

# UK general election: May's mandate Setting a course for Brexit and beyond

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**Oxford Analytica Conference Call**  
**Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> May, 15:00 UK time**



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## UK general election: May's mandate

### Setting a course for Brexit and beyond

Whatever the professed reasons that UK prime minister Theresa May gave for calling a snap general election for June 8, the political logic of her decision is as cold as it is compelling.

The opposition Labour Party is in disarray. The right-wing UK Independence Party (UKIP) is struggling to find a role in the wake of last year's Brexit vote. May's Conservatives expect to make deep inroads into the heartlands of both.

Meanwhile, the pro-EU Liberal Democrats can expect only a modest comeback after their dismal showing in the 2015 election. And the Scottish Nationalists reached a high-water mark in 2015 from which they are only likely to recede.

The prime minister will almost certainly get the stronger mandate she seeks than the narrow parliamentary majority of less than 20 inherited from her predecessor, David Cameron.

She would, no doubt, like to top the landslide 144 majority Margaret Thatcher secured in 1983. Local election results earlier this month suggest she may well fall short of that, but it would take a remarkable reversal of fortune over the next three weeks to leave her with anything but a commanding position in parliament.

Whether that will give May, as she has suggested, a stronger hand in the negotiations with Brussels over the settlement of the United Kingdom's 'divorce' from the EU and subsequent trade arrangements is moot. The task will be long and arduous regardless of the size of her majority.

The best that may be said is that the fact that the subsequent election will now not ordinarily take place until 2022 provides her with more leeway for transitional post-departure arrangements and thus mitigates the risk of a 'cliff edge' Brexit.

Yet the more determinedly the Conservative government pursues Brexit, the more forcibly the pro-EU Scottish government will campaign for independence from London and a second referendum to back it. It is also conceivable that Brexit could eventually lead to the reunification of Northern Ireland with the Irish Republic.

Beyond Brexit and the possible break-up of the United Kingdom is the question of what the Conservatives want to use their majority to create – a country in the one-nation Tory tradition or one moulded by a radical vision of small government, low taxes and a dismantled welfare state?

And what future, if any, is there for the Labour party? Will UK politics realign?

Join us on Thursday, May 18 to discuss these issues and the other implications of the June 8 UK general election and to put your questions to three of Oxford Analytica's expert advisors.

## Chair

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### **Paul Maidment, Director of Analysis and Managing Editor, Oxford Analytica**

Paul Maidment joined Oxford Analytica in December 2014 as the Director of Analysis and Managing Editor of the Oxford Analytica Daily Brief.

He is an award-winning journalist who founded the New York-based digital editorial consultancy Bystander Media in 2010. A pioneer in combining digital and print journalism, he was previously Editor of [Forbes.com](http://Forbes.com) and Executive Editor of Forbes, transforming a magazine website into the leading online destination for business, finance and up-scale lifestyle. Before joining Forbes in 2001, Paul was the founding Editor of the Financial Times' award-winning web site [FT.com](http://FT.com) and Assistant Editor of the newspaper. His early career as an editor and foreign correspondent encompassed The Economist, the Asian Wall Street Journal and the BBC in the U.K. the U.S. and Asia — a depth of journalistic experience and breadth of media that gives him a unique perspective on the changes transforming publishing and the world economy. Paul was inducted into the Digital Hall of Fame in New York in 2010.

## Panellists

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### **Chris Morris, Contributor, Oxford Analytica**

Chris Morris has been a BBC correspondent for more than 25 years, and he's recently moved back to the UK after spending most of his career abroad. For the past 5 years he was the BBC's Europe Correspondent based in Brussels. He now works for the BBC's newly-created Reality Check team. He is an expert on Brexit, on the EU and on Turkey in particular. He covered the French Presidential elections from Paris in both 2002 and 2012.

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### **Vanessa Rossi, Advisor on Global Economics and Finance, Oxford Analytica**

Advisor in global economics and finance in Oxford Analytica; formerly Senior Research Fellow at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House. Vanessa Rossi has extensive experience within private, government and academic sectors including the European Commission and senior roles with consulting groups in the UK and Germany. Her previous positions include the Research Director for Swiss Bank Corporation, London, and Director of International Economics, Oxford Economics; also graduate researcher at Princeton University and extensive range of publications and media work.

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**Vernon Bogdanor CBE, Professor of Government at the Institute of Contemporary British History, King's College, London.**

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Vernon was formerly for many years Professor of Government at Oxford University. He is a Fellow of the British Academy, an Honorary Fellow of the Institute for Advanced Legal Studies, a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, and a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences. He has been an adviser to a number of governments, including those of Albania, Czech Republic, Hungary, Kosovo, Israel, Mauritius, Slovakia and Trinidad.

Vernon is a frequent contributor to TV, radio and the press. In 2008, he was awarded the Sir Isaiah Berlin Award by the Political Studies Association for Lifetime Contribution to Political Studies. In 2009 he was made a Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur by President Sarkozy. He is an Honorary Fellow of The Queen's College, Oxford, an Honorary D. Litt. of the University of Kent, and an Honorary Bencher of the Middle Temple.