The roles of parliament and the people after the referendum

• With even Nigel Farage agreeing (before the referendum) that a 52:48% vote would be too close to accept as a popular mandate, parliament has the democratic and moral duty to step in and express its own opinion in a vote on Brexit. While, given its royal prerogative, it is not altogether clear whether the government would have to take note of such a parliamentary vote, it stands to reason that since the unconventional route of a popular referendum did not produce sufficient grounds to act on, the government has at least a moral duty to listen to the opinion of the body to which it is after all accountable.

Moreover, with millions of voters petitioning parliament to debate a second Brexit referendum, there is clearly a significant democratic demand for parliament to get involved. The best way forward in this extremely unfortunate state of affairs is therefore for parliament to vote on the UK staying in the EU, which must weigh at least as much as the referendum in the government's decision whether to exercise its royal prerogative.
Professor Benito Müller
Environmental Change Institute, University of Oxford