

Theresa May loses big over her Brexit deal

On January 15th Britain's prime minister, Theresa May, lost the parliamentary vote on her Brexit deal by the huge margin of 230 votes, the largest-ever defeat for a ruling party. Coming after five days of debate during which **Tory backbenchers** repeatedly said they would vote down the deal, the result was not a surprise. But the margin of defeat was. It leaves Mrs May with precious little time to decide what to do next.

tory 保守主义的

backbencher 普通议员

Following her defeat, Mrs May promised to consult MPs on possible changes to make her Brexit deal more **palatable**. She would then hope to go back to **Brussels** to get legal changes. The European Union is, after all, familiar with countries' difficulties in **ratifying** treaties. Add a few **tweaks** and declarations, offer some **concessions**—and invite the country concerned to vote again.

palatable 美味的; 愉快的

Brussel 布鲁塞尔

ratify 批准

tweak 微调; 扭

The trouble is that such a course is far harder this time round. The EU leaders are **adamant** that they cannot make legally substantive changes to the much-disliked **Irish "backstop"**, which guarantees that there will be no hard border in Ireland by, if necessary, keeping the entire United Kingdom in a customs union with the EU.

concession 让步

adamant 固执的

Irish 爱尔兰的

backstop 捕手; 后备方案

Some MPs will push for a second **referendum**. Others are hoping to take charge of the Brexit process themselves. The risk is that Britain could leave the EU with no deal at all, **wreaking** maximum damage on the economy. Mrs May said that she was firmly against that idea.

referendum 公投

wreak 造成