



Embargoed until Thursday 00.01am

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As Brexit turmoil continues, Welsh organisations express grave concerns about no-deal in letter to Prime Minister

28 organisations from Wales have joined a group of 87 charities and non-profits from across the UK to outline their concerns about no-deal in a letter to the Prime Minister.

Following recent announcements on the prorogation of Parliament, over 85 organisations from across the UK have called on the Prime Minister to urgently engage with their 'grave concerns' about the impact that leaving the European Union without a deal will have on the voluntary sector [\[1\]](#), in an open letter (29 August 2019).

Signatories urge for better engagement and support from UK Government as their concerns about the impacts of no-deal continue to be ignored amid turbulent political movements in Westminster.

They warn of the dangers that rushing through legislation, in the now drastically reduced parliamentary calendar, will have on the ability of MPs and civil society to fully engage and scrutinise [2].

Coming together from across the devolved nations, as well as a breadth of English regions. The signatories of the letter- which includes organisations working nationally and those delivering front-line services- are unified in their concerns. This includes the uncertainty they are facing while no agreement has been finalised, the threat to communities in Northern Ireland and the Good Friday Agreement presented by no-deal, a regression of rights and standards, and legal uncertainty.

Ruth Marks, Chief Executive of Wales Council for Voluntary Action said:

'The evidence suggests that a no-deal Brexit would negatively impact the UK's economy and increase hardship on our society's most vulnerable citizens. The voluntary sector plays an integral role in working with, supporting and empowering at risk people and families and a no-deal Brexit should not be allowed to undermine this work.'

'Leaving the EU without an agreement will likely compound the sector's already hard-pressed funding and staffing while increasing the need for its services, creating a perfect storm. It also raises a myriad of concerns for the sector from the wellbeing of farmers in rural Wales and regression of rights and standards to the legal uncertainty for UK and EU citizens living abroad.'

In the event of no-deal, there would also be a higher risk to current animal welfare, food, as well as environmental, human rights and equality standards [3]. Time is running out to replace the EU agencies that enforce regulations at present. With no official monitoring, standards will be weakened or could fall away entirely with very little scrutiny by Parliament [4].

Speaking about the equality and human rights dimension of a no-deal Brexit, **Ele Hicks, Policy Manager of Diverse Cymru** said:

'Diverse Cymru are concerned that, in a no-deal scenario, there will not be enough time to replace the vital EU agencies that monitor Equality and Human Rights, and ensure compliance. Diverse Cymru feel that a no-deal Brexit will have a substantial negative impact on diverse communities in Wales.'

'The impact of a no-deal Brexit on access to food and medicines is likely to be felt more keenly by diverse communities in Wales. Given the rise in discrimination faced in the wake of the Brexit vote we are concerned a no-deal Brexit will heighten social tensions, whilst putting vital safeguards at risk'

Civil society groups in Northern Ireland continue to express alarm at the impact leaving without a deal would have on the Good Friday Agreement. **Kevin Hanratty, director of the Human Rights Consortium in Belfast, Northern Ireland** said:

'A No-Deal Brexit represents a clear threat to the peace process in Northern Ireland. No-deal means a hard border not just for trade and commerce but for the vital levels of North/South cooperation and regulatory alignment on both sides of the border that were intrinsic to the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement.'

'For people on the ground, that means deep uncertainty and anxiety. Brexit already meant that we would be regressing in the levels of rights and protections currently available to individuals in Northern Ireland as members of the EU. A no-deal Brexit goes even further and removes even the limited measures planned to offset those disruptions and loss of rights. It's the equivalent of slapping people in the face and then forcing them to turn the other cheek.'

NOTES TO EDITORS

[1] [Open letter to the Prime Minister - 29 August 2019](#)

The letter has been jointly facilitated by the Wales Civil Society Forum on Brexit project in partnership with its sister Brexit Civil Society Projects at the UK level (Brexit Civil Society Alliance), in Scotland (Civil Society Brexit Project) and in Northern Ireland (Human Rights Consortium). The Forum does not take a position on Brexit but aims to support voluntary organisations with information on the law and policy of Brexit and by providing a coordinating role.

[2] The Law Gazette - 'Brexit Bills must be passed in time'

<https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/commentary-and-opinion/brexit-bills-must-be-passed-in-time/5101225.article>

<https://twitter.com/SamCoatesSky/status/1166645801034162176>

[3] House of Lords, EU Justice Sub-Committee - '[Human rights protection at risk after Brexit warns Committee](#)';

Human Rights Consortium Scotland- '[A 'no deal' Brexit and Human Rights in Scotland](#)'

Sustain (the Alliance for better food and farming) - '[A 'no deal' Brexit will indeed mean shortages- mainly of food and farming jobs, workers, transport and common sense](#)'

Friends of the Earth - '[A no-deal Brexit would be disastrous for our environment](#)'

[4] Brexit Civil Society Alliance - '[a no-deal Brexit: impacts on rights, standards, governance and transparent law-making](#)'

A video recording of the signatories reading the letter to the Prime Minister is available for press use. Twitter and full length versions are available from:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ZW3Sk43NjAV9eznhtJHf0I_AP8kHZhgx?usp=sharing

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