

BUSINESS EYE

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The current direction is madness

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This week's personal rant comes to you from Birmingham where I am meeting fellow directors and discussing the madness that is the current direction of our country; from mature interdependence to the mirage of teenage minded independence in a complex world.

We are not alone as Italian political parties are now uniting after Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini's calls for a no-confidence vote, which could leave him with majority control of the country.

Anti-establishment Five

Star and the Democrat Party fear that a government with Salvini at the helm would "hand our children's future to the extreme right".

We've seen what the far right did to Italy and Europe when Mussolini ran the place.

Meanwhile, claims that UK businesses will be prepared for a no-deal Brexit have been challenged after Institute of Directors data suggested that one in two firms "cannot be fully prepared".

The survey, which was completed by 952 business leaders last month, shows just 15 per cent believed they are "fully prepared" for a no-deal Brexit.

Fifty-three per cent said they had done "as much preparation as we can but cannot be fully prepared".

Government-issued guidance released thus far has been deemed "not very helpful" or "not helpful at all" by 42 per cent of company directors.

The technical notices, for

example, are "too technical, too jargonistic" for businesses to follow.

In Boris Johnson's first speech as prime minister he suggested "businesses will be ready" for EU exit on October 31.

A spokesperson for the government said it has allocated £108 million of funding to ensure businesses' Brexit preparedness.

In case you missed it, the latest GDP growth figures showed the UK economy shrank for the first time in nearly seven years in Q2, by 0.2 per cent and business investment has dried up to a trickle. Chancellor Sajid Javid has attributed the performance to a "challenging period across the global economy, with growth slowing in many countries".

To avoid cementing this madness into our future, UK business groups are warning the home secretary against raising the salary threshold for immigrant workers to

£36,700 after Brexit, arguing it would prove another body blow to British businesses.

This comes as Priti Patel is reportedly being urged by some in the Conservative Party to raise the threshold from the current proposed minimum of £30,000 for all new foreign workers in an effort to protect lower-skilled, UK-born staff.

A new report from the Centre for Social Justice, co-founded by Tory grandee Iain Duncan Smith, is calling for an increase in the income threshold for foreign workers. It argues that a significant rise in low-skilled migration to Britain has suppressed UK low-income wages.

Income thresholds at present only apply to non-EU foreign workers, but are expected to extend to those coming from the EU after Brexit.

The pound is tanking, the High Street is in meltdown, we are actively discourag-



Italian Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini has called for a no confidence vote. MIGUEL MEDINA/AFP/Getty Images

ing talent from coming here, business investment has collapsed, we are far from prepared for a no deal Brexit and the far right has been released to rampage across Europe.

Don't think we are immune from the latter either; hate crimes here have multiplied since Brexit.

Our international reputation as a beacon for sense and fairness lies in shreds.

History will remember Ni-

gel Farage and Boris Johnson in the same vein as Oswald Mosley, for setting Europe back 50 years to the days of division and distrust.

We will be remembered as the mugs who let them do this to us and future generations.

If I ever have grandchildren I hope they realise that grandpa wasn't hypnotised by the Brexit svengalis and stood to be counted against this utter madness.