

## Putting a tiger in the tank: 19 June update

*Boris Johnson wants a deal sooner rather than later, the European Commission reportedly makes a fishy concession, and the unpopularity of Labour's election position on Brexit becomes clearer: **Ros Taylor** and **Roch Dunin-Wąsowicz (LSE)** round up the week's Brexit news.*

On Monday, Boris Johnson videoconferenced European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen for a somewhat inconclusive discussion about Brexit. The PM expressed his desire to get an outline deal done by July and urged EU leaders to 'put a tiger in the tank'.



For younger readers, this was an allusion to an [Esso slogan](#) devised in 1959.



Photo: [fPat Murray](#) via a [CC-BY-NC-SA 2.0 licence](#)

President of the European Council Charles Michel responded drily:

EU-UK meeting with [@vonderleyen](#) [@EP\\_President](#) & [@BorisJohnson](#)

A broad & ambitious agreement, in line with [#EUUCO](#) guidelines, is in our mutual interest.

Ready to put a tiger in the tank but not to buy a pig in a poke. Level playing field is essential. <https://t.co/uniMjyXvfb>

— Charles Michel (@eucopresident) [June 15, 2020](#)

On Thursday Johnson welcomed Emmanuel Macron in London and indicated to the French president that there was no point in delaying a deal until the late autumn.

There was [excitement](#) in the Times: 'Brussels is preparing to back down over a Brexit fishing deal and acknowledge for the first time that European fleets do not have an automatic right to fish in British waters.'

Barnier hopes this concession will help to 'unlock negotiations'. LSE Brexit has a useful [primer](#) on the fish issue.

In recent weeks some have suggested that hardline Brexiters hope to disguise the economic impact of no deal behind that of COVID-19. In an intriguing thread, former SPAD to the PM Raoul Ruparel says this is misleading. The sectors hit by coronavirus and those affected by no deal are different:

Interplay between economic shocks of Brexit & Covid-19 has been underdiscussed IMHO. Some talk from Government about how C-19 economic impact makes Brexit irrelevant. Superficially, sounds like it might be right but is it? Yes and no, though mostly no. Thread explaining why 1/

— Raoul Ruparel (@RaoulRuparel) [June 18, 2020](#)

Meanwhile, public opinion in the UK seems to be tacking somewhat to Remain – though of course we have already left. [Kantar](#) found 56% in favour, while a [Times/YouGov poll](#) found only 40% believe Britain was right to leave (47% disagreed).

'Dithering' and 'dire': Labour has published a report into the reasons for the 2019 General Election defeat, finding the 'ambivalent' Brexit policy of promising a referendum on a future Brexit put off voters. It repelled both leave and remain supporters, [says the Guardian](#). However, the Huffington Post [reports](#) that a Conservative pledge to hire more nurses was far more important to so-called 'Red Wall' voters.

'The rhetoric of successive Conservative leaders saw Parliament get the blame' for delaying Brexit, says Meg Russell:

[Parliament and Brexit: what went wrong, and why we urgently need to fix it](#)

[Italians want more Europe, not less](#)

## **Elsewhere on LSE blogs**

[COVID-19 may strengthen Central-Eastern Europe – will it embrace the EU or nationalism?](#)