

Nigel Farage says chances of UK leaving the EU on 31 October “pretty low”

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News

Brexit Party leader argues that his party’s recent election success gives it “legitimate” right to be included in any further Brexit talks between the UK and EU.



Nigel Farage | *Photo credit: Press Association*

Speaking exclusively to this website, Farage also demanded that the European Parliament “please present some evidence” about alleged undeclared gifts from Brexiteer tycoon Arron Banks.

His comments come as the contest for the Tory party leadership – and Britain’s next Prime Minister – got underway.

The leading candidate to succeed Theresa May is thought to be former UK foreign minister Boris

Johnson who has said the UK will leave on 31 October “with or without a deal.”

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One other challenger, UK health secretary Matt Hancock, however has refused to rule out extending Britain's membership of the EU beyond October.

Hancock said his rival candidates who had pledged to leave – deal or no deal – by 31 October were making false promises because UK parliamentarians would block any no-deal departure.

On Tuesday, Farage told this site that he does not expect the UK will exit on this date, adding, “The chances are pretty low. I do not see this happening under any of the Tory party leadership contenders. I do not think any of them will do it by 31 October.”

Farage's Brexit party won 28 seats and a 31.7 per cent share of the vote in the UK in the recent European elections. It is now one of the biggest single national delegations in the European Parliament.

Farage told The Parliament Magazine that he hopes the party's electoral performance in the 23-26 May poll “will scare the living daylights” out of the mainstream parties, including the Tories and Labour both of which suffered dramatic losses, particularly the Conservatives, in the poll.

“The chances are pretty low. I do not see this happening under any of the Tory party leadership contenders. I do not think any of them will do it by 31 October” **Nigel Farage**

He said, however, that despite the party's demand that the UK leaves by 31 October, as agreed in the latest Brexit extension granted by the EU, he believes Britain will again have to ask for a further delay to its protracted exit, taking any likely departure into 2020 at the soonest.

Farage insisted that the Brexit party be included in any further Brexit talks between the UK and EU, saying that its success in the elections gave it the legitimate right to be involved.

Farage's remarks come on the same day that France's state secretary for European affairs confirmed that the EU27 are not prepared to reopen the Brexit withdrawal agreement, and that without a “new political line” in the UK or a second referendum, Britain must expect to leave the bloc on 31 October.

On the eve of a two-day working visit to London, Amélie de Montchalin also said that France regarded the €39bn financial settlement Britain has agreed to pay the EU as part of the exit deal as a matter of international law.

“We are now waiting for clarification from the UK side,” De Montchalin said. “We consider it is up to

Britain to decide how it wants to proceed. The exit agreement was not negotiated against the British; negotiators on both sides tried, painstakingly, to find the best solution for all concerned."

Farage, the former UKIP leader, also addressed parliament's request that he attend a hearing into alleged undeclared gifts from Brexiteer tycoon Arron Banks.

The Advisory Committee on the Conduct of Members hearing was postponed from last week until this Thursday.

"What I would like to see from the European Parliament is some evidence (of any wrongdoing). So far, I have seen absolutely no evidence" **Nigel Farage**

Farage did not specify if he would attend the meeting on Thursday, adding, "What I would like to see from the parliament is some evidence (of any wrongdoing). So far, I have seen absolutely no evidence."

Last week, a Brexit party source described the hearing as a "kangaroo court."

He also accused parliament's hierarchy of "leaking" information to the press about Farage which, it is claimed, amounts to a "breach of confidentiality." Such alleged leaks, it is also claimed, are "not only prejudicial to a fair hearing but also means that we can have no confidence that the hearing itself."

A letter sent by Farage's office to parliament reads, "the leaks to the press are likely to have breached the Rules of Procedure and in any event have prejudiced any future hearing".

"Consequently, if the Committee will not adjourn until such time as all concerned can be confident that its proceedings will be confidential, we invite it to dismiss the proceedings in the interests of natural justice."

On Tuesday, a parliament source told this website, "As you know, we cannot comment on cases currently before the advisory committee - even if the Member concerned does".

Farage also touched on speculation about whether the Brexit party will join forces with any other political groupings in parliament in the new term.

"I can confirm... that the Brexit Party will not be joining the ENF group" **Nigel Farage**

This comes following what was called a brief "social" meeting between Farage and a member of the far right ENF grouping in Brussels last week.

There was speculation that the meeting was with Matteo Salvini, the Italian interior minister.

The populist Salvini, of the anti-immigrant Northern League, and Marine Le Pen of France's far-right National Rally (RN) want their Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENF) group to become the third largest in Brussels, behind the EPP and Socialists.

The ENF includes Austria's Freedom Party, Belgium's Vlaams Belang and Gert Wilders' Dutch Party for Freedom.

The meeting with Farage fuelled rumours that the Brexit Party will join the ENF in a European

Parliament grouping.

But Farage, who is also the European of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD) leader in parliament, said, "I can confirm that this is not the case and that the Brexit Party will not be joining the ENF group."

He said, "We already have a group here in parliament and we will try to keep this one going."

About the author

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