and wondered that was how he felt. Nick Clegg replied that was now that the tough stuff began and his party would hold the government to account.

At 8.55am, David Starkey was the guest. Mr Robinson prefaced his appearance by suggesting the audience was probably bored about the 'significant day in the country's history'. Mr Starkey said we had been in the same position before: this was, in fact the second Brexit, the first one having been Henry VIII's break with the Roman Catholic Church in which, he contended – 'unlike the intolerably tedious conversation we've just had' - they had known what they were doing. He suggested that those who had voted in the referendum had known what they were doing. They wanted independence, self-determination and self-government, exactly like Henry VIII. Mr Robinson suggested that people did not think his was an assertion of Parliamentary sovereignty 'because of course we were not a democracy'. Mr Starkey argued that it was nonsensical to suggest that parliamentary sovereignty was 'something to do with democracy'. Thomas Moore argued that Parliament was subordinate to European law, but Parliament had decided that an act of Parliament was sufficient to break with Rome. Parliamentary sovereignty thus long antedated democracy and had been created to break with Europe. Mr Robinson asked if he was not revealing his politics when he argued that Nigel Farage should be seen as a latter-day Henry VIII. Mr Starkey said he could be 'unbelievably rude' about Mr Farage, then said that Henry VIII had used the break with Rome to achieve a radical redefinition of national identity, which was similar to the Brexiteers. They were using instruments that Henry VIII had invented. Mr Robinson suggested that Henry VIII's legislation was being used again. Mr Starkey said that had been got wrong too, yes, it was being used, but not the Act of Proclamations, but the Act of Conditional Restraint of Annates, which cut off payments to Rome – exactly as was being argued now.

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Bulletins said the government would reveal its plans to 'repatriate more than 40 years' worth of powers from the EU' in what was being called the Great Repeal Bill. Eleanor Garnier said the Bill would ensure that the UK left the jurisdiction of the European Court and also transpose EU legislation into domestic law. She noted that this could lead to ministers having time-limited powers to change some aspects of European law without full scrutiny of MPs, and added that Jeremy Corbyn had said he would not allow Parliament to be overridden. Zeb Soanes (newsreader) said that work and pensions secretary Damian Green had denied claims that the government was trying to blackmail the EU by linking a future trade deal to the UK's cooperation on security. There was a quote from Mr Green taken from the previous night's Newsnight.

At 6.10am, Chris Morris reported from Malta where European leaders were meeting. He noted that MEP Guy Verhofstadt had mentioned blackmail, but said what mattered was the reaction of the leaders. He said they had expressed concern about the linking of trade with security, but they were mainly relieved that the tone of Theresa May's letter was of conciliation and needing to work together. There was also sadness, but also determination among the 27 to stick together. John Humphrys asked if any one of them scupper the deal. Mr Morris said they could put large obstacles in the way but voting would be by qualified majority. He added that it was 'an article of faith' that the UK's strategy would be divide and rule. Mr Morris added that he was sure others would disagree, but the 27 were as united on this issue as on any other in the past five years. He opined:

...and it may just be that Brexit was the wake-up call they needed to get on with trying to fix the other problems of the EU. And, you know, Angela Merkel, I think, a lot of people in Downing Street seemed to have held up hope that she was the person that was going to agree with the way they wanted to move forward, parallel talks on the divorce and on trade at the same time – she made very clear yesterday, and she'll be speaking here in Malta lately (*sic, means 'later'?*) she agrees with European Commission line, we need to sort out the terms of separation first, before any talk about future relationships.

In the Business News at 6.15am, Dominic O'Connell – after Mr Humphrys had first noted that despite expectations, the market had not reacted with turmoil to the May letter – said there had been no repeat of last June even though the possibility of a stand-off over negotiations might have triggered one. Kathleen Brooks, research director at City Index claimed the reason that there had been no problems the day before because there were already record numbers of short (selling) positions on the pound. Mr O'Connell asked if this meant that people were betting on that the pound would go down. Ms Brooks said they were doing so at record levels. She said:

So, you know, how much more weakness can there be, essentially, those people who want to go short, who don't like the pound because of Brexit, have had nine months already to short it, and that's what they've done in droves.

Mr O'Connell asked whether this meant that the pound would necessarily fall. Ms Brooks suggested that because such lows had been reached, it might also rise. Mr O'Connell laughed. Ms Brooks added that a lot going on the markets was not to do with Brexit but because the dollar had risen. Mr O'Connell then asked Rupert Harrison, if Blackrock, and said to be a former advisor of George Osborne, how the stand-off in negotiations would go. He replied that what had been seen so far was mainly theatre and not much substance. Mr O'Connell asked what he thought of Theresa May bringing security into the equation. Ross Hawkins said he thought it was punchy to put trade and security next

to each other, but suggested it was a difficult card to play to bracket them together. Mr O'Connell asked if that bluff could easily be called. Ross Hawkins said it could, the real issue would be money versus transition. Mr O'Connell turned to Ms Brooks again. He suggested that Theresa May had hinted at a special deal for the City, and had mentioned certain key sectors in a free trade agreement. He wondered – though suspecting it would be very difficult politically – if the government could allow Europe to have some regulatory hold over the City through the ECJ. Ms Brooks claimed that big banks and big taxpayers had demanded and got some special treatment:

...they got it, Scotland essentially didn't, erm, so I think that, you know, Theresa May's best interests now, she wants to keep, you know, investment banks and the financial sector, you know, jobs in London, is to actually, you know, give them the deal that they want, essentially, and to, you know, potentially give them, give Europe concessions to keep the financial sector in London.

Mr O'Connell said Lloyd's of London was going to announce the relocation of some people to Brussels, and suggested that was of symbolic importance. Ms Brooks agreed. He then said:

Rupert, what about that free trade deal, it will, you know, if we're talking about The City, it will have to encapsulate services, and free trade deals in services are pretty rare on the ground, are they? And not . . . I mean, the European Union doesn't really have one, does it, as it stands?

Ross Hawkins: No, that's absolutely right, I mean, I think that we should be able to come to a decent outcome on goods. I mean, it's really a failure of negotiations if we end up with tariffs and serious barriers to goods trade. With services, I think we have to be much more pessimistic, frankly, er, particularly financial services. The optimistic vision is that we can come up with some form of what people call 'enhanced equivalence' whereby we keep the regulatory regimes roughly the same, and you have some new operation on top of it that probably includes the ECJ and the British courts working together in some way to police that, I think that is going to be very difficult for both sides, actually.

DO: Because this idea of equivalence has this sort of idea that everybody sort of stands back and says, 'Oh yeah, let's agree the right thing.' It'll be the Germans and the French you are setting the rules, won't it?

Ross Hawkins: *(speaking over)* Well *(fragment of word, or word unclear due to speaking over)*

DO: *(speaking over)* So the idea of equivalence might be completely different?

Ross Hawkins: Well, so . . . there are two big problems, one is if you are the Bank of England or the regulator in The City, the idea that you can manage the world's, one of the world's largest financial centres by essentially cutting and pasting regulation that someone else is coming up with is a total nonsense.

DO: And they would hate that *(word or words unclear due to speaking over)*

Ross Hawkins: *(speaking over)* And then, from the point of view of the banks and other institutions making location decisions, if you're making long-term investment decisions on the basis of a kind of fragile equivalence concept that might be taken away at any minute, it's

very, very hard to make those long-term commitments, so I think we are going to see activity at the margins increasingly starting to move.

DO: Yeah, and Kathleen, there was already one big, perhaps a casual to Brexit, the merger between the London stock exchange and Deutsche Borse, er, did Brexit do it, or something else do you think?

Ms Brooks: It was a very tricky one anyway, you know, sev— for 17 years there have been, you know, talks about the LSE being taken over by somebody. You know, ultimately, you know, shares in the LSE and the Deutsche Borse both rallied yesterday, suggesting to me that, you know, for some people the collapse of this deal was good, be that, you know, the UK government, because then they keep a big UK business, or, you know, people keep their jobs.

At 6.31am, John Humphrys suggested to Norman Smith that ‘an awful lot of stuff’ was involved in the new bill. Mr Smith said it was a legislative mountain, thousands of pages covering every nook and cranny of ‘our daily lives’. He suggested this was not contentious because the government had committed to retaining all the existing laws, but the issues were the ‘legislative soup’ now opened up and the potential for MPs if they were so minded to cause the government ‘grief and difficulties’ at the same time they were trying to negotiate with the EU. Mr Smith said he did not think that the Great Repeal Bill would itself be a flashpoint, but other separate legislation covering immigration, trade, agriculture and customs could be. He said these may be on the backburner for a while so the focus would switch to Brussels and there, Theresa May was ‘absolutely in the market to do a deal’. She was reluctant to walk away, so was not in the same place as Brexiteers who thought differently. Mr Smith said a second point was that the UK would have to make ‘big concessions’ because Theresa May wanted a generous deal including the same conditions as being in the single market. He added:

That means we are going to have to give a lot if we want a lot. And we got a sort of tantalising sense yesterday of some of the areas where we might give: money – it’s clear we are going to pay a Brexit bill, it seems also likely to me we will be prepared to pay money to ensure access to key sectors of the British economy, the letter talks about financial services and so-called network industry. There was no mention of the European Court of Justice, possibly there could be a continuing role for them, and most fascinating of all, there was no mention of immigration. And you just wonder whether there is possibly some sort of room for compromise over freedom of movement, because to date ministers have also been very careful in saying ‘we want to end freedom of movement as it currently operates’ – does that provide a little chink to negotiate?

At 6.37am, the Labour MP Gisela Stuart presented an edited item called ‘Brexit milestones’. She outlined that the next big event would be a meeting of the EU heads of state. This would be an opportunity to sort out priorities, define the size of the negotiating envelope and take stock of where were the problems. Trade deals with non-EU countries would also be considered (by the UK) and then would come the Queen’s Speech in May, which would include primary legislation around immigration, EU citizens and customs arrangements. Then would come the Great Repeal Bill – ‘our laws made in Westminster not Brussels. In the rest of the item, GS speculated about what would happen in Europe to the negotiations in the light of forthcoming elections. She said a Marine Le Pen victory in France would lead to an existential crisis for the EU, but the German elections would be more important because German interest had driven European economic policy for a long time. A win for Martin Schulz in the German elections would mean more emphasis on the institutional interests of the EU. She

warned that if negotiations were not sorted out in the two-year time frame, the UK would have to start again. If things were done right, it would be good for the UK and for the EU.

At 6.45am, in Yesterday in Parliament, Susan Hulme said the process had begun of extracting the UK from the EU after more than 40 years. There were extracts from Theresa May's statement to the House, including that the UK was leaving the EU but not Europe. Ms Montague noted that Jeremy Corbyn had responded that some Tories wanted to change the UK into a low-wage tax haven, and that his party had laid down conditions including access to the single market. Ms Hulme said there was 'real anger' from the SNP Westminster leader Angus Robertson, who had reminded MPs that his country had voted Remain. She added that Liberal Democrat leader Tim Farron had maintained that voters had not opted for a hard Brexit. There was a quote from Ed Miliband, who warned that Theresa May needed to do things differently to achieve national unity. Ms Hulme noted that Jacob Rees-Mogg had compared Theresa May to Elizabeth I. Ms Montague noted that Ms May had answered questions from 113 MPs and had been at the Despatch Box for 3h 20m.

At 6.53am, Mr Humphrys interviewed Welsh First Minister Carwyn Jones. He claimed first that Theresa May's bracketing the negotiations with security ('terrorism' in his word) was akin to threatening to jump off a cliff if the UK did not get it wanted. Mr Humphrys said that this is not what had been said. Mr Jones said it was the way it was being spun. He claimed there was a fundamental battle going on in the Conservative government between pragmatists and English nationalists who saw the world as it was in the 19th century. He maintained that the EU was 'too big to intimidate, far bigger than we are' and a solution was needed that good for everybody. Mr Humphrys asked if Wales wanted anything specifically. Mr Jones said full and unfettered access to the single market was needed. Mr Humphrys said he would not get it. Mr Jones said membership and participation were different and it was vital that Welsh businesses could export on the same terms as before because 67% went to the EU. He also claimed that Leavers had promised that Wales would not lose any funding as a result of Brexit and he wanted this confirmed. Mr Humphrys asked if he meant farming subsidies. Mr Jones said £260m came into rural Wales through farming subsidies and at the moment there was no guarantee of continuation beyond 2020. He added that a joint negotiating position was needed covering all the Parliaments, it was important to note that in 2011, the Welsh Parliament had decided that the UK Parliament should have no role in Welsh Law development. Mr Humphrys asked whether he was advocating separate votes in each Parliament. Mr Jones said ratification should be in all the UK Parliaments, as had happened in Belgium. Mr Humphrys asked what would happen if, say, Scotland and Wales voted against. Mr Jones said there would have to be a new deal. Mr Humphrys said that was unrealistic. Mr Jones repeated Belgium did it that way. Mr Humphrys suggested that 'do it like Belgium' would not be a good phrase. Mr Jones said that Wales needed a voice. He added:

Why do I say that? If you look at areas like agriculture and fisheries, the UK doesn't exist, everything is either European or its devolved, so why then shouldn't we have a role in ratifying, an agreement that would've been reached in areas that we control entirely ourselves? It makes perfect sense, and it's only fair.

Mr Humphrys said the answer was that the UK was negotiating for the whole of the country. Mr Jones said that was true but unity was not guaranteed, it was not particularly secure. Mr Humphrys said Wales was not going to break away. Mr Jones said that if you pushed people too far and Welsh people would be unhappy if they were not listened to.

The 7am bulletin was broadly a repeat of 6am.

At 7.09am, Ross Hawkins reported from Christchurch. Simon Boyd, the boss of a steelworks who was said to have campaigned for Brexit, said he had had to increase staff to deal with the amount of paper. British standards had been the best in the world, and he wanted them reborn. John White, an employee, said:

We're still working to the same standards, we've still got the same welders, we're still welding to the same, the same quality that we did before. There just seems to be more paper to go with it. Every load that leaves site has to have a certificate with it, saying it's EE marked, but it's just another piece of paper we've got to print off.

SB added that the UK had been sucked into a deal with bureaucrats in Brussels who were trying to make everyone the same when clearly they weren't. Ross Hawkins then visited a paint factory in Northampton, and an employee said they had to comply with the EU's Reach regulations without having any influence on how they were set. Ross Hawkins commented:

And even *if* Ministers wanted to, they couldn't just copy and paste those rules into British law, but as the system relies on an EU regulator and EU data, it would have to be negotiated alongside, well, everything else. The uncertainty's such, the chemical industry trade body says a fifth of its members are looking into leaving the UK. The demand in this factory . . .

The factory owner said he wanted the British system to stay the same as the EU system, 'both now and in the future'. Ross Hawkins said these contrasting views – ditch rules and keep them the same meant that someone would have to lose out in post-Brexit Britain.

Sarah Montague then interviewed Lord Lisvane, who, she said, was now a cross-bench peer but had been clerk to the House of Commons. He said Britain had never relinquished the actual sovereignty of Parliament and could have repealed in the European Communities Act of 1972 at any time. In two years there would be big questions about future sovereignty would be exercised when an enormous body of EU law was brought across, but there would be opportunity to amend or repeal elements of that law. Ms Montague suggested there were 80,000 items, but despite that, there would be gaps. Was that his concern? Lord Lisvane replied that in passing across laws – for example relating to drugs – there might be the need to create a UK drugs authority to replace the EU one. Any changes introduced in that process could be contentious. Patent law also came to mind. Ms Montague asked whether this was the Henry VIII clause applied. Lord Lisvane said that it gave powers to the executive in a way in which primary legislation did not. He added:

And I think it would be a supreme irony, after all we were told in the referendum campaign about taking back control of parliamentary sovereignty, if the result of the process were actually two . . . affect a major shift of power to the executive.

Ms Montague asked if that would be because Parliament would just have too much to do. Lord Lisvane said it would be complex because not everything could be neatly parcelled. It would also be a huge drain on resources. And in terms of negotiations, A and Z might depend on each other, even though they were separate areas, so dealing with changes would be complex. Ms Montague asked if it would be 'do-able' in two years. Lord Lisvane said it would take ten.

At 7.17am, in a Business News update, John Humphrys noted that since June 24 there had been a trickle of jobs out of London (he posited that 'it hasn't been a flood?') and asked where Lloyd's was

going to set up its new base. Mr O'Connell replied that it would be in Brussels. He asked Inga Beale, chief executive, why she had to set up or move these people. Dame Inga said it was because when the UK exited the EU, it would lose the ability to issue and provide insurance for customers in the EU. So this was not moving the London HQ, it was setting up an EU subsidiary to service EU customers. Mr O'Connell asked how much of existing turnover was from the EU. Dame Inga said it was around 11%, though half of that could still be dealt with by London, to around 5%. Dame Inga said the numbers would be 'minimal', that is, in the tens out of 34,000 in the London insurance market. Mr O'Connell suggested that Lloyd's employed only about 1,000 – Dame Inga confirmed this. He asked why Brussels had been chosen. She replied it was the best place. Mr O'Connell also noted the Lloyd's annual results, which showed a flat profit of £2.1bn on slightly increased turnover. Dame Inga said margins had tightened, but the increase in the dollar had been a strong boost. Mr O'Connell wondered if Lloyd's 'still had a future' in London 'despite the Brussels base'. Dame Inga said that it definitely would with 95% of business still written out of London.

At 7.35am, John Humphrys said it as tempting to see Brexit as a divorce, but that would be wrong because unlike divorce (which could be quick or slow) there was a two-year time limit. So Theresa May wanted to keep two sets of negotiations going at the same time, the break-up and the new deal. Mr Humphrys first asked Sylvie Bermann, the French ambassador to the UK, if she wanted a deal quickly relating to the French national living in London and vice versa. She said France did, because people here were understandably worried. Mr Humphrys asked if this was concern about French nationals being expelled. Ms Bermann said not, but they wanted certainty for themselves and their children. Mr Humphrys asked how long it would take to be sorted out – would it be part of the first negotiations. Ms Bermann said was a priority, and there was also reciprocity (British in Europe) but she could not say when. Mr Humphrys asked Manfred Weber, of the German People's Party if he agreed that it should be dealt with now rather than later. Mr Weber said a mistake was being made. Europe was now borderless and fair and equal and this was building up borders again, which was wrong. Mr Humphrys said that the UK had always kept its borders but Mr Weber said he was on record as saying he cared only about the 450m European citizens and did not care about British interests. That was tough language. Mr Weber said he only cared about EU citizens, he did not care about the City of London's interests, but those of Amsterdam, Dublin and Frankfurt. So the negotiations would be very tough. Mr Humphrys said:

Forgive me, will you not care about Britain's relationship with the rest of Europe in security terms, security cooperation?

MANFRED WEBER: Yeah, absolutely. I would care . . . I would love to care about this, but . . . first of all have to decided (*sic*) has decided to leave the European Union, and yesterday I heard that Theresa May says she wants still to cooperate with Europol – Europol is 100% EU situation, you see, it's Europe what we talk about, until yesterday I heard that you want to cooperate with Europol, so please tell me, Theresa May, please tell me what leaving the European Union means . . .

JOHN HUMPHRYS: (*speaking over*) Hmm, but . . .

MANFRED WEBER: I hear every day that you want to stay in the research union, you want to stay as close as possible to the single market, you want to stay in Europe altogether, I have no idea what you are leaving (*sic means, 'why'*) and we have to say, I respect the outcome of

the voters of Great Britain, and they want to leave the European Union, that means to build up walls again, to split up . . . to make a divorce.

Mr Humphrys said the UK had agreed it wanted a divorce and he had to accept that. Mr Weber said he accepted this, but no-one in London appeared to do...they would see over two years how high the damage will be when 'you take this union into question'. Mr Humphrys asked Ms Bermann if she took a hardline approach as well. Ms Bermann said the priority was now the future of Europe. This didn't mean there would not be a good agreement with the UK, and France was a close partner on security issues, defence, intelligence sharing and trade, but the priority was to strengthen the EU. Mr Humphrys suggested that therefore there was no difference between France and Germany. Mr Weber said:

That's why (*words unclear*) the European Union, Michel Barnier is negotiating on behalf of 27 member states, and that is important, especially for the Irish friends, because they can feel that they are not alone in the Northern Ireland question. So that . . . that they are part of a big family of 27, who are backing their position, who are supporting their idea to avoid hard border in the island of Ireland, so I think it's a divorce between EU and Great Britain, and having said this, you have to have in mind it will be very difficult for Great Britain.

Mr Humphrys suggested to Ms Bermann that her country's approach was going to be more collegiate, which in tone suggested there was a difference in tone between the 27 countries. Ms Bermann said that there would be complete unity, and the negotiations would be conducted by Michel Barnier on behalf of the 27. The bilateral relationship was 'something different' and would continue. Mr Humphrys asked what else would be in the bilateral relationship, apart from security. Ms Bermann said that most important was security and defence. Mr Humphrys said Theresa May was being tough about that yesterday, she had suggested that a failure to reach agreement about the UK's departure would mean cooperation on crime and terrorism would be weakened. Ms Bermann said that was not her understanding, it would not be interests of the UK because everyone was facing the same security challenges. She could not see a trade-off between the FTA and security.

In the 8am bulletin was a voice report from Norman Smith. Zeb Soanes first said that the Great Repeal Bill had been described as one of the largest legislative processes ever undertaken in the UK. NS reinforced that this was a massive undertaking that could provide scope for critical MPs to cause Mrs May grief. He added that much of this had been reduced by Mrs May's pledge not to repeal or amend existing EU laws, including those covering the environment or employment. He added that Lord Lisvane had warned the process could take a decade. Chris Morris, reporting from Malta, said that Donald Tusk had pledged to respond to Mrs May by Friday, but meanwhile Angela Merkel had insisted again that divorce arrangements would have to be agreed before a new deal could be reached. Dominic O'Connell then reported that Lloyd's had confirmed it was setting up a base in Brussels. He said the company could claim a place in the national consciousness, and was a bedrock of Britain's financial services industry. He said that Lloyd's had said that it had been 'forced' to set up a new base because after the UK left the EU it would lose the right to sell across the single market, He added:

It has chosen Brussels, something of a surprise, given that many had thought Luxembourg Frankfurt more likely. It's chief executive, Dame Inga Beale said the new office would only employ a few dozen people, but the significance of Lloyd's of London planting a flag in the heart of Europe, the day after Article 50 was invoked, will not be lost on other people in the Square Mile.

At 8.10am, John Humphrys interviewed David Davis. He first suggested that the sentence, 'a failure to reach agreement would mean our cooperation in the fight against crime and terrorism would be weakened' sounded in Theresa May's letter like blackmail. Mr Davis said it did not. He had spent yesterday talking to his opposite numbers in Europe and they all stressed they wanted a deep and special relationship. In the section concerned, the prime minister was saying simply that if there wasn't a deal it would be not good for both sides. There were security issues that needed sorting out such as Europol, they would need a new deal, and this was what was being said. It was a reasonable point to make. Mr Humphrys asked what Amber Rudd meant when she had said that the UK was the largest contributor to Europol and if 'we get thrown out', the UK would take 'our information' with us, and the legislation. He asked if that wasn't a touch of blackmail, what was? Mr Davis denied it was. The simple truth was that unless a parallel deal was made, the UK would not be in Europol or part of the European Arrest Warrant, which Theresa May had helped negotiate. Mr Humphrys said all she would have had to do (for it not to sound like blackmail?) was to say that everything possible would be done towards reaching agreement. But she did not and it was a blackmail threat, and had been interpreted as such by many in Europe. Mr Davis suggested Guy Verhofstadt. Mr Humphrys said that Manfred Weber had said the same thing on the programme. Mr Davis said neither were direct negotiators. Mr Humphrys said GV was going to be. Mr Davis said that was with the European Parliament. He repeated the words were not a threat, simply a statement. The UK was after a fully comprehensive deal that covered all aspects of our existing relationship including security.

Mr Humphrys shifted focus to the timing of the talks. He suggested that Mr Davis would like to deal with departure and new arrangements together. Mr Davis confirmed that he would. Mr Humphrys said he was being told that could not happen, the money 'we give to Brussels' had to be sorted out first. Mr Davis said that Article 50 stipulated both, and suggested that for practical reasons, they could not be separated. Mr Humphrys said he wanted to keep his trump card. Mr Davis denied that. Mr Humphrys said if he wanted a lot he would have to give a lot. Mr Davis said they agreed with the Commission that the first thing that had to be dealt with was European and British citizens. Then there was the Irish border, but that should not hold up trade and security negotiations. Mr Humphrys suggested there was not a lot of give, Mrs Merkel was being tough. Mr Davis said it was the beginning of the negotiation and people would take strong positions. His job was to keep things on an even keel and not get in tit-for-tat – the first negotiations would not be for about a month after the European Council meeting that set terms. Mr Davis repeated he wanted to secure good terms. Mr Humphrys said he had stated in January that he wanted to deliver the same benefits as the UK currently has – was that conceivable? Mr Davis said he made no apology for being ambitious. He wanted to secure the ability to do deals in the biggest markets in the world. Mr Humphrys said he knew very well if he got, the signal it would send to the 27 was that they could have the same benefits without paying a penny. That was not going to happen. Mr Davis replied that he would try for the best. Things had calmed down – a reason for delaying applying for Article 50 – and it had emerged that Britain's position in the world was unique, others didn't have the same strengths to go it alone. This was not the start-up of a break-up of the EU, and the UK wanted a strong powerful EU.

Mr Humphrys asked if some of his 'troublesome' backbenchers were prepared to accept less than had been originally promised. Mr Davis said he was aiming for a good deal and they would be able to decide whether it was at the end. He wanted to get control back of laws and borders and so on, there was focus on numbers in the economy, but a lot of this was our standing and our ability to stand on our own two feet. He was not sure who was troublesome. If he got a good deal, they would support it. Mr Humphrys asked how important immigration – those already here and Brits overseas – was. Mr

Davis said it would be the first thing on the agenda, a deal had already been attempted, and now it was a moral duty to sort out the anxieties of the individuals involved. Mr Humphrys asked in terms of numbers the issue was control rather than rigid numbers. Mr Davis said the task was to make the British Parliament responsible for decisions about immigration, and then numbers would be brought down smoothly. Mr Humphrys asked whether this would take a very long time. Mr Davis did not define a period of time, but stuck that it would take time.

Finally, Mr Humphrys suggested it was a joke to claim that the negotiations could be complete in two years. Mr Davis denied this. He said it took time to sort out standards related to trade deals – that is why European standards were initially being incorporated into British law because it gave certainty in the negotiating base. Mr Humphrys suggested it would take years to cut red tape. Mr Davis said it was a two stage process – the first to adopt EU law, and then for Parliament to decide what it wanted to improve and change. Mr Humphrys said that ‘the powerful Europeans’ had said they were sad (over and over again) to have received the Brexit letter. What did he think? Mr Davis said ‘excited for the future of our country’.

Laura Kuenssberg was asked to assess Mr Davis’s contribution. Ms Kuenssberg said normally governments played expectations down, but this government was playing them up. She said some would say this was preparing the ground for ‘pesky opponents’ (to be dealt with when they were difficult across the table), but others were saying they were being honest and believed it could be done. She claimed that Mr Davis had changed one thing – that he was now saying that achieving the ‘exact same benefits’ was an ambition, not a promise, ‘clearly suggesting he doesn’t want to be held to that’. Ms Kuenssberg added that all around the government had opportunities, but they also had problems - that the EU wasn’t interested in parallel talks and of the sheer complexity of ‘getting all this done’.

Mr Humphrys asked if the Labour party could put spokes in wheels. Ms Kuenssberg replied that after having several positions, Labour now had gone through internal agonies and arrived at one. There were six tests on which they would hold the government to account. Ms Kuenssberg added that, however, most of the pressure on Theresa May was coming from the ‘right’ in her own party – the eurosceptics in her own party were very powerful and the most difficult thing to deal with.

At 8.45am, Mr Humphrys spoke to ‘prominent Leave campaigner’ Tim Martin of Wetherspoon’s about the estimated 19,000 EU rules and regulations. Was he worried or relieved about the Repeal Bill? Theresa May said he was relieved – it would mean in future it would be clear who to speak to about contentious legislation. Mr Humphrys asked what might change for him. Theresa May replied that new regulation starting next week would cost the business £40m, and then there was climate change. Mr Humphrys suggested taxes would not change because they were imposed by the British government. Theresa May said taxes were partly the result of European laws and there was not proper current scrutiny because MPs did not understand and regulation was nodded through. He added that alcohol duty had gone up by 3.9%, allegedly because of inflation. Mr Humphrys said it was something decided by the Chancellor without reference to Brussels. Theresa May said there had been poor government and it was important to be more vigilant. Mr Humphrys asked if there was an issue about going back to pints, there was no legislation that could be changed immediately. Theresa May said there was a £4m increase in his electricity bills imposed by the EU, now the buck would stop at the gates of number 10. Mr Humphrys suggested he should be optimistic. Theresa May said he was breakdancing in the street.

At 8.54am, John Humphrys spoke to 'two leading journalists', Stefanie Bolzen, London correspondent of Die Welt, and Bartosz Wielinski, foreign editor for the Polish newspaper, Gazeta Wyborcza, about their reactions to the Article 55 letter. Ms Bermann first said the EU was a project about peace, Britain had played a large part in that, so it was very sad. She added that a German prime time host had said the UK was 'kicking itself into Brexit La-La Land and was a ticking time-bomb. BW contended that leaving the EU was a kind of madness, the 'freedom' the UK was seeking was not possible in a globalised world, 'leaving the family' was a disaster that would put the country in peril. In addition, there were lots of Polish citizens in the UK who were now afraid of the future. Mr Humphrys suggested there was no doubt they would be able to stay. BW queried whether it could be guaranteed, then added that there was uncertainty – the prediction is that it would be chaotic and erratic. Mr Humphrys asked Ms Bermann to what extent the big companies would influence the outcome of the negotiations as far as trade deals were concerned. Ms Bermann said they were sticking together in saying the unity of the 27 was pivotal. Only 8% of car exports went to the UK, and Berlin was 'not amused' that the UK might not pay the money owed, and the comment on security was received in a 'sensitive way' in Berlin. Mr Humphrys asked BW about the 'security' comment. She replied that Poland was worried about Russia and that Britain was needed as a partner in NATO as well.

March 31

Bulletins said that Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, would set out how the EU wanted to handle the Brexit negotiations. Kamal Ahmed reported on a British Hospitality Association (BHA) claim that they relied on 60,000 workers from the EU every year and had warned that tourism would be damaged if strict immigration controls were introduced. KH said BMW had called for a retention of labour mobility, and now the BHA had said they were facing a 'recruitment crisis' if the ending of freedom of movement meant a drop in the number of EU citizens coming to work in the UK. He added that a KPMG report said that it would take 10 years to reduce the need for EU workers by training UK workers.

At 6.10am, Chris Morris, reporting from Malta, outlined how the EU response to the Article 50 letter would be announced. He said the talks would be in three phases, the terms of the divorce, trade agreements and then the future relationship. He added:

At each of those three stages there are going to be severe stumbling blocks I think and you may have noticed that one party that isn't being consulted about what's in these guidelines is, of course, the United Kingdom and that is significant. Until Wednesday the British government was in charge of the timing of this whole process because it was the Prime Minister who decided when Article 50 was to be triggered, now that's been done control of the timing moves to Brussels and other EU capitals.

Mishal Husain asked whether the news that talks over trade could start in a few months was a relief. Mr Morris said not because the UK would like that to happen immediately, because the future trading relationship was of great importance. But the chief negotiator insisted otherwise. He said the UK could challenge the framework but once it was agreed by the 27, it was hard to unpick.

At 6.15am in Business News, Katie Prescott spoke to Lucy McDonald. From Allianz Global Investors. She asked whether, because of Brexit she was balancing portfolios away from the UK. Ms McDonald said her funds did not have much exposure to the UK domestic market, they did not think sterling was going to be strong and that it could be a much extended period of uncertainty for the UK economy

and the countries dependent on it. Ms Prescott asked if everyone was a bored (with Brexit) 'as you are'. Lucy McDonald repeated it was a problem that was going to go on for a long time.

The 6.30 bulletins said that Theresa May has been warned that hotels, restaurants and tourist attractions could face a staffing crisis if tighter controls on the movement of labour are imposed after Brexit. The British Hospitality Association had warned there would be problems filling tens of thousands of vacancies.

At 6.44am, Sean Curran (Yesterday in Parliament) reported that David Davis had said the Great Repeal Bill would smooth the exit from the UK, but Labour had warned it would give ministers sweeping new powers. Mr Davis was quoted:

It will provide clarity and certainty for business, workers and consumers across the United Kingdom on the day we leave the EU. It will mean that as we exit the EU and seek new deepen special partnership with the European Union, will be doing so from a position where we have the same standards and rules. But it'll also ensure that we deliver on our promise to end the supremacy of European Union law in the UK as we exit. Our laws will then be made in London, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast, and interpreted not by judges in Luxembourg but by judges across the United Kingdom.

Mr Curran said that Kier Starmer, for Labour, had warned of sweeping new powers to the executive and had demanded safeguards to protect workers' rights. He added that Nick Clegg had said:

The government will either have to keep those provisions in domestic legislation, in which case they will reasonably say 'What on earth was the point of leaving the EU in the first place?' or he will remove those provisions in which case the EU will need exacting safeguards to ensure that we're not undercutting EU standards.

Mr Curran added that the SNP had warned that the Bill was turning back the clock 40 years. Then John Redwood (Con) had claimed that everyone should be able to back the proposals, while another Conservative, Christopher Chope, appeared 'wanted to go further' than the Brexit Secretary. Mr Curran said that the SDLP's Mark Durkan had said the bill should be called 'the great download and save until delete bill' and predicted a demolition derby by ministers to scrap rights and protections.

The 7am bulletins were led by the BHA's claims of threats to the tourist industry. In a voice, report, Mr Morris outlined that the exit talks would be in three phases. He concluded:

The terms of transition will be particularly difficult to agree, because they will involve topics of huge controversy in the UK, including freedom of movement of people and the role of the European Court of Justice.

At 7.08am, Mishal Husain interviewed Sven Mikser, the Estonian Foreign Minister, which, she said, had 19,000 of its citizens living in the UK. Ms Montague first said he wanted agreement on the financial settlement, acquired rights and the jurisdiction of the ECJ – he wanted a good outcome and that there would be a close relationship between the UK and the EU after Brexit, with the UK still involved in EU security. Ms Husain asked if he recognised this figure of €60 billion as amounting to the UK settlement of its obligations. Ms Montague said he would not speculate on the amount. Ms Husain asked how important it was to Estonia – as a net recipient of EU funds – that the UK honoured its financial promises. Ms Montague said he accepted receiving EU funds, but he regretted losing the UK as a like-minded member state and wanted a good future relationship bilaterally and via the EU. Ms Husain

asked if, as he wanted the UK to keep its relationship, he would be flexible over the bill. Ms Montague said that the EU had been sticking together, but no-one wanted to punish the UK. He hoped for constructive engagement from both sides and thought the Prime Minister's statement was 'very good'. Ms Husain noted she had brought in security cooperation as part of the mix. What did Estonia think if that, given local concerns about Russia? Ms Montague said that the UK was currently sending troops to the NATO presence in Estonia – it was a statement that the UK wanted to remain an important player in global affairs and European security affairs. Ms Husain asked what the UK being constructive would look like in terms of the rights of Estonian citizens in the UK. Ms Montague replied:

I think that it's important that those acquired rights of, of those citizens who are already living either in UK, or UK citizens in the EU, the rights and legitimate expectations of those people will be honoured. The constructive nature of negotiations, I think, could involve willingness to come to a settlement that is mutually beneficial, although it's very difficult to see that EU putting on table (*sic*) a better deal that was offered to Cameron for staying in the EU. But I think that's pretty much (*word or words unclear*) at this point to speculate about where the negotiations might lead.

Ms Husain asked it talks about separation and future trade deals could take place at the same time. Ms Montague thought that to some extent they would have to be parallel because there could not be limbo, but it was uncharted water.

At 7.17am, in Business News update, Katie Prescott outlined again the warning from the BHA about UK tourism being at risk and it being 10 years before the need for EU workers would be reduced. Ms Prescott said the spread of the numbers across the UK and outside big cities was 'quite surprising'. Ufi Ibrahim from the BHA agreed and said in Llandudno, for example, 60% of relevant staff were from the EU. Ms Prescott asked if that was because of a failure to train homegrown workers and enjoying cheap labour. UI said there were 4.5m employed in her industry and with UK employment at record levels, there were not enough people to fill vacancies. Ms Prescott asked if their 10-year plan to attract train local staff was long-overdue.

Mr Ibrahim replied that in other countries her industry was more a matter of choice. Ms Prescott asked if there should not be higher pay and better career progression. Mr Ibrahim said that the UK's record in this respect was very good, progression could be very fast. Ms Prescott asked how she was upping the game. UI said an integrated plan was being launched. Ms Prescott again asked about money. UI said that was not the issue.

The 7.30 bulletins again included the BHA item, followed by the Tusk response to the Article 50 letter.

At 7.49am, Mishal Husain asked defence secretary Michael Fallon if the deployment of the NATO contingent of British troops in Estonia would be reconsidered as part of the EU 'security' negotiations. Mr Fallon said absolutely not. He added:

When it comes to the EU negotiation, there are some security matters that are dealt with within the treaties, and there are some outside the treaties. What we are saying very, very clearly is we now want with Europe, rather like we have with the United States, we want a deep and special partnership that is based on trade, it's an economic partnership, but is also based on security. We will continue to play our part in the security of the continent, because it remains our continent and we have every interest in cooperating with the other European countries in the fight, for example, against terrorism.

The 8am again led with the BHA story.

At 8.10am, in an interview about the NHS, Sarah Montague asked Simon Stevens, the chief executive of NHS England, how many NHS staff came from the EU and how worried he was about the impact of Brexit. Mr Stevens replied that 4% of nurses came from the EU and were highly valued, but there were many more people in the UK wanted to become nurses than there were places, and so there was a desire to expand UK training.

At 8.29am, Chris Morris reported from Malta on the EU response to the Article 50 letter, having seen the draft guidelines. Mr Morris said it was a nine-page document that outlined a phased approach in line with what had been predicted. Only when the 'divorce' phase had been dealt with could there be progress to the next phase. The document also laid out second and third phases. He added that it would be rather difficult to initiate parallel negotiations on trade if the other 27 countries did not want to do it that way. He added that the document did not go into any detail about the more difficult issues such as the Irish border – something that was concerning many people not just in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland but also in London and elsewhere.

The 8.30am bulletin said that European Council plans for negotiations had rejected Theresa May's request for parallel talks on leaving arrangements and trade. The document instead called for a phased approach. There was another mention of the BHA waning on EU workers.

At 8.45am, Mishal Husain pondered in her intro if the title of the Great Repeal Bill was political spin in that it could be better described as the Great Incorporation Bill, 'given that it was making a body of EU law British'. Polly McKenzie, former adviser to Nick Clegg said she thought the title was spin in that it was jurisdictional transfer 'that didn't have the right ring about it'. It was simply transferring every gram of 'offensive' (apparently) Brussels legislation on to the UK statute books. She added that it could not be called 'great' either, because legislative words had to have relevant meaning. Michael Cockerell noted that the Great Reform Act of 1832 (opposed by the Tories) was only called that at the bill stage. He said the current bill was 'great' in that in that 43 years' of legislation from Brussels was being cut and pasted into British legislation. There was discussion about the Theresa May picture accompanying her Article 50 letter (was she trying to be like Thatcher?) Mr Cockerell said the Bill would not go down well in Scotland because of the Henry VIII provisions – he had never been king there.

April 1

The 7am bulletin said that Downing Street had sought to reassure Gibraltar that the UK would stand up for its interests. After Donald Tusk had said that a deal between the EU and the UK would not apply to Gibraltar without an additional agreement between Spain and the UK. Mark Lobel said that Gibraltar's first minister had accused Spain of launching a predictable, selfish, rancid, medieval sovereignty claim to the Rock. ML said that Spain had a 'long-standing territorial claim on Gibraltar'. There was a quote from the first minister saying Gibraltar had not chosen Brexit and would not be the victims of Brexit.

At 7.10am, Damian Grammaticas said the inclusion in the draft negotiating guidelines of Gibraltar was a surprise. He added that an official had explained that the clause applied in the first instance to a future trade deal – so not the Brexit deal itself – but a future deal could not be applied to Gibraltar without without Spanish agreement, and that was what had raised concerns. John Humphrys asked if

they could do this. Mr Grammaticas said that an EU official had explained that any deal needed the approval of all 27 EU countries, so negotiations had to reflect Spain's interests. He added that the official had also pointed out that when Spain had joined the EU, the British position on Gibraltar had been reflected in negotiations; now the boot was on the other foot. Mr Grammaticas said that the difficulty had caused upset but was what was likely to happen now that the UK was at the other side of the negotiating table – one country facing 27. Mr Humphrys asked if the EU were rowing back from this. Mr Grammaticas suggested not, and the UK could not now influence the negotiating stance.

At 7.20, Chris Morris looked back at the week since the Article 50 letter was sent, and developments in consequence. He said the day would be remembered in history as 'the long goodbye, a rollercoaster, two year process finally began'. A quote from Theresa May was played:

Perhaps now more than ever the world needs the liberal democratic values of Europe. Values
...

Mr Morris said that at least gave the Liberal Democrats 'something to smile about', but this was Theresa May's day, and 'her big gamble'. She had also said that the UK was not leaving 'Europe', but this had not impressed Labour. Jeremy Corbyn had rather described her actions as 'reckless and damaging'. Mr Morris said the Brexiteers had been cock-a-hoop, but Donald Tusk had looked and sounded stunned by the ending of the phoney war, with the UK now on the other side of the table. Mr Morris said that on Thursday the government white paper to adopt 'thousands and thousands of EU laws, had been wheeled out, with Lord Lisvane, former clerk to the House of Commons warning that an 'awful lot' of tidying up could go on for a decade. Mr Morris said that also on Thursday – with the magnitude of the task beginning to show – David Davis had sought to rally the troops. There was a quote from him saying he wanted a really good trade deal and to get back control of laws and borders in pursuit of being able to stand 'on our own two feet'. Mr Morris said that on Friday, Donald Tusk had set out the EU's draft negotiating position which laid down that there would be no trade talks until 'priority issues' such as separation and divorce had been addressed. The message was no parallel talks, and 'behave and thou shalt be rewarded'. He concluded:

So what did we learn from this momentous week in Brexit? Well, point one – blimey it's complicated, but we knew that already. Point two: both sides, the UK and the EU really do want an ambitious partnership in the future, but getting there from here is going to be a big ask. And finally, this was a turning point. After this week, nothing in relations between the UK and the EU will ever be quite the same again.

At 7.50am, John Humphrys interviewed Christian Hernandez, president of the Gibraltar Chamber of Commerce and Clare Moody, the Labour MEP for the South West and Gibraltar. CH said the Spanish stance was to be expected from Europe's corrupt country. They had used Gibraltar before to deflect from internal problems – this was playing the Gibraltar card to be able to achieve a 'diplomatic triumph'. John Humphrys suggested that Mrs May had not referred to Gibraltar in her Article 50 letter and should have done because it was a colony. CH said that was not correct, Gibraltar was part of the EU and had been since 1972. Mr Humphrys asked Mr Morris what she made of Gibraltar not being mentioned. She said she was amazed by the omission. Mr Humphrys asked what signal it sent. Mr Morris said that the most detailed negotiations for decades were about to start and the interests of Gibraltar had been overlooked. What other omissions would there be? She added that both Spaniards and people in Gibraltar would be punished if things happened to the border. Mr Humphrys suggested it was a good sign that Gibraltar was not mentioned because it would lead to bilateral talks

between only Spain and the UK. Mr Morris claimed that the people of Gibraltar must not be excluded from talks, they wanted to remain as members of the EU, and also wanted to be part of the UK – there could be no talks without Gibraltar being involved. Mr Humphrys asked if CH had faith in the British government. She said the reaction had been steadfastly in support of Gibraltar, the British family needed to stand together in the face of Spanish bullying. Mr Humphrys said Gibraltar was a very small rock with not much influence. CH said they had to trust that the government would represent the interests of Gibraltar. Mr Humphrys asked if it did not, there would be UDI. CH ruled that out.

Mr Humphrys said at 8.33am that the stage seemed set for tough negotiations over protecting specific British industries and the jobs they created. He first repeated that Theresa May had not mentioned Gibraltar in her Article 50 letter. Iain Duncan Smith said this was yet another attempt by Spain to force the Gibraltar issue. They had been doing it for years and would continue. He added that Theresa May did not mention Gibraltar in the same way she did not mention Dover because it was part of her overall position. He added that the Tusk statement was otherwise ‘a lot more reasonable than I had any expectation for’. Vince Cable said that the Spanish had a claim on Gibraltar, it was a row that had been going on for 300 years and would continue. He added:

Gibraltar depends . . . as a functioning . . . entity on free trade, and free movement of people across its frontiers and that’s difficult to reconcile with hard Brexit. Which is, of course, why the people of Gibraltar voted to stay in the European Union.

It was totally predictable that this problem would arise and it would be hard to resolve. Mr Humphrys then asked IDS why the Tusk letter was reasonable. IDS said there had been a lot of talk, emanating mainly from the Commission that the UK was going to be punished, individual nations had been uneasy with that rhetoric and now figures such as Herr Schauble of Germany were saying they wanted a proper agreement with the UK, wanted to remain a friend and wanted the City to thrive. Donald Tusk was also reasonable. Mr Humphrys asked VC if he agreed. VC said he did, to the extent that trade could be talked about before issues such as the divorce payment. He added:

it’s very clear that the European Union, their top priorities to maintain their own unity. The idea that the British had, and a lot of the Brexiteers, that we can somehow pick off the Germans by . . . giving them what their car companies want, that’s for the birds, that isn’t going to happen. They are going to negotiate very solidly as a bloc, and there are going to be some very tough issues for the UK. They will want, and quite rightly, a proper financial settlement that will involve divorce payment, we can argue about exactly what the sum will be, but we will have to pay a sum of money, and it will be difficult for Iain and others to explain that we’re not getting lots of money back for the Health Service, we’re actually going to pay . . .

Mr Humphrys asked him how much that payment would be. VC suggested the figure of €60 billion, £50 billion might be negotiated down a bit. IDS said he fundamentally disagreed with the estimate of the figure. There were ongoing commitments, but also part of the equation was the assets that the UK had invested in over the past 40 years. The Commission had quietly accepted this point. VC said there were big commitments to areas such as pension funds and regional policy. He claimed that the government would have to explain why money was being paid over rather than got back. Mr Humphrys then said that the Tusk letter had ruled out sector-by-sector trade deals that replicated the single market. VC said he thought it would be very hard to get such deals, for example covering cars, because the WTO also ruled such arrangements out. Mr Humphrys asked if this meant the UK could not operate under WTO rules and have sector deals. VC said it would be very difficult, a free trade agreement had

to apply to everything across the board. IDS Said he had never been in favour of sector deals, but wanted an EU-UK free trade deal. This was in the EU's interests too – a strong City, for example meant that capital was much cheaper, and if it ever hit problems, London's trade would go to New York or Shanghai, not a European capital. Mr Humphrys asked if a deal could be done in two years. VC said absolutely not, there would have to be transitional arrangements and ECJ jurisdiction for many years. IDS thought a deal could be done.

April 3

In the 6am bulletin, it was said that Theresa May would not allow Gibraltar to be used as a bargaining chip. Tom Burridge said that Gibraltar's low tax regime had been a constant subject of complaint from Madrid.

In Business News at 6.15am, Philippe Waechter, chief economist of the French bank Natixis, said that Marine le Pen's policy of wanting to leave the EU would, if she won the presidential election be a 'very strong shock on France'. Later Dominic O'Connell said that the British economy had done amazingly well in creating jobs 'since the financial crisis'. Alan McIntosh, chief investment strategist at Quilter Cheviot, said the UK economy had been 'quite robust', and 'to the surprise of many, particularly robust in the aftermath of the vote Leave'.

At 6.32am, John Humphrys said the Spanish government was not talking about the row over Gibraltar. Tom Burridge said they were 'probably slightly more diplomatic' than some of the rhetoric from British politicians. He added the foreign minister had said he did not want to use the word 'veto'. He added:

Well, I think, you know, the new Spanish Foreign Minister, or relatively new Spanish Foreign Minister is a former diplomat, I think, you know, he's, he's, he's being true to his sort of career, if you like. Erm, I think, you know, for the Spaniards, you know, I don't think the assertion by the European Union in this document, which is only a desire, it's only a sort of a plan, a proposal, that Spain could have the final say, erm, I don't think it really alters the debate over Gibraltar's sovereignty, you know, Britain and Spain have long disagreed on that, and, you know, there's no sign that there will be any agreement in the coming years or that will change. But I think, you know, it does sort of question the Gibraltarian way of life, if you like, the relationship. And it's been a distinctive relationship that Gibraltar has enjoyed with the European Union. There are low taxes here, and the Spanish grievance in recent years has always been on a predominantly economic argument, the fact that corporation tax here in Gibraltar is very low, that attracts financial companies to come here, and then you just go over the border into La Linea, a pretty depressed town on the Spanish side, and unemployment is sky high, the economy is pretty stagnant, and here in Gibraltar there's a, there's a hell of a lot of money, there's a lot of wealth, and the economy here booms, but it does depend, of course, on the free movement of labour, people coming back and forth across that border.

Mr Humphrys asked why the Brexit negotiation would alter that. TB said that Gibraltar wanted to join the customs union and Spain had not been up for that.

At 6.38am, Mr Humphrys noted that Theresa May was visiting the Middle East. John Pienaar said she would be seeking trade and security deals in Saudi Arabia and Jordan. Mr Humphrys observed that not much was known about Theresa May's approach to foreign policy. Mr Pienaar said that had been 'shaken all about by Brexit', so now:

...the thrust or direction of British foreign policy, global policy, global economic policy, is to maintain something like a presence, comparable to Britain's now, there'll be talk of enhancing that, but of course, outside of the European Union, the question presents itself: can Britain continue to punch above its weight as it always sought to do, and so . . .

JOHN HUMPHRYS: (speaking over) Whatever that may mean (laughs)

JOHN PIENAAR: Well, indeed, well in the c— . . . well, it means hard cash on one level . . .

JOHN HUMPHRYS: Yeah.

JOHN PIENAAR: . . . and the Prime Minister was in the, in the gulf just before Christmas, at that Gulf cooperation council meeting, meeting the heads and, and rulers of states there, seeking to maintain the argument that Britain is reaching out to that area, that it has a special relationship, that there are gains on both sides to be . . . to be had.

JP said it was controversial that the UK was seeking the special relationship with Saudi in the light of the fighting going on in Yemen.

AT 6.45am, John Humphrys said:

One of the most difficult issues facing the UK and its nearest neighbour in the Brexit talks will be what happens to the Irish border. The UK is leaving the European customs union, of course, but the British and Irish governments, and the EU's chief negotiator, Michel Barnier, have all said they want to keep the frontier as open as possible. Our Ireland correspondent, Chris Page, has been considering what can be done and hearing opinions in the borderland.

CHRIS PAGE: I'm at the side of a narrow, rural road just outside the city of Londonderry. There's a sign here that tells me that the speed limit is 80 km and hour, and that's the only indication that this is the border which will become the frontier between the UK and the EU. The border hasn't always been this invisible, but the government has said many times now there'll be no return to the borders of the past. I'm with a man who remembers what the frontier was like in times gone by, Gerry Temple, who used to be a customs officer.

GERRY TEMPLE: Border crossings would have been restricted to certain times of the day, so if you had a vehicle, for example, and you were going into the Irish Republic, you used to get a card stamped. There's horses in the fields exercising.

CHRIS PAGE: Yeah, there's two horses there.

GT: Yeah. They're in the British part of Ireland, right. The only access to that field is that gate in the corner, which is in the Irish Republic. That's a minuscule example, but it's, it's repeated a myriad of times right around the border. How does one regulate that?

CHRIS PAGE: Border brainteasers are occupying minds, from Belfast to Brussels. The British and Irish governments are already discussing what technology might be available to monitor goods, but the Brexit secretary, David Davis, has acknowledged that creating a new system won't be easy. The search for a solution matters especially to businesses like Nuprint Technologies. At its base in Derry, the firm makes labels for food packaging which go across the UK and Ireland. The managing director, Gavin Killeen, says that if there's an electronic border, it wouldn't deal with his main worry.

GAVIN KILLEEN: That would alleviate the physical movement of goods through a customs border. It still doesn't make any difference to what tariffs, whatever, would be charged, and that's the uncertainty. We currently import most of our raw material from Europe. That goods coming in will be subject to a tariff coming in, and then whenever I export into the Republic of Ireland, there will be another tariff going out. Now those two tariffs could make my product uncompetitive in the Republic of Ireland.

CHRIS PAGE: 75% of people in Derry wanted to remain in the EU. Robert Moor, who's a farmer, was one of those who voted the other way. He says he already has to deal with bureaucracy when doing cross-border business, and he doesn't think it'll become more difficult.

ROBERT MOOR: The animals have to be properly tested, they have to be cleared for export, there are fees to pay, I have to keep a note of everything that I buy in another EU country. And when I do my VAT returns at the end of the period, all that has to be declared. If there are tariffs or whatever in the future, I foresee a similar sort of system like the current VAT, and I don't see why there would be a massive problem with it.

CHRIS PAGE: As well as the economic factors, there's a profoundly political dimension to customs controls and checkpoints. Denis Bradley was a mediator in the early days of the peace process. He's been reflecting on his memories of the pre-EU frontier near his home city, and contemplating the implications of any change now.

DENIS BRADLEY: I'm steeped in the borders, I once described myself as being marinated in it. My father drove a bus, he passed that border ten times a day. But looking back on it, there was always a tension. In the Troubles, customs posts were one of the first targets. Can that border be recreated in any fashion, in any style? My feeling about that is no, because the memories are too . . . they're too close, and they're quite bitter still.

At 6.49am, Justin Webb spoke to Rafa de Miguel the national desk editor at El Pais, the Spanish newspaper. He said that Michael Howard's bracketing of Gibraltar with The Falklands was over-reacting. He said the situation was complex with thousands crossing the border each way every day. There was a jurisdictional dispute which had been dealt with calmly. Mr Webb asked what the Spanish government thought of the talk of war that there had been in Britain. Rafa de Miguel said it would be a mild reaction, the prime minister as prudent and would not want to stir up the ashes. Mr Webb asked what the Spanish government actually wanted. He replied that it wanted the EU to side with it in its shared sovereignty claims. Mr Webb noted that the people of Gibraltar did not want that and wondered how far the Spanish government would go, for example holding up or stopping final negotiations. Rafa de Miguel said that Spain accepted that the European Council and the Commission would handle the talks.

At 8.10am, John Humphrys interviewed Jack Straw about Gibraltar. It was preceded by a report from Tom Burridge, who said that there was now uncertainty because of Brexit over Gibraltar's way of life and the low tax economy that had been the centre of Spanish grievances for many years. He added that the UK could defend its position over Gibraltar and ignore Spain, but it was another dimension 'to an already complicated process'. Mr Humphrys asked Mr Straw if gunboats were going to be sent to Gibraltar. He said that was absurd and reeked of jingoism. He added that a new deal needed to be done with Spain over the new circumstances and that this was an 'asymmetric issue'. He said Gibraltar was an affront to the Spaniards' sense of national identity. Mr Humphrys suggested he had nearly got

‘chucked into the Med’ over his policy to Gibraltar, and that 98.97% of locals had voted against joint sovereignty. Mr Straw claimed that Michael Howard was in favour of Leave and that what had happened was a downside of leaving the EU. He asserted:

I’m afraid, as we get into the reality of the negotiations, all sorts of problems are popping up. One is . . . is this: as long as we were in the European Union, we held equal cards with Spain, and indeed, when they wanted to join, they joined in 1986, we held many more cards than they did. The situation and I reversed. We are leaving, we’re going to have to get an agreement on all sorts of issues not just Gibraltar, with 27 other member states. Guess what: they hold the cards. This is going to be really difficult. This is one aspect of a whole series of very, very complex negotiations, which Britain now faces.

Mr Straw added that he had never been comfortable with the differential tax rates enjoyed by Gibraltar, this would have to be looked at very, very carefully. Mr Humphrys suggested Gibraltar’s position would not scupper or delay the Brexit deal. Mr Straw agreed, and added that the trade with the UK was more important.

April 4

The 6am bulletin led with that the Commons exiting the EU committee was challenging the government to prove the Prime Minister’s claim that no deal was better than a bad deal on Brexit. It had also said that Parliament should be consulted before ministers walked away without a deal. Alex Forsyth said:

The report by Parliament’s Brexit committee stressed the importance of the UK and the EU reaching agreement on future relations by the end of the two-year negotiating period. It accused the government of making unsubstantiated claims that no deal was better than a bad deal, and said economic and legal assessments of that eventuality should be carried out. Some Brexit-backing committee members refused to support the report, saying it was rushed, skewed and partisan. The government said the ‘no deal’ scenario was not wanted or expected, but it would be better than a deal which sought to punish the UK, and insisted it was preparing for all potential outcomes.

At 6.15am, Justin Rowlett reported on a trade mission by the Chancellor to India. He said it was all about post-Brexit Britain and was the British government saying there was a world of opportunity outside Europe, and the Treasury had got a ‘great statistic’, that India invested more in the UK than the rest of Europe combined. They would be saying that the City was ready to fund India’s ambitions to grow its manufacturing base, and also wanted to start talks over a trade deal. Sarah Montague asked what were the chances of a deal. JR replied:

I have to say, and I don’t want to pour cold water on this event, but, er, I would suggest that it is very unlikely that a deal would be available for Britain. The European Union, India’s biggest trading partner, has been negotiating with India now for more than . . . for almost 10 years, and has not achieved a trade deal. Now that’s a market of 400 million people, and as I say, India’s biggest trading partner, and if India won’t do a deal with the European Union, you got to ask yourself what kind of concessions would Britain have to make in order to get a deal on its own? So, I must say, the long-term hopes of a deal may be not great, but in the short-term

I'm sure they'll pulling all sorts of deals between companies out of the hat and saying that relations between the two countries are, are fabulous.

At 6.12am, John Pienaar reported on the Prime Minister's trip to the Middle East. He said they would be talking about trade relations and security, but the issue of human rights in the Yemen would intrude. Mishal Husain asked if that would 'intrude less than before', given 'our need to strike deals with countries like Saudi Arabia in future'. JP replied:

Well, the consistent criticism of those who want to see a shift in the emphasis on British policy suggest that that is the, is the case, that trade, that the post-Brexit mission of increasing and improving relations around the world, beyond the European Union, is the ultimate priority of the Prime Minister at this time, as you say. The Prime Minister insists that Britain is committed to, to human rights, but the feeling among those who are worried and sceptical, and they include some on the government side in the House of Commons as well, is that there is a cold, and they might argue even cynical view that if Britain doesn't sell arms to a market like Saudi Arabia, there's a queue of other nations that will do the same, so they need to be, to be in there, not neglecting a commitment to human rights, but of course, keeping it in perspective, and the Prime Minister, on all past evidence does take a fairly, well, let's say hard-headed approach to these things.

At 6.15am, Dominic O'Connell, noted the previous week's news that Lloyd's of London would set up in Brussels after the Brexit vote as part of a steady trickle of jobs out of the City since June 23. He said that Frankfurt was hoping to be one of the 'big beneficiaries'. He asked Hubertus Văth, the head of Frankfurt Main Finance how many jobs would come to his city. He said there was a trickle and it was expected there would be 10,000 over five years. Mr O'Connell asked who was leaving and why. Mr Văth replied:

Well, at the moment, there are more exploratory teams. Why is that the case? Like, like you said, everybody is right now looking, and what is the post-Brexit world looking like? As London is Europe's leading financial centre, and 100 out of the 200 foreign banks located in London said they mainly serve the common market out of London. In the post-Brexit time, they will lose these opportunities to do that, at that ease as they do it now, by losing the passporting rights.

Mr O'Connell asked if the big US banks were looking. Mr Văth said they were, and they were also looking at Asian banks, and Russian ones. Mr O'Connell asked if the choice was between Frankfurt, Dublin, Paris or Luxembourg. Mr Văth said it would be a multipolar world, and some might go to two places.

Later in the sequence Mr O'Connell asked the chief executive of GoDaddy – which was acquiring a UK tech firm for \$1.8bn – if the Brexit vote had given him any pause for thought and 'made it a bit cheaper to buy'. He replied it had slowed the process down because of hesitation on behalf of the banks.

At 6.32am, Ellie Price said the Commons Brexit committee had challenged the Prime Minister's Lancaster House speech in which she had said no deal was better than a bad deal. It wanted a though assessment of what would happen if there was no agreement and wanted a Parliamentary vote if a no deal impasse was reached. Mishal Husain suggested that David Davis had 'admitted' that there had been no such assessment. She replied that this was right but the government had said they were preparing for all outcomes and insisted that the plan was to get at a deal. She added that the report

questioned whether two years was enough time to get a deal. She noted that the EU had said that divorce terms would have to be agreed before trade could be discussed. Ms Husain asked who supported the report. EP said it was crucially not all MPs on the committee – there were six who did not support the findings. She added that one of them, Dominic Raab, had claimed the report was rushed, skewed and partisan.

At 6.43, in Yesterday in Parliament, Sean Curran said the Brexit road had taken a ‘rocky’ turn with peers demanding assurances about Gibraltar. Lord Collins (Lab) was quoted as saying that remarks about gunboat diplomacy had not been helpful. Mr Curran said that Lady Anelay, the foreign office minister, had said the government would negotiate the best possible deal for what she had called ‘the UK family’. Another peer, Lady Northover, had wondered why Theresa May had not mentioned Gibraltar in her Article 50 letter and had pointed out an extreme irony in that the idea of war with Spain was mentioned merely days after Article 50 was triggered. Mr Curran said LA had said that the UK was steadfast in its support of Gibraltar, and had defended the remarks of Lord Howard on the grounds of free speech. Mr Curran said that Conservative peer Lord Forsyth had claimed the reason why Gibraltar had not been mentioned in the Article 50 letter was because it had nothing to do with the EU. Mr Curran said that Lord Hannay, a former diplomat, had claimed that Spain was now in a strong position’ He stated:

Would the Noble Lady, the Minister, not feel that the last people to give advice on this matter are the people who caused the problem? Those who incited this, the electorate of this country to leave the European Union, without which, without which, without which Gibraltar’s situation would be perfectly and totally secure.

Mr Curran said that LA had replied that Gibraltar’s position was still as secure as it had been before June 23.

At 7.08am, Mishal Husain interviewed Hilary Benn, chairman of the Commons Brexit Committee, about his report. MA asked him what he meant by a full assessment in relation to no deal. Mr Benn suggested that if tariffs were imposed, passporting issues arose and healthcare provision in Europe to UK citizens ended, there would be consequences, but David Davis had confirmed that this had not been done. Ms Husain asked if such an assessment was made and was made public, it might get in the way of doing an actual deal. She asked if he would be happy if it were not made public. Mr Benn accepted a balance had to be struck, but he expected the work to be done. At the same time, no-one had defined what a bad deal would be, Ms Husain repeated if he would be happy for a deal not to be made public. Mr Benn said he wanted the assessment to go ahead and as much as possible of it to be shared. Ms Husain said the report was supported by only 10 of the 16 members of the committee. And Dominic Raab had called it rushed, skewed and partisan. Mr Benn said he did not agree, his committee was implicitly holding the government to account. Ms Husain wondered if they might work harder in future to get consensus. Mr Benn replied they were doing a vital job.

At 7.34am, in a sequence about the Prime Minister’s visit to Saudi Arabia, Sir William Patey, the former ambassador there, said that as the UK embarked on ‘a difficult relationship with its European trade partners’ it would have to be more careful about who it offended, and it would be unwise (in the context of human rights) to upset trading relationships in the Gulf. Sir William suggested that Theresa May would be having frank discussions, however, about human rights issues.

At 7.42am, Sarah Montague said:

The last 12 months have seen some extraordinary events in the news. So has it been good for satire? That was one of the main topics at what has been described as comedy's party conference, The Craft of Comedy – a gathering of the nation's comics, writers and producers, that takes place each year in Llandudno. However, while Brexit and Trump may have been good for the press, they've caused problems in the world of comedy. Is David Sillitoe.

DAVID SILLITOE: Another week and the comedy topic is, once again, Brexit.

HENNING WHEN: I feel like I've come to the country far too late, because before Britain joined the common market, this must have been paradise.

DS: Week in, week out.

HW: It was paradise, wasn't it, you only had to go to work three days a week.

DS: And the people who write and perform all of this are here in Llandudno.

STEVE DOHERTY: We are on the seafront at Llandudno.

DS: On his Twitter profile, comedy producer Steve Doherty is wearing a hat made out of a savoy cabbage, but here in person he's looking much more serious. He's got a lot on his mind. He's in charge of all of this.

SD: It's been called 'the comedy party conference'

DS: Is there any topic that you just couldn't have ignored this year?

SD: It's the 'B' word.

DS: Inside, I caught up with Alan Davies, who'd just come off stage discussing what he does on stage.

ALAN DAVIES: I used to try and be political, and then I would find that those jokes came and went so quickly, they were . . . not really personal to me, so other comedians could do similar material probably better. Recently, I've done a couple of gigs and it is impossible to stand on the stage without thinking about Brexit, Donald Trump and the rise of the right. So I think political comedy will actually return more strongly in the next few years.

DS: After that a visit to the topical jokes workshop. Our topic – the government's support for small chocolate bars. And my joke?

UNNAMED FEMALE: Nicola Sturgeon has released the wording for a second Scottish referendum, 'would you like a new fun-size UK'. (*laughter*)

DS: Thankfully, a laugh. The men in charge here are some of Britain's most successful gag writers. Among them, Gareth Gwyn.

GARETH GWYN: The problem is the fact that since June 2016, almost every headline and almost every topical show I've worked on has wanted to discuss Brexit or Trump. And you begin to feel like you're in a tunnel that you just can't see the end of.

HUGH DENNIS: Still, the plan remains for the UK to have left the EU by the time of the next election, scheduled for May 2020. Just to give you an idea of what Britain might look like by then, please remember that *Blade Runner* was set in 2019.

DS: And Marcus Brigstock has just done a tour based on the topic.

MARCUS BRIGSTOCK: Brexit lends itself to comedy like any other subject, but in terms of the audience it's a much bigger problem. Anger's not great for writing comedy, not really.

DS: Has there been an angry response from people?

MB: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Absolutely. People have been angry, people have walked out of shows, people have booed. A lot of the people that I think of as my audience will not be back. They won't come again. They were that angry.

DS: You travel round the circuit. Do you know of a pro-Brexit comedian?

MB: Yeah, there's a couple of pro-Brexit comedians, Lee Hurst is . . .

DS: (*interrupting*) We're talking a couple.

MB: Yeah.

DS: So that Brexit split, we've got about a hundred people in the room and Steve who's in charge is about to make an announcement.

SD: Did anybody vote Brexit? Pro-Brexit. That's okay, that's fine, Mr Sillitoe would be delighted to speak to you.

DS: One hand has gone up. Yeah, just one. And the one hand that went up belonged to comedy writer James Carey.

JAMES CAREY: It is not a widely-held view within the comedy community.

DS: Is that a good or a bad thing?

JC: I think in a sense it's a bad thing, because you would hope that there would be a range of views, within those people who are writing comedy and aspiring to write comedy. I think it's because Brexit is associated with conservatism and patriotism and nationalism, which are all things which comedians generally find distasteful. I think what some comedians are realising is that if you are very much a London based, that England and London are two very, very separate places. People in London should be a little bit careful about seeing England as, as backward and nationalistic or patriotic or racist.

DS: Meanwhile, back in the meeting room there was a panel, on the future of satire. The answer – I'll give you one guess, and leave you to write your own punchline, because this lot are already running out.

AT 8.10am, Mishal Husain suggested to the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, that he had said he was concerned to protect London as a global financial centre after Brexit. She asked:

how much assurance have you been given, and what could the government say that might stop jobs moving out of London in a way that we're already seeing from, erm, from banks, from people like Goldman Sachs, I mean, the . . . Lloyd's of London is opening up a Brussels office, the movement.

He replied:

The two biggest things the government can do almost immediately is one: to give a cast-iron guarantee to those in our City and our country who are Londoners and Brits but are EU citizens, that certainty is what they need. Secondly all the evidence I've seen . . .

MH: *(speaking over)* Sorry, what kind of assurance?

SK: Er, if you're an EU citizen in London, you're guaranteed . . .

MH: Ah.

SK: . . . you can stay here.

MH: Okay.

SK: We don't need to wait for the Europeans to give our Brits in Europe that assurance. But secondly, the reality is it's almost impossible that we'll reach an EU deal within two years, and what that means is in two years and one day, we could fall off a cliff edge in relation to the agreement we have across Europe. So what I'm saying to the government is, we need to start working now on an interim deal which will take effect from two years and one day, until we've reached an agreement with the European Union, because what businesses, especially the financial sector need is certainty, and if it's the case that in six months' time, they're unsure about what will happen in two years and one day, they will make plans to have plans *(word or words unclear)* to have offices across Europe.

MH: *(speaking over)* We . . . we know that migrants will be dealt with early, you know, whether Brits abroad or EU citizens here will be dealt with early in, in the negotiations. You've called for a flexible immigration system that would recognise different parts of the country. Now, what would that mean in terms of London?

SK: Well, let me give you a specific example. So, so the Prime Minister has said that she wants immigration to be in the tens of thousands, so let's assume, best case scenario, as far as talent is concerned, it's 99,999. That means London gets, according to the current proportion, 38,000 of those people coming to London. The construction sector alone in London, construction, employs 300,000 people. Half of those are UK-born, but of those half who are UK-born, between 10 and 20% will retire in the next five years. I'm accelerating the training up of Londoners to have construction skills, but we need skills from the EU, and so the 38,000 we have . . .

MH: *(speaking over)* So a quota, a quota for London?

SK: Well, so, the 38,000 that we'd have for everyone would be taken up just by construction, and some. So what I'm saying to the government is: London voted to remain in the EU, so we want talent, but also we need it. In those circumstances, we need a flexible immigration system that recognises that London needs the talent, but wants it. That means .

. . by the way, I accept the case, Mishal, that some parts of the country don't want immigration, even if they, they may need it, so I'm saying have a flexible immigration system that recognises the needs that London has. That could be a proportion of work permits, a proportion of visas, but recognising that London's needs are different to the rest of the country.

At 8.24am, Sarah Montague observed that over the weekend it sounded as if the UK had declared war on Spain. She said that had happened in 2002 when some Royal Marines had landed on the wrong beach. Lord West had been First Sea Lord at the time, and he explained they had got lost and charged a Spanish fisherman. He said the Spanish authorities had understood the mistake. He added:

I think it's very unfortunate that the EU put in their negotiating paper, mentioned Gibraltar, that was . . . it was like a veiled threat, and I think that was highly unfortunate, because at the end of the day, we've got to make sure, not sending battle groups and all this nonsense, but we've got to make sure that we get the best possible deal for all of us, including Gibraltar, and that's what we've got to do, and say— putting that in the document was not clever.

At 8.35am, it was said that trade ties with India might become more important because the UK was leaving the EU. Justin Rowlett said he had asked the Chancellor, Philip Hammond, if there was a contradiction between wanting to limit immigration from India and wanting better trade links. PH replied that the UK would want in future skilled immigrants, for example, for the tech industries. In the studio, Didar Singh, from India's National Chamber of Commerce, said that Brexit brought uncertainty to the UK-India relationships. Sarah Montague asked if businesses were being put off and if he needed reassurance. He replied:

See, we have two (*fragment of word, or word unclear*) two types of connections, we have some 800+ companies in Britain who have invested, and so, of course, for them, they have to decide is it the market in Britain that they're more interested in, or was it the sort of European market through Britain that they had looked at, and they will take a call once the whole situation gets a little bit more certain. In terms of trade, there are very, very more companies that do trade on both sides and they again will look at what the future holds in terms of the relationship, some of course, reassuring them that there is going to be a better situation for them, will of course, that's very much part on the agenda (*sic*) and of course a trade . . . agreement, if it could actually come about between Britain and India would improve both the investments scenario, as well as the trade scenario.

Ms Montague then asked Sir Andrew Cahn, former head of UK and Investment, what were the chances of a trade deal. He said the government was making good initiatives, but getting a deal quickly was unlikely. The EU had been negotiating for nine years. That was partly because India wanted to protect its manufacturing and service industries from competition. There was already two-way traffic and the door could be opened further. But a deal could take 10 years. Mr Singh also confirmed that a deal could take time, but in the meantime, trade could continue to happen. Sir Andrew concluded:

There's no doubt that for a couple of years, while the uncertainty about our relationship with the European Union remains, we just don't know what sort of access will have to the market, that is going to be a, you know, that is going to be a break, but in the lon— in the medium to long term, it shouldn't be and we should, we should make real progress. But, but you know, it's not the trade agreements that matter it's the . . . our business is going to unfamiliar, difficult territory and doing the difficult job of exporting. It's our governments, helping and

supporting the businesses, and I still think that more can be done to provide finance, to provide intelligence, and to provide contacts. A lot is done, our embassies overseas work very well, but actually now that we're going to be out of the European Union, government needs to do even more.

At 8.43am, Mishal Husain said:

No deal for Britain is better than a bad deal, said the Prime Minister in January, to which MPs on the Brexit Committee have effectively said today, 'Prove it' – they're calling on the government to do a proper assessment. Chris Morris is our correspondent tasked with checking the facts and the issues on Brexit. Chris, just explain what 'no deal' might look like in practice.

CHRIS MORRIS: Hi Mishal, yeah, it seems to me the most dangerous scenario is one in which you might think you have a deal and it falls apart at the last minute, or . . . in other words in the last few days of the two-year Article 50 period, either because someone sit down, or there's a last-minute hitch that blows the whole thing out of the water. If, on the other hand, six months before the end of the two-year period, it's clear that a deal is not in sight, then at least you'd have time to plan far more structured response. And I think it's worth defining what we mean when we say 'no deal', because (*laughter in voice*) there are going to have to be multiple deals negotiated. Let's maybe deal with just the three mentioned in the EU's draft negotiating guidelines, you know, that's broadly separation agreement, a longer term deal on future trade and other relations, and then a potential transition deal to get from A to B. In that context I think 'no deal' means primarily no agreement on the terms of separation, because if that happened, it would mean the whole negotiating process would collapse, and we could crash out of the EU rather suddenly. Eventually, you would presume that we would still come to agreement on long-term relations . . .

MH: As so it's . . .

CM: . . . it's the immediate . . .

MH: (*speaking over*) It's what happens . . .

CM: . . . danger of short-term chaos that everyone's keen to avoid.

MH: And, and the . . . the term we hear is 'falling back on WTO rules'. Now, given the complexities of all of this, when the Brexit Committee says the government needs to do a proper assessment, to what extent would it be able to quantify the cost of 'no deal'?

CM: Well, there are obviously numbers out there that they could use, so I mean, yes, falling back on World Trade Organisation rules, that would mean that on average tariffs on manufactured goods would be about 5%, on some things they'd be considerably higher, some agricultural produce they would be 40%. There would be the sudden imposition of customs checks, it's hard to quantify exactly how much that would cost, how much that would cost businesses, all sorts of other barriers to trade. I mean, a serious impact on financial services, because companies would lose their passporting rights to sell services across the single

market. There are also, I think, I mean, a host of practical issues, which again are pretty hard to quantify in terms of a number to do with the common rules that regulate all parts of daily life. So, for example, if we were very suddenly no longer part of European aviation agreements, the next day, planes taking off from the UK would probably not be able to land at airports in the EU, because we would have fallen out of the rulebook. And you, you know, you can paint a very apocalyptic picture of many things right to halt. How you put a number on them is difficult, but the . . .

MH: Okay . . .

CM . . . manufacturers' association, EEF, has certainly said 'no deal' would be major economic shock.