

Boris's arguments would have made Gorgias jealous

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From Prof Costas Milas, University of Liverpool, UK

Sir,

Your editorial "Boris Johnson's withered olive branch for Brexit's opponents" (February 15) correctly notes that by venturing "some innuendo about tourists in Thailand" Mr Johnson's speech was a calculated trick to evade difficult questions.

In fact, Mr Johnson's speech was so rich in rhetoric that it would have made Sicilian rhetorician Gorgias extremely jealous. Not least because the speech of Mr Johnson followed extremely closely Gorgias' most famous work, *On the Non-Existent*.

In that work, Gorgias put forward three arguments: that nothing exists; that, even if something in fact existed, it could not be properly known; and that, even if it could be properly known, it could not be communicated through language. Indeed, what we really learnt from Mr Johnson's speech is that a (proper) Brexit plan does not exist; that even if it did exist, it could not be properly known because all studies assessing this or alternative Brexit plans are well hidden from the public domain; and that, even if the Brexit plan was properly known, it could definitely not be effectively communicated either to the public or to EU's top negotiator Michel Barnier through the "cheapo flights to stag dos" language used by our top Brexiter policymaker.