

## EU grants UK Brexit 'flection' until January 31

Written by Lorna Hutchinson on 28 October 2019 in News  
News

The UK's arduous divorce from the EU entered a new phase on Monday as Council President Donald Tusk announced the bloc's green light for yet another extension.



*Photo credit: Pixabay*

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The third extension of its kind to be granted in the long-running Brexit soap opera, this time it has been dubbed a 'flection.'

The nature of the flection means that the UK can leave the EU before January 31 if the Withdrawal Agreement is ratified by the UK Parliament before this point.

The dates set out by the EU for the Withdrawal Agreement to enter into force are: December 1, 2019; January 1, 2020, and February 1, 2020.

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On Monday morning, Donald Tusk tweeted: “The EU27 has agreed that it will accept the UK’s request for a Brexit flexextension until 31 January 2020. The decision is expected to be formalised through a written procedure.”

MEP reaction to the news saw deputies generally lauding the EU’s flexibility and welcoming the possibility of finding a way to untangle the Gordian knot of Brexit.

Parliament President David Sassoli called the move “positive,” saying that the extension now “gives time for the UK to make clear what it wants.”

He added, “In the meantime, the European Parliament will continue to scrutinise the Withdrawal Agreement.”

“Let’s take these 3 months to lay the foundations for the next 3 decades. We must go back to the people and give them their voice” **Irina Von Wiese MEP**

Parliament’s Brexit Steering Group coordinator Guy Verhofstadt reacted in his inimitable tongue-i-cheek manner, “Relieved that finally no one died in a ditch.”

He was referring to UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s hyperbolic assertion back in early September that he would rather be “dead in a ditch” than delay Brexit.

This was one of many pledges by Johnson that there would be no third extension, including his statement on June 25: “We are getting ready to come out on October 31. Come what may. Do or die.”

Verhofstadt added, “Whether the UK’s democratic choice is revoke or an orderly withdrawal, confirmed or not in a second referendum, the uncertainty of Brexit has gone on for far too long. This extra time must deliver a way forward.”

UK Liberal Democrat MEP Irina Von Wiese said, “Let’s take these 3 months to lay the foundations for the next 3 decades. We must go back to the people and give them their voice in deciding the future of our country.”

“Relieved that finally no one died in a ditch” **Guy Verhofstadt MEP**

“I was elected to keep the UK in Europe and stop Brexit. The time is now,” she added.

Northern Irish Renew Europe deputy Naomi Long echoed these sentiments, saying simply, "Now. Time to either get a People's Vote agreed or a General Election called."

German Greens MEP Terry Reintke said that the extension should have been longer, in order to "give all the possibilities to the British Parliament to decide the way forward." She added, "but this is a start."

Bulgarian Renew Europe deputy Ilhan Kyuchyuk said, "I will continue to fight with my Liberal Democrat colleagues shoulder-to-shoulder to stop Brexit."

UK Liberal Democrat deputy Barbara Gibson thanked Donald Tusk and all the members of the European Council, adding, "I know you're tired of Boris's games, but Lib Dems will try to get things moving to finally resolve this mess and stop Brexit once and for all."

"And the EU get another £1 billion per month while we all lose the will to live" **Martin Daubney MEP**

Not all reaction to the news was favourable, however, with UK Brexit Party deputies suitably unimpressed with the development.

Brexit Party MEP Rupert Lowe said, "Boris [Johnson] should not have made promises he wasn't sure he could keep in order to Hoover up the Brexit Party vote."

He added, "He has broken that promise and there will be a lot of disappointed Brexiteers out there."

Fellow Brexit Party MEP Martin Daubney was also in the doldrums on hearing the news, saying, "And the EU get another £1 billion per month while we all lose the will to live. Once again they've danced rings round our negotiators."

### **About the author**

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