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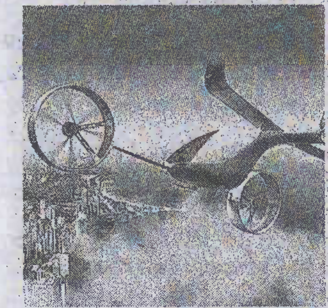

**HEIGHT OF AMBITION**
An entrepreneur is developing a drone to take commuters from central London to Heathrow
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The Golden Globes black dress protest was an egregious display of vanity signalling
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**DINNER TONIGHT**
**Fennel soup with bacon**
Simple is often best when it comes to

Quarter the fennel lengthways then slice across the pieces. Cook the onion in the oil with a pinch of salt, stirring regularly. Add the leeks and

# Juncker warns EU countries they'll pay for Brexit shortfall

**Bruno Waterfield** Brussels

Jean-Claude Juncker has dashed remainers' hopes of a second Brexit referendum and warned EU countries they will have to pay extra billions to plug the hole left by the UK leaving.

The European Commission president told a conference of EU officials and national ministers "not to believe" politicians like Tony Blair or Sir Nick Clegg who are campaigning to reverse the 2016 vote.

"I don't think Brexit can be put to the voters again. I don't believe it," he said. Mr Juncker, 63, warned that when Britain leaves, national contributions for the EU's 27 remaining countries would have to rise to fill a shortfall of more than €18 billion annually, based on this year's spending figures.

"I'm not in favour of any cuts," he said. "Britain will be leaving us so we need to find a means [of] reacting to the loss of a significant number of billions in euros. It will be difficult for the budget coffers of Europe when a net contributor leaves."

EU contributions are pegged at about 1 per cent of a country's GDP — a figure, Mr Juncker said, that would have to increase "to pursue European policies adequately". "Europe costs the European taxpayer one cup of coffee a day, that's all. I think that Europe is worth more than one cup of coffee a day."

European governments are gearing up for a fight over the funding gap as the EU begins talks on a seven-year budget to run from 2021 to 2027 and a transition phase when Britain will have to pay into Brussels until the end of 2020. Mr Juncker has warned that the budget would have to be larger than the 2014-2020 amount of €1 trillion to pay for eurozone integration, defence co-operation and securing borders.

"We don't have any more cash to finance any extras," he said. The budget talks will be vicious, according to senior officials. Countries that pay in more than they get out of the EU budget are expected to refuse to pay more to plug the Brexit hole, leading to cuts.

"This is going to be a bloodbath," said a senior EU official. Net contributors Austria, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Finland have refused to pay more. France and Germany are also reluctant to make extra payments.

According to a study by the German finance ministry, Brexit could cost the country, which is already paying more than any other, an extra €4.5 billion a year at a time when support for nationalists and Eurosceptics is growing.

Southern, central and east European countries are desperate to avoid cuts as they are dependent on EU regional funding. This is targeted at Europe's poorest areas and gives significant financial support to the countries' economies, worth 3 per cent of GDP to countries like Hungary.

Deprived regions, such as Andalusia in Spain, have called on the EU to "create a fund for areas especially affected by Brexit" if funding is lost.

The budget row could strengthen Britain's hand in trade talks. Many central and east European countries are ready to concede on access to the single market in return for continued British budget contributions.

In an interview on the German broadcaster ARD, Mr Juncker warns that Brexit will also have a devastating effect on Britain. "Anyone who thinks that Britain's exit would have no impact on its economy is fundamentally wrong. There will be consequences of the most negative kind," he said.

**'At least Ukip is in the news'**

Nigel Farage has praised Henry Bolton, Ukip's latest leader, for finally hitting the headlines — thanks to an affair with a 25-year-old model (Bruno Waterfield writes).

The MEP was speaking after meeting Michel Barnier, Europe's lead Brexit negotiator, to tell him why voters chose to leave the EU.

Mr Farage, 53, who separated from his wife amid reports of affairs, could not resist commenting on the Ukip leader's rise into the headlines. "At least he is being talked about now," Mr Farage said. Mr Bolton, 54, who was elected Ukip leader in September, left his wife, with whom he has two young children, and spent Christmas with Jo Marney, 25, a "model, presenter and Brexiteer".

After 40 minutes with Mr Barnier, Mr Farage said the EU still did not understand why Britons had voted for Brexit. "It's pretty clear that in the talks so far, immigration really hasn't been discussed."