

The EU believes Theresa May's government could soon collapse



Reuters/Toby Melville

- **EU figures are reportedly preparing for Theresa May's government to collapse this year.**
- **Brussels is worried about the chaos that would be caused by a change in leadership or another election.**
- **Priti Patel resigned last night for holding unauthorised meetings with Israeli politicians.**
- **Cabinet has lost two ministers within the space of a week.**

LONDON — The European Union is reportedly preparing for Theresa May's government to collapse before the New Year after the prime minister last night lost a second Cabinet minister within the space of a week.

There is growing concern in Brussels that the increasing instability of the Conservative minority government could soon trigger a change in leadership or a general election leading to a Labour government, according to the Times.

Brexit talks between British and EU negotiators resume today with the UK

government in a state of disarray.

Last week Michael Fallon resigned as defence secretary after being named in a sexual misconduct scandal that has engulfed Westminster, while last night Priti Patel left her role as International Development Secretary after it emerged that she held a number of unauthorised meetings with Israeli politicians.

May is also under pressure to sack Boris Johnson. The foreign secretary's mistaken claim that Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe was in Iran to teach journalism when she was arrested in Tehran last year is being used against the imprisoned Brit as evidence as she faces another five years being added to her sentence.

"There is the great difficulty of the leadership in Great Britain, which is more and more fragile," one European leader told the Times. "Britain is very weak and the weakness of Theresa May makes negotiations very difficult."

EU figures are believed to be considering a range of options as Prime Minister May struggles to keep her government under control, including a chaotic "no deal" Brexit and the result of last year's referendum being reversed.

The European leader quoted by the Times appeared to leave the door open to Brexit being reversed, remarking: "The referendum decision was very close."

Attention will today turn to Brussels where May will hope British negotiators will be able to make a breakthrough with their European counterparts.

The UK government is determined to kickstart talks on future trade relations before the New Year. However, the EU's chief Brexit negotiator, Michel Barnier, has warned that work is to be done before "sufficient progress" is made on the issues of citizens' rights, the Irish border, and Britain's financial obligations.

The EU Parliament's chief Brexit spokesperson, Guy Verhofstadt, said yesterday that it was "erroneous" to claim a deal on citizens' right was close. The EU Parliament will have the power to veto any final Brexit deal.

Source: <http://www.businessinsider.com/the-eu-believes-theresa-mays-government-could-soon-collapse-2017-11>

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