



BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – MONDAY 13 MARCH 2017

Brexit

[CITY AM](#) and [Daily Mail](#) write about the risks of a Brexit “no deal”, as MPs warn Theresa May to plan now for negotiation failure. [CITY AM](#) is quoting the Bar Council’s finding that no deal ‘could lead to a short, sharp shock, rather than a lengthy period of economic dislocation and political acrimony’ and a “favourable outcome would be far from certain”. It further points to the six areas identified as risks by the Bar Council.

[Daily Mail](#) reports that “May’s Brexit plans are hit by fresh infighting as MPs savage Brexit Minister David Davies for being ill-prepared for a ‘no deal’ exit”. [Daily Mail](#) also quotes the Bar Council’s statement that “ending the Article 50 period without a deal ‘could lead to a short, sharp shock, rather than a lengthy period of economic dislocation and political acrimony. But a favourable outcome would be far from certain.”

Furthermore, [Daily Mail](#) envisages scenarios in which a ‘no deal’ might be better than a bad deal. “Such as, for example, if the eventual proposed agreement only involves payment of a large sum to the EU in settlement of UK liabilities, with no provisions for any preferential trade arrangements or transitional arrangements towards a mutually beneficial future relationship.”

Judge accused of ‘victim-blaming’ over rape comments

Media outlets gave extended coverage to a judge’s comments on rape victims. [The Times](#), [BBC](#), [Daily Mail](#) and other media outlets report that a female judge warned women who get drunk that they are putting themselves at risk of rape has been accused of “victim blaming” by a police commissioner. “Judge Lindsey Kushner said that although there was “absolutely no excuse” for rape and women were entitled to “drink themselves into the ground”, their “disinhibited behaviour” increased the risk of being attacked”, wrote [The Times](#). “Dame Vera Baird, Northumbria’s police and crime commissioner, said the comments were “victim blaming” and could stop raped women from coming forward.”

[Daily Mail](#) then reported that the judge’s comments were “backed by top lawyers and politicians”. Francis FitzGibbon QC, chairman of the Criminal Bar Association, is quoted saying that “It is sensible for young women to be educated so that they are aware that there are predatory violent men out there who may take advantage. That level of education is itself a form of empowerment. I don’t see it as any way as victim-blaming”.

Women in Law

[The Gazette](#) and [WiredGov](#) inform that the first female Lord Chancellor and Justice Secretary Elizabeth Truss met lawyers from across the capital for an event designed to inspire the next generation of women leaders in law, at Inner Temple. **The Gazette** quotes justice secretary Liz Truss saying that “gender equality in the legal profession will not be achieved without a fundamental change in the way law firms work.”

WiredGov makes known justice secretary’s comments on improving diversity within the legal professions: “I want to see more women and ethnic minorities in the judiciary and in senior levels of law firms, but I’ve been clear this is not diversity for diversity’s sake. It’s about talent for talent’s sake. We want the best and the brightest from every background. If you have the skills, the drive and the talent to reach the top of your profession then it’s vital we tap into this so we can continue to lead the world in the increasingly competitive legal services sector.”

Legal services market shrinks

[The Gazette](#) reports that the legal services market shrinks for the first time since the financial crisis. The publication is referring to a report by Consultancy IRN Research, which estimates that the UK market was worth £31.5bn in 2016, a decrease from £32.2bn the previous year. The legal services market contracted for the second time since 2005.

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