

Supreme Court's ruling won't derail Brexit

It has come as no surprise that the Supreme Court has upheld the original ruling by the High Court that Parliament must vote on the triggering of Article 50.

However, there was one crumb of comfort – the judges dismissed calls for the Scottish Parliament to have any veto over the deal.

With this verdict widely anticipated, we understand that the Government has already drafted an enabling act designed to provide minimal opportunities for Remain-supporting MPs and peers to table amendments and it is unlikely that Parliament will try to derail it.

There have long been concerns that the House of Lords, which has historically been predominantly Europhile, may seek to block Brexit, but a statement earlier this month from Lord Fowler, the speaker of the House of Lords, provides us with some encouragement:-

"The Lords recognise the primacy of the Commons based on the fact that they are the elected chamber and we are not... In return most MPs value the check that scrutiny by the Lords provides. We are not here to sabotage legislation – we are here to improve it."

In Mrs May's speech last week, she ruled out continued membership of the Single Market, but did not go into any detail as to how British products could circulate freely "within" EU, as she has mentioned several times – or indeed, what the transitional arrangement at which she hinted might entail

Consequently, Labour sources have indicated that while they would try to amend legislation in four areas, including a demand that the Government sets out its plans for Brexit in full, the party would not try to block the triggering of Article 50.

Jeremy Corbyn, interviewed by Sophy Ridge for Sky TV on Sunday was adamant that "We accept the result of the referendum. Parliament must reflect public decision." and added "I will ask Labour MPs to respect the decision."

It is likely that the opposition to the enabling act will be greater than the 89 MPs who voted against the earlier vote on triggering Article 50. Nevertheless, for all the concerns expressed in some quarters about Mrs May's speech, the remoaners' tactics have won them few friends since June 23rd, which has taken away their credibility, regardless of the legitimacy of their concerns. The latest outburst, from the philosopher A C Grayling, who called for a general strike over Brexit, is all too typical.

So Mrs May's timetable for Article 50 looks still to be on course. We should be on our way out by the end of March by which time we will hopefully know a lot more about how she plans to extricate us seamlessly from the EU.