

What might stop a negotiated Article 50 agreement? (28 June 2018)

Simon Usherwood

Article 50 states that if no agreement is found by the end of two years after notification, then a member state leaves in any case. Why might this happen?

The Risk	Why might it happen?	Likelihood of preventing agreement	Change since May
Tory party revolt	While customs arrangement tensions have not become deeper, there is a considerable volume of disquiet about May's leadership	Medium-High	Rising
UK government is unclear on objectives	Some efforts to work up alternative detailed plans, but still little sense of overarching policy direction or balance. Chequers meeting on White Paper needs to produce clear choice to overcome this	Medium	No change
Radical hardening of UK position	The argument over customs arrangements has largely blown itself out, without clear resolution, but still consistent internal pressure to pursue harder options	Low-Medium	No change
European Parliament refuses to accept agreement	Despite various concerns on citizens' rights and the Irish border, the EP continues to be broadly supportive	Low	No change
EU27 fail to agree position	EU continues to hold broadly-agreed line, including on future relationship	Low	No change
UK Parliamentary revolt	Failure of Withdrawal Bill amendments suggests there will be limited scope for major influence at this stage, despite several coming opportunities	Low	No change
Non-ratification by an EU27 assembly	Commission Phase 2 mandate continues approval process without major issues and no sign of breaking ranks	Very Low	No change
Insufficient negotiating capacity	Despite short-staffing and high staff turnover in DExEU, no sign this will hinder ability to reach agreement on planned schedule.	Zero	No change
Disagreement over sequencing of agreement	Sequencing is no longer an issue on either side, as they move into Phase 2	Zero	No change