Twitter Thread by Tony Connelly

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New: the European Parliament's announcement that it will not ratify any treaty before the end of December unless the deal is concluded by midnight on Sunday comes amid signals that, despite progress, a deal won't be concluded until early next week.

2/ This is because there are still some formidable hurdles in the way of closure on the level playing field issue, and they haven't even got into fisheries in a big way yet. And both sides say things there are "extremely difficult".

3/ Yesterday there were some signals that a deal could be done by the weekend, but the mood seems to have dipped somewhat.

4/ The EP is saying it wants a "provisional" text from the European Commission "as soon as possible" - not clear if that means even before the midnight deadline

5/ If a deal is not concluded by Sunday night then we are in uncharted waters

6/ Member states will say the treaty should therefore be applied provisionally from January 1 and ratified later. Under the Lisbon Treaty the Council has that prerogative. However, the Commission wants the treaty to be ratified by end Dec if at all possible. EP dead against PA

7/ Provisional application still requires the consent of the UK. That's another question altogether. If the UK decides it does not accept Provisional Application then we're into a short No Deal period

8/ Even if Provisional Application is required, it can't just be done in a heartbeat. There are still several procedures to get through.

9/ So there could still be a No Deal period from January 1. Officials say that the No Deal contingency plans which the European Commission have published for aviation, haulage, trains and fisheries would kick in in that scenario