

Guidance

Guidance for businesses on the Great Repeal Bill

From:

[Department for Exiting the European Union](#)

Part of:

[Brexit](#)

First published:

30 March 2017

Information for businesses on the Bill to convert EU law to UK law.

Contents

1. [The Great Repeal Bill](#)
2. [What will change](#)
3. [Business as an employer](#)
4. [Consumer protection](#)
5. [The environment](#)
6. [The role of standards](#)
7. [Timescales](#)

The Great Repeal Bill is a significant step in the country's journey towards leaving the EU and taking back control of our laws. It is designed to prepare the ground for the UK's exit so that, on the day we leave, there is as little disruption and as much certainty and continuity for business as possible.

The Government has published a White Paper that goes into more detail about the Great Repeal Bill.

We will continue listening to and talking with businesses, representative bodies and other stakeholders throughout the passage of the Bill.

The Great Repeal Bill

The Bill will repeal the European Communities Act and convert EU law (as it applies in the UK) into domestic law on the day we leave. This means that, as far as possible, the same laws and rules will apply immediately before and immediately after our departure, ensuring a stable and smooth transition.

The Bill will establish a stable legal framework for our withdrawal from the EU, and provide the basis for our future relationship.

What will change

The Bill will repeal the European Communities Act and convert EU law (as it applies in the UK) into domestic law on the day we leave. These changes will come into effect only when we leave the European Union, not before.

The Bill will not make major changes to policy or establish new legal frameworks in the UK, beyond those which are necessary to ensure the law functions properly.

Once we have left the EU, and EU law has been converted into UK law by the Bill, the UK Parliament (and, where appropriate, the devolved legislatures of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) can make changes to laws to reflect domestic or international policy.

The historic case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) will be given the same status in our courts as decisions of our own Supreme Court. It is very rare for the Supreme Court to depart from one of its own decisions and we would expect the Supreme Court to take a sparing approach to departing from CJEU case law.

The CJEU will no longer have a role in interpreting our new laws. We will of course continue to honour our international commitments and follow international law.

In parallel with the passage of the Great Repeal Bill, the Government will engage in negotiations with the EU to reach agreement on other issues that affect businesses. This will include prioritising a reciprocal arrangement for EU citizens living in the UK and UK citizens living in the EU, and access to European markets. The Government's priorities for negotiation are set out in its recent [United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union White Paper](#).

Business as an employer

We have made a clear commitment to protect workers' rights and ensure that they keep pace with the changing labour market. More detail on this commitment is available in the [United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union White Paper](#).

All of the employment rights that are enjoyed under EU law will be converted into domestic law by the Great Repeal Bill. This will give certainty and continuity to employees and employers alike, ensuring the existing stable framework persists.

There has been no change to the rights and status of EU nationals in the UK as a result of the referendum. Until the UK leaves the EU, EU nationals continue to have the same rights to live and work in the UK. This means that businesses can continue to employ EU nationals as they currently do now.

As to the way that UK businesses will be able to employ EU nationals once the UK has withdrawn from the European Union, this is a matter for discussion in negotiations. The

Prime Minister has been clear that securing the future status of EU nationals currently in the UK and UK nationals currently in the EU is a priority for agreement.

Consumer protection

The Great Repeal Bill will preserve relevant EU law to ensure domestic law functions appropriately after exit. This stability will give businesses and consumers clarity and confidence in their domestic rights and obligations.

The environment

We remain committed to our ambition to be the first generation to leave the natural environment in a better state than we found it and we will uphold our obligations under international environmental treaties. Much EU environmental legislation is in line with UK environmental aims. The Great Repeal Bill will aim to roll forward EU-related law into UK law wherever possible and, as such, is intended to give certainty and continuity to business.

Any future changes to our legislation will be subject to the usual parliamentary scrutiny processes – it is Parliament and the electorate’s role to hold the Government to account.

The role of standards

Where standards are voluntary agreements, developed for purely commercial reasons, they will not be altered by the Great Repeal Bill and will continue to be available for use by businesses.

Standards can be followed by business to give a presumption of conformity with the essential requirements of some EU legislation. The Great Repeal Bill will convert this legislation into UK law.

Timescales

We will introduce the Great Repeal Bill in the next Parliamentary session. Its passage through Parliament will run alongside the UK’s negotiations with the EU, and other legislation associated with our withdrawal.

Changes made by the Bill will come into effect on the day we leave the European Union, taking into consideration any implementation period agreed during the negotiations.

After the Bill has become law, the Government will begin bringing forward secondary legislation to correct laws that will not operate appropriately once we have left the EU. These statutory instruments will be subject to parliamentary procedure.

We will strive to give businesses affected, including small businesses, the time and support they need to prepare. We will work with the business representative bodies and directly with business to prepare them for any changes.

Document information

Published: 30 March 2017

From: [Department for Exiting the European Union](#)