

---

## **MAY HEADS TO BERLIN AND PARIS FOR PRE-BREXIT TALKS**

-

20.07.2016

---

20.07.2016

EU Observer

The new British prime minister, Theresa May, is heading to Berlin on Wednesday (20 July) for "frank and open" discussions on Brexit.

A week after taking office, May will have a working dinner with chancellor Angela Merkel on Wednesday evening, before going to Paris to discuss Britain's exit from the EU with president Francois Hollande on Thursday.

"I do not underestimate the challenge of negotiating our exit from the European Union and I firmly believe that being able to talk frankly and openly about the issues we face will be an important part of a successful negotiation," May said ahead of her trip.

I also want to deliver a very clear message about the importance we attach to our bilateral relationship with our European partners, not just now but also when we have left the European Union.

May has already talked to the two leaders over the phone, but it will be her first face-to-face discussions with key European figures on the terms of divorce from Europe.

Formal negotiations will not start until May has launched the exit procedure laid out in article 50 of the Lisbon treaty.

She has said before this happens, she first wants to have a common UK position that takes into account the interests of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

May is not expected to trigger article 50 before the end of the year.

Merkel has argued that May should have enough time to form a clear negotiating position, but Hollande is expected to have less tolerance for British delays, and to push for a hard bargain.

Both Merkel and Hollande face elections next year, where they might be pressed by voters not to give in to British demands.

In France, far-right leader Marine Le Pen is pushing for a French exit from the EU, and wants a referendum on the issue.

EU leaders said there would be no cherry-picking from the bloc's policies, and that the access to

the EU's single market required the UK to agree to freedom of movement of citizens.

However, May's early talks are not expected to produce tangible results just yet.

Hollande and May are also expected to talk about security cooperation in the wake of the recent attacks in France.

Britain is likely to join the EU's military missions targeting pirates or people smugglers even after Brexit, the UK defence secretary has suggested.

No to a second vote

Meanwhile, Britons have no appetite for a second referendum or general election, a ComRes poll for the Independent suggested.

It found that 57 percent of respondents opposed the idea of a second Brexit referendum, with 29 percent in favour of repeating the vote.

Also, 46 percent agreed that the Conservative party was elected for a five-year term and that May does not need to call an early election. Some 38 percent wanted to head back to the polls.

<https://euobserver.com/uk-referendum/134422>

---

Kaynak/Source: