

Juncker: No-deal Brexit on 12 April ‘very likely scenario’

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News

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker says he believes that a “no-deal” Brexit at midnight on the 12 April is “now a very likely scenario.”



Jean-Claude Juncker | *Photo credit: European Parliament Audiovisual*

Juncker was speaking on Wednesday in Parliament in a debate with MEPs on the latest Brexit impasse.

He told members, “The developments in Westminster over the past days have convinced me of what I already knew. The best way forward is the ratification of the Withdrawal Agreement.”

“In its decision ten days ago, the European Council paved the way for an extension of the Article 50 negotiation period until the 22 May - on the condition that the Withdrawal Agreement was approved by the House of Commons by 29 March. This was not the case.”

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“But 12 April is the ultimate deadline for the approval of the Withdrawal Agreement by the Commons. If it has not done so by then, no further short extension will be possible,” Jucker said, adding that after 12 April, “we risk jeopardising the European Parliament elections, and so threaten the functioning of the EU.”

However, Juncker said that a no-deal at midnight on the 12 April is now “a very likely scenario.”

“It is not the outcome I want. But it is an outcome for which I have made sure the EU is ready.”

Juncker went on to say that the measures the EU and Member States have taken will mitigate the worst impact of a no-deal scenario.

“I will personally do everything I can to prevent a disorderly Brexit and I expect political leaders across the EU27 and in the UK to do the same” **Jean-Claude Juncker**

“The measures we have taken are time-limited and unilateral. They provide a cushion for key EU interests at least until the end of the year. But disruption will be inevitable for citizens, for businesses and for almost every sector,” he said.

Juncker warned that the UK will be affected more than the EU because there is no such thing as a “managed or negotiated no-deal” and there is no such thing as a “no-deal transition”.

He said that whatever happens, the UK will still be expected to address the three main separation issues: citizens’ rights being upheld and protected; the UK honouring its financial commitments made as a Member State, and a solution being found on the island of Ireland that preserves the internal market.

“These three issues will not go away. They will be a strict condition to rebuild trust and to start talking on the way forward.”

Juncker told MEPs that at the European Council next week, the EU will listen to Prime Minister Theresa May’s intentions and decide how to proceed.

“The principles that will guide my actions are clear. I will work until the last moment to avoid a “no-deal” outcome. The only ones who would benefit from such disruption are the opponents of the global rules-based order. The only ones who would cheer are the populists and the nationalists. The only ones who would celebrate are those who want both the EU and UK to be weak.”

Juncker concluded by saying, “The EU will not kick any Member State out. I will personally do everything I can to prevent a disorderly Brexit and I expect political leaders across the EU27 and in the UK to do the same.”

About the author

Martin Banks is a senior reporter at The Parliament Magazine

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