



### Michel Barnier, European Commission Chief Brexit Negotiator



A politician with a wealth of experience in national and European politics, former French Minister and Commission Vice-President Michel Barnier will lead the Commission's Taskforce for the Preparation and Conduct of the Negotiations with the UK. The appointment was badly received amongst elements of the UK press, as Barnier is mostly remembered for his role as Single Market Commissioner (2010-2014), during which time he brought forward a number of legislative initiatives for the financial sector, such as the establishment of the new banking union as a response to the financial crisis.

In his long political career Barnier has held portfolios in national and European politics including foreign affairs, agriculture, regional policy, institutional reforms and internal market and services. He is very well connected, both at EU level and amongst individual Member States. Given his past experience with the UK, his appointment by Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker was seen as a sign the EU was prepared to adopt a tough stance during the negotiations.

Barnier will officially begin his work from 1<sup>st</sup> October, following which it will become clear whether the Council or the Commission takes the lead role in the negotiation process.



### Didier Seeuws, Council Special Taskforce Chief Negotiator



A Belgian diplomat and former advisor and later Chief of Staff to previous Council President Herman Van Rompuy (2011-2014), Seeuws has been a diplomat since 1989, having worked in Washington on economic and trade affairs, as well as in the Belgian Permanent Representation to the EU, where he was Deputy Permanent Representative. With Donald Tusk taking over the Presidency, Seeuws was appointed as the Director of Transport, Telecommunications and Energy in the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union.

The appointment of Seeuws to his current role was seen by the European Commission as a 'power grab' on the part of the Council, following conflicting legal advice on which organisation should take the lead. The Commission will nevertheless be closely involved, especially as a repository of expertise, whose knowledge of legislation and the Treaties is far superior to that of the Council.

A key concern of the Commission was, reportedly, that the Council might give the UK greater flexibility during the negotiations, which could set a precedent for other countries considering leaving the EU. If that was indeed a concern, the appointment of Michel Barnier to lead the negotiations on the Commission's side has certainly conveyed that message.



## European Parliament

### Guy Verhofstadt, European Parliament chief negotiator on Brexit



A veteran politician and a familiar face both inside and outside the EU - in itself a rarity - Guy Verhofstadt's appointment made immediate waves, despite the fact that the European Parliament will most likely have the least power in the Brexit negotiations. One of the few politicians in the European Quarter who can demonstrate charisma and a flair for oratory, Verhofstadt is an avowed federalist.

The current Leader of the centrist ALDE group of Liberal MEPs, Verhofstadt has been involved in politics since the early 70s, first as a student. In 1978 he was elected in the Belgian Parliament and served three times as Belgian Prime Minister (1999-2008). He has been an MEP since 2009.

His appointment [made waves](#) and was seen as a provocation in the eyes of his Eurosceptic parliamentary colleagues. Nigel Farage, with whom Verhofstadt has often hotly debated in the European Parliament, stated that "Guy Verhofstadt hates everything we stand for, which should mean a much shorter renegotiation," while leader of the ECR political group of Tory MEPs Syed Kamall called the appointment "a stitch-up".

Despite all the noise, it is unclear how much actual power and influence the Parliament will have in the Brexit negotiations. The Constitutional Affairs Committee will take the lead on behalf of the Parliament and it is expected that a special task force on Brexit will be set up, which Verhofstadt will lead. It can also be expected that the Parliament, in choosing a strong personality to lead the negotiations on its part, is hoping to be more influential in the Brexit process. This comes following the wrangling between the Commission and the Council over which gets to lead on the process.



## Foreign & Commonwealth Office

### Boris Johnson, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs



The appointment of the colourful former Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, to the role of Foreign Secretary was seen as the first surprise appointment of Prime Minister Theresa May's Cabinet. Johnson, one of the leading figures of the Leave camp in the EU referendum campaign, saw his party leadership bid abruptly stopped after his referendum ally Michael Gove announced his leadership candidacy. The Foreign Secretary will not only be a key negotiator in coming to a deal with EU member states, but following the referendum, can also be seen as senior voice of the Vote Leave Campaign in cabinet.

An Eton and Oxford graduate and veteran journalist (Telegraph, Spectator and others), Johnson is well known for his witty remarks, although his experience in foreign affairs is limited. He has been criticised on numerous occasions for comments on foreign leaders that have been considered offensive.

Success in his new, high-profile, yet challenging post, could mean that Johnson's leadership ambitions might make a comeback.



Department  
for Exiting the  
European Union

David Davis, Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union



A veteran politician (first elected in 1987) and a former Tory leadership candidate, David Davis is strongly Eurosceptic and is seen as belonging to the right of the Conservative Party, although he is on the progressive side when it comes to issues such as civil liberty. Davis made a comeback (his last frontbench post as Shadow Home Secretary was in 2008) in Theresa May's Cabinet as Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, a newly created position immediately dubbed 'Brexit Secretary'. His appointment a clear overture by Mrs May to the Leave camp.

Earlier this year, Davis elaborated on his views on what relationship the UK would have if it left the European Union. [Writing](#) for the *Daily Telegraph*, he rejected the idea that the UK would have to adopt a Norwegian or Swiss model, noting that the country would negotiate a bespoke deal to suit its circumstances, adding that this is what countries like Norway and Switzerland had done. In an [article](#) for *Conservative Home*, he emphasised the need for an export-led growth strategy and expressed his belief that Brexit would enable the UK to "take back control of trade", as striking free trade deals would be less rigid without the need to find a compromise among 28 states. In the same article, he was also in favour of the UK taking its time to trigger Article 50 in order to develop its negotiating strategy, also consulting broadly among stakeholders.

Davis has built a reputation as a highly competent political operator and will certainly be a hard negotiator in the process of the UK's disentanglement from the EU.



Department for  
International Trade

### Liam Fox, Secretary of State for International Trade



Dr Liam Fox has returned to the frontbench as a favourite of the Tory grassroots – illustrating Theresa May's efforts to unite her party. The remit of his new department will be interesting, as traditionally the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) 'sells' the UK to other nations Dr Fox's appointment demonstrates Mrs May's consideration that maintaining these trading relations is critical to making Brexit work.

The Brexit department will be delivering the EU trade deal, so Dr Fox may be charged with producing frameworks for trade deals which the PM will sign off. However, this leaves the FCO in something of a grey area, possibly creating tensions between Dr Fox and Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson where their responsibilities potentially overlap.



Department  
for Exiting the  
European Union

Robin Walker – Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for Exiting the European Union



Robin Walker took the parliamentary seat of Worcester from Labour in 2010 and established a comfortable majority in 2015. Prior to entering Parliament Walker attended Oxford before working in financial public relations in the City of London.

His rise has been steady, initially focusing on business issues: he served on the Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee and campaigned in favour of credit unions. Shortly before the 2015 election, Walker was appointed as Permanent Parliamentary Secretary at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs before moving across to the Department for Education.

Robin Walker is one of three junior Ministers at the newly-formed Department for Exiting the European Union (given the acronym of DfEEU). Whilst his colleagues David Davis and David Jones were keen leavers, Walker was a vocal remain supporter. It is likely that Walker – also an early supporter of Theresa May for Conservative leader - has been placed in the new department to provide some balance with the position of the Secretary of State.

The DfEEU is the first task-specific Department ever set up in peacetime; and Walker will be part of a Ministerial team trying to achieve the best possible deal for the UK out of negotiations with the other 27 EU member states, all with their own electorates to satisfy. He will work closely with the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Trade, along with satisfying the demands of Conservative Party MPs and members.



Department  
for Exiting the  
European Union

Oliver Robbins CBE, Permanent Secretary



Oliver Robbins has been made Permanent Secretary for the Department for Exiting the EU, responsible for supporting EU negotiations and establishing the relationship between the UK and the EU. As Permanent Secretary he will provide the most senior support to ministers and the wider European and Global Issues Secretariat.

A well-known face within the Civil Service, he originally joined as a graduate entrant in 1996 and has spent time in HM Treasury and Downing Street. Robbins was also Director General of the Civil Service from January 2014 to September 2015, and Deputy National Security Adviser to Prime Minister David Cameron. Prior to his latest appointment, Robbins was Second Permanent Secretary for Borders, Immigration and Citizenship, an apparent sign that Oliver Letwin – [the 'Brexit Minister'](#) of the new unit in the Cabinet Office

– is going to prioritise free movement of people in the negotiations process.

Robbins is a highly experience Civil Servant, with government and international negotiating experience that makes him suited to the challenging tasks ahead.



Department  
for Exiting the  
European Union

Sarah Healey, Director General



Prior to being appointed Director General for the Department for Exiting the EU, Sarah Healey was a Director for both Private Pensions in the Department for Work and Pensions, Strategy and Education Funding in the Department for Education, and Director General for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Her role as Director for the Department of Exiting the EU will see her manage a team of six directors focusing on a range of different factors around the Brexit Process.

Healey has also worked to improve gender diversity in the Senior Civil Service through encouraging job sharing schemes that accommodate for different lifestyles. She graduated from the University of Oxford in 1998, holding a BA in Modern History and English, and in 2002 completed an MSc in Social Policy from the London School of Economics.



Department  
for Exiting the  
European Union

Antony Phillipson, Director of Trade and Partnerships



Having started his career in 1993 in the Department of Trade and Industry where his posts included Private Secretary and Principal Private Secretary to the Secretary of State, Antony Phillipson has experience in an array of policy issues and in diplomacy.

Phillipson served as a Global Issues Counsellor in the Washington Embassy, and was the Prime Minister's Private Secretary for Foreign Affairs from 2004-2007. He was subsequently Head of the Iran Co-Ordination Group in the Foreign Commonwealth Office, and in April 2011 Phillipson was appointed the senior role of High Commissioner to Singapore, which has given him four years' experience as a diplomat. On his return to London in April 2015 he was made the EU External Director in the Global Issues Secretariat Cabinet Office.

In his current role as Director of Trade and Partnerships in the Department for Exiting the European Union, Phillipson will be a key player in deciding what kind of trade deals Brexit creates. His time as a diplomat will be an invaluable asset in the Department as will his wide knowledge of global issues and international relations.



Department  
for Exiting the  
European Union

Catherine Webb, Director of Market Access and Budget



Before being appointed Director of Market Access and Budget for the Department for Exiting the EU, Catherine Webb served in the Cabinet Office as Director of EU Internal Issues and was a former trade and economic policy expert in the Foreign Office. Her new role in the Department will see her managing the outcome of the negotiations regarding Britain's access to the European Market and forming a coherent exit plan.

Webb previously worked as Head of the Work Incentives and Poverty Analysis Team in HM Treasury. Her array of experience in different departments and offices and expert knowledge of economic policy will have been the deciding factors in appointing her to steer the UK's access to EU markets.

Webb studied a BA in Economics at the University of Cambridge from 1997-2000.