
SCOTTISH MINISTER IN BRUSSELS PUSHES CASE FOR SPECIAL BREXIT DEAL

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The Scottish government is pushing for Britain and the European Union to give Scotland special terms in any Brexit deal to keep it closer than England to EU markets, its lead negotiator said in Brussels yesterday (21 November).

Telling an audience that included EU officials and diplomats that only the softest break with the EU would suit Scotland, Edinburghs Brexit minister Michael Russell said that if that were not possible, then Scotland should vote again on independence.

British Prime Minister Theresa Mays drive to restrict immigration from the EU and end EU judicial oversight made it unlikely, Russell said, that Britain would remain in the EU single market.

STURGEON FRUSTRATED BY BREXIT TALKS WITH MAY

Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon warned Monday (24 October) she would not watch her country driven off a hard Brexit cliff as she voiced frustration at her latest talks with British Prime Minister Theresa May.

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As a result, he said, the letter May promises to send the EU by March to trigger withdrawal should include commitments to negotiate special terms for Scotland as well as those expected to be required to accommodate Northern Irelands problems in modifying what is now an open land border with EU member state Ireland.

What we need to see in the letter is a recognition that there will not be a uniform Brexit for every part of the UK but that there will be different arrangements, Russell said on the day when Londons Brexit minister, David Davis, was in Brussels for a first meeting with chief EU negotiator Michel Barnier.

BRITAINS BREXIT MINISTER HOLDS FIRST MEETINGS IN BRUSSELS AND STRASBOURG

Britains Brexit minister headed to Brussels and Strasbourg Monday (21 November), in his first official meetings on the continent since taking up the portfolio after the UKs June referendum.

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May herself set out plans on Monday to get big business behind her Brexit strategy, toning down

proposals to put workers on company boards and promising to spend billions of pounds on science, technology and research.

Russell said creative solutions for Scotland would be needed on both sides, but that unprecedented arrangements to keep Scotland close to EU markets, and even to maintain EU citizenship for Scots, should not be ruled out.

The pro-independence government of Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has embarked on a charm offensive with the EU since Scots voted heavily to remain in the bloc when Britain as a whole voted to leave in the 23 June referendum.

STURGEON IN BRUSSELS TO PUSH SCOTLANDS REMAIN CASE

Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said she would travel to Brussels on Wednesday (29 June) for talks to defend Scotlands place in the European Union after a vote by Britain as a whole to leave the bloc.

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A new senior director took over running the Scottish mission in Brussels on Monday and the government published a pamphlet aimed at making Scotlands case to fellow Europeans for its rights and wishes to stay in the bloc. Wary of secessionists in other EU states, the Union was cool to Scottish pleas to stay in the bloc during an independence referendum in 2014.

The Brexit vote has brought sympathy for a country voicing support for the much criticised bloc but Russell said that it remained to be seen what the EU was ready to do to help.

We are having good conversations, he said. Sympathy, fascination, support do not necessarily translate into anything. But there are important issues at stake here for the EU upon which I hope there is reflection by all the member states.

BREXIT CHAOS PUTS SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE BACK ON THE TABLE

Scotlands government will publish a draft bill for an independence referendum next week as a last resort if it cannot keep close EU ties when the UK leaves the bloc, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon warned today (13 October).

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