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Spain's Socialists seen easily winning election in opinion poll

Madrid.—Spain's Socialists (PSOE) would win 30.6 percent of the vote if an election was held today, an official poll showed yesterday, up from a previous poll held in August which predicted the party headed by Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez would win 29.9 percent.

The latest poll will buoy Sanchez in parliament, in which he holds just 84 seats in a 350-seat house, as he negotiates next year's budget

and scrambles to find support while insisting he plans to take the government until the next election in 2020.

The conservative People's Party (PP) and market friendly Ciudadanos have vowed to reject the budget proposal, leaving Sanchez relying on hard-left Podemos and smaller, regional parties including pro-independence parties in Catalonia.

It was the second poll since

June's change of government following a no-confidence vote which toppled the PP and put the PSOE in power. The poll showed the PP a distant second with just 20.8 percent of the vote.

The Socialists have seen two of their cabinet members step down since June, one due to reports of an unpaid tax fine and another due to questions surrounding the validity of the minister's stated academic credentials.

"NO-DEAL" BREXIT WOULD HIT TRUCKS, AIRLINES AND PET OWNERS: OFFICIAL

● Amid warnings that trucks could stack up on both sides of the English Channel in the confusion of a no deal, Britain said it would seek to strike bilateral agreements with European countries to ensure hauliers would retain access.

Leaving the European Union without a proper divorce deal could ground airlines, stop hauliers from lugging goods to the world's biggest trading bloc and even make headaches for pet owners who want to take their dogs on holiday, according to government documents.

With just six months to go until the United Kingdom is due to leave the EU on 29 March 9, Prime Minister Theresa May has warned that negotiations are at an impasse and that the EU must come up with new proposals on how to craft a divorce settlement.

Many business chiefs and investors fear politics could scupper an agreement, thrusting the world's fifth largest economy into a "no-deal" Brexit that they say would spook financial markets and silt up the arteries of trade.

Britain, which has warned it could leave without a deal, published 25 technical notices on Monday covering everything from commercial road haulage and buying timber to airline regulations and taking pets abroad.

"If the UK leaves the EU in March 2019 with no agreement in place, UK and EU licensed airlines would lose the automatic right to operate air services between the UK and the EU without seeking advance permission," the government said.

Overall, the government has published more than 65 such notices giving a glimpse of what a no-deal Brexit - the nightmare scenario for chief executives of most multinationals operating in Britain - would look like.

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The notices covered a vast swathe of the British economy, warning, for example, that labels on packaged food would have to be changed.

"Use of the term 'EU' in origin labelling would no longer be correct for food or ingredients from the UK," the government said.



Taking your pet away on holiday could be a nightmare.

Honey producers would have to change their labels while EU countries might not accept British mineral water, the government said.

In the worse case scenario for pet owners, dogs, cats and even ferrets might need health certificates and rabies jabs. Travel plans would have to be discussed with a vet at least four months in advance before traveling to the EU.

That would mean someone wanting to take their pet to the EU on 30 March, 2019, the day after Britain leaves the bloc, would have to discuss the trip with a vet before the end of November.

Without a deal, the UK would move from seamless trade with the rest of the EU to customs arrangements set by the World Trade Organization for external states with no preferential deals.