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## **DENMARK SAYS TIME IS RUNNING OUT TO AVOID NO-DEAL BREXIT**

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The Guardian (17 August 2018)

Time is running out to strike a Brexit deal, according to the Danish finance minister, who has echoed warnings that there is a 50-50 chance of Britain crashing out of the European Union without an agreement in place.

Kristian Jensen said the window of opportunity for striking a deal that was positive for both Britain and the EU was closing.

Earlier, Latvia's foreign minister, Edgars Rinkēvičs, claimed the chance of a no-deal Brexit was 50-50. Rinkēvičs said it was a very considerable risk but stressed he remained optimistic an agreement with Britain could be reached.

Speaking on BBC Radio 4's Today programme, Jensen was asked about Rinkēvičs's remarks. He said: I also believe that 50-50 is a very good assessment because time is running out and we need to move really fast if we've got to strike a deal that is positive both for the UK and EU.

He said that everyone who wanted there to be a good deal needs to put in some effort in the months to come, otherwise I'm afraid that time will run out.

He went on to describe Theresa May's Chequers plan – which includes a pledge that the UK would apply domestic tariffs on goods intended for the UK, but charge EU tariffs on goods heading into the EU – as a realistic proposal for good negotiations.

We need to go into a lot of details but I think it's a very positive step forward and a necessary step, he said.

The discussion comes after the foreign secretary, Jeremy Hunt, warned that a no-deal Brexit would be a mistake that we would regret for generations. Eurosceptics in his party accused him of weakening May's hand by making such comments.

Ministers have spent weeks emphasising that May is not kidding when she says she will walk away rather than accept a bad deal, but Hunt sent the opposite message, suggesting that Britain would make concessions.

Jensen refused to say whether Hunt would be easier to work with than his predecessor, Boris Johnson, but said: I do believe that we had a good cooperation with Boris and I'm sure that we will

have good cooperation with Jeremy.

In an interview with ITV News, Hunt said the UK would find a way to prosper and thrive but a no-deal Brexit would be a geo-strategic mistake.

He said: We want a deal with the EU that means we really can have a deep and special partnership, a friendship, going forward, not just in terms of our economic relations but in terms of everything else that happens on the world stage, and it would be a mistake that we would regret for generations if we were to have a messy, ugly divorce and that is what we all want to avoid.

Hunts comments drew criticism from Brexiter MPs. Conor Burns, a Tory MP, told the Telegraph: The thing that we want to avoid for generations to come is being locked into a permanent orbit around the EU where we end up with a deal but dont have a seat around the table.

The foreign secretary said later on Twitter his warning was intended for the EU, saying it would be a big mistake for Europe because of inevitable impact on long term partnership with UK.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/aug/17/denmark-says-time-is-running-out-to-avoid-no-deal-brexite>

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