Twitter Thread by katya adler



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EU views PMs letter accompanying his formal #Brexit extension request - saying that he doesn't actually want an extension- as a gimmick aimed at a domestic audience. As far as EU law is concerned: a formal request from the UK prime minister, is a formal request full stop /1

EU leaders not rushing to make decisions. Instead they watch events in Westminster carefully. If their newly negotiated #Brexit deal is approved by the majority of MPs - as the PM promised them it would be - then possibly no extension will be needed OR /2

Only a short one maybe to allow for necessary legislation to be completed. If this is the case, EU leaders won't think twice about granting this short extension. They may even approve it by writing rather than on person at an emergency #Brexit summit. Spoiler alert../3

EU leaders - who surprise, surprise already have a thing or two planned in their diaries over next couple of weeks - have zero appetite to return to Brussels again especially for #Brexit They have no desire to be involved in the drama playing out right now in the UK BUT /4

If MPs reject the deal, if there are plans for a general election or a referendum on the deal then a longer extension will be necessary. Here it is harder for EU leaders to come to immediate consensus so an emergency summit becomes likely /5

Some in EU (like Germany) will favour a looooooong extension - remember the 'flextension'?? -that can be cut short asap. Others (eg France) favour as short an extension as possible to keep pressure up on UK MPs to make up their mind!! (This is certainly Macron's silent scream) /6

STARK CONTRAST to Theresa May era + her extension request: Then Angela Merkel +Donald Tusk still thought "If we grant the UK a long enough extension, maybe it'll change its mind about leaving". That's what Tusk meant with words "Use the time wisely" when granted last extension /7

EUs central concern now is ending the politically and economically costly uncertainty. Brussels sailed v close to its dreaded no deal #Brexit with Boris Johnson as PM.. Leaders don't want a long extension now. They want their new Brexit deal approved ASAP so they can move on /8

I’m not saying EU wants UK gone. EU believes it’s stronger with UK inside; doesn’t want to push an EU member out the door. Despite continental foot-stamping EU leaders will grant a new Brexit extension but they accept departure is most likely outcome +ask:Why prolong any more? /9

PS It’s worth discounting talk of the PM persuading Poland/Hungary to block a new #Brexit extension. Every EU leader does have a potential veto but new EU budget will soon be decided. Hungary/Poland won’t risk their subsidies allocation to block extension other leaders want /10

BUT what is also true is that more uncertainty lies ahead with UK even if the exit deal is now agreed. As I often write - the standstill transition period lasts 14 months, extendable by 2 years only. How likely is it a full new EU-UK trade deal is in negotiated in that time?? /11

MPs saying “Let’s get Brexit done by 31st October” are being disingenuous. EXIT bit may get done by 31st but all-important, likely-to-be-politically painful trade negotiation trade offs (fishing rights, work visas, U.K. ability to do other trade deals) will only just start /12