Twitter Thread by David Henig

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Morning. And its Groundhog Day today. https://t.co/gRs4Dc8RH2



> Source say Michel Barnier has told EU ambassadors that there has been no breakthrough on the fisheries question, and that reports to that effect were \u201ccompletely untrue\u201d
>
> — Tony Connelly (@tconnellyRTE) December 7, 2020

Some useful threads will follow, first on the Northern Ireland protocol, where unfettered is still being defined... https://t.co/YHPJdNC4mf

> The trouble with \u2018unfettered access\u2019...
>
> — JPCampbellBiz - Wash your hands keep your distance (@JP_Biz) December 6, 2020

And on fish and level playing field. The latter seems, has always seemed, the most problematic, because the UK has apparently ruled out any compromise on shared minumum levels even if not automatic. That would be a deal breaker, but seems... unnecessary. https://t.co/PCtI1olTOV

> 1/ On fish, both sides are far apart, but it sounds like the UK wants the EU to jump first before it, in turn, shows flexibility. The UK is offering a three year phase in but with an upfront payment of \u20ac300m in demersal fish (ie, out of the \u20ac650m EU boats catch in UK waters)

— Tony Connelly (@tconnellyRTE) December 6, 2020

Your reminder closing complex deals is never easy. But there are ways to facilitate and EU is good at doing this if you meet their red lines. But still the biggest concern that the UK never understood level playing field terms are fundamental to the EU. https://t.co/WkQHyvMzMt

> In case it wasn't obvious the final choreography of a complex trade deal is complex. The big issues, and potentially some smallprint / related matters of relevance to both sides (for example I wonder if soon after a deal we hear about data or financial services equivalence?)
>
> — David Henig (@DavidHenigUK) December 6, 2020

In the UK, one man's decision. Allegedly backed by a Cabinet who in reality will be quite happy to blame the PM either way. The temptation to send Michael Gove to seal the deal and end his leadership ambitions must be there... https://t.co/T12k9zpVpw

> Fact is: EU objectives/focus unlikely to change much in remaining 24-48 hours: fish, non-regression & ability to retaliate across sectors/entire agreement in case of systematic divergence by HMG
>
> Most in Cabinet want a deal. @BorisJohnson has big decision he now needs to make https://t.co/mJ49WLt3Qd
>
> — Mujtaba Rahman (@Mij_Europe) December 7, 2020

As it happens... https://t.co/dOeSREAAYg

> \U0001f1ea\U0001f1fa\U0001f1ec\U0001f1e7 I will meet @michaelgove today in Brussels to discuss the implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement, including the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland. We are working hard to make sure it is fully operational as of 1 January 2021.
>
> — Maro\u0161 \u0160ef\u010dovi\u010d\U0001f1ea\U0001f1fa (@MarosSefcovic) December 7, 2020

For what it's worth it seems likely that there was some kite flying last night to see what the reaction to a deal might be on the UK side. It... didn't go well. Which is the fear of those on the EU side - that Johnson has talked up sovereignty too far for reasonable compromise.

I might be on some media or other later today talking about my favourite christmas reci.... if only. Depending on how many updates there have been since I might be optimistic or pessimistic, but still on the fence. https://t.co/YVb4oBZLke

> BREAKING: Ireland\u2019s foreign minister Simon Coveney says EU chief negotiator Michel Barnier has given a \u201cvery gloomy, downbeat\u201d assessment of the prospects for a deal to EU ambassadors
>
> — Tony Connelly (@tconnellyRTE) December 7, 2020

Oh yes, 24 days left to the biggest one day change in UK trading terms in history. Just the £2 billion of trade per day at stake. https://t.co/NEdPJzysvZ

Picture for those who were missing their Brexit flowcharts. From what I can see (and Jon also suggests) today has the right elements for final deal choreography with Gove in Brussels, and quite possibly also therefore a no-deal announcement. https://t.co/KunRWGig4x

> 2 #Brexit developments since last night:
> - The Guardian's \U0001f3a3 scoop looks wide of the mark (see negative words from Barnier, Coveney)
> - @tconnellyRTE news about the Joint Committee as a way to avoid the IM Bill & Finance Bill problems looks correct
>
> So a new #BrexitDiagram pic.twitter.com/n78o3zpozJ
>
> — Jon Worth (@jonworth) December 7, 2020

Has always been my belief. Though rather raises the issue of only listening to those who won't challenge your views. https://t.co/KdM68PKsif

> For what it's worth, I also don't think there was any deliberate attempt to deceive by Boris. I think he genuinely believed the EU would fold. I honestly think he's managed to convince himself about this BMW and Prosecco stuff. Who knows, he might still be right.
>
> — (((Dan Hodges))) (@DPJHodges) December 7, 2020

Right. If today ends with a statement saying the PM and vdL are going to make another last effort to reach a deal after all of this I think the Brexit watchers finally have to stage an intervention. https://t.co/aUIhkJbVMA

> Clement Beaune, France's Europe minister, was meant to speak at an Irish think tank webinar today . That has been postponed due to "unavoidable circumstances"
>
> — James Crisp (@JamesCrisp6) December 7, 2020

Fundamentally UK politics (on all sides, but differently) cannot reconcile leaving the EU but still being in Europe. Listen to Norwegian, Swiss, or Turkish officials. A horrible experience, they say, when you always want to leave the table but can't. https://t.co/U92sZcHKZy

> We need to talk about UK politics. More specifically we need to talk about the absence of opposition to a no-deal Brexit risking Scottish independence, Northern Irish peace, the end of the mass market car industry, more expensive food, and damaged relations with US and EU 1/n https://t.co/ovBPA8zEth
>
> — David Henig (@DavidHenigUK) December 6, 2020

I think we can safely dismiss any Barnier statement on deadlines given the record to date. We're long past the point any agreement can receive proper scrutiny or business be ready to implement it. https://t.co/ai4F7qd53y

> The final #Brexit countdown: @MichelBarnier tells MEPs he sees Wednesday as the deadline for a deal, while the UK makes controversial new demands on fishing boat ownership. Latest with @MehreenKhn : https://t.co/E0Kd0mgVGu

— Jim Brunsden (@jimbrunsden) December 7, 2020

UK-EU talks Wednesday deadline latest https://t.co/H2nNksRgTc

> European Commission spokesman on whether EU has a final deadline for talks: \u201cWe are not going to speculate on a last chance date. We are fully committed to substantial negotiations; we\u2019ve always said and continue to say it\u2019s the substance that prevails over timing.\u201d #Brexit /1
>
> — Katya Adler (@BBCkatyaadler) December 7, 2020

On this at least the UK and EU are united, against their own businesses. Nobody, it is clear, is in any kind of hurry.

Because, hey, there are still 16 working days until huge new barriers are erected to the world's second largest trading relationship.

https://t.co/WPX9uOUNiE

> Dutch foreign minister Blok on #Brexit:
>
> "We shouldnt be rushed into compromises. We actually have a lot of time remaining. We should use the time till 31 December, and not get rushed by #EUCO."@berndlange @tconnellyRTE https://t.co/mZgYZuhKG0
>
> — Rem Korteweg (@remkorteweg) December 7, 2020

The problem again - EU and UK will have to upset some of their domestic constituencies to get a deal. Neither seem prepared to do so. But neither want to walk away either. Stalemate. https://t.co/mSewDGwJRR

> Message from Tory backbencher, says he and others getting concerned @BorisJohnson is so desperate for a deal he may agree to EU demand on 'level playing field'.
> If PM goes to EU summit with that in mind, "he will come back as Neville Chamberlain, instead of Winston Churchill"
>
> — Paul Waugh (@paulwaugh) December 7, 2020