

News story

Certainty and stability for UK businesses as negotiations begin on new relationship with Europe

From:

[Department for Exiting the European Union](#) and [The Rt Hon David Davis MP](#)

Part of:

[Brexit](#) and [United Kingdom](#)

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The Great Repeal Bill White Paper was published today. It sets out the government's proposals for ensuring a functioning statute book once we have left the EU.



Giving maximum legal certainty for businesses, workers and investors as the UK leaves the European Union is at the heart of Government plans published today.

The day after the Prime Minister triggered Article 50 — starting the formal process of leaving the bloc — a [White Paper](#) on the Great Repeal Bill sets out the Government's approach to converting existing EU law into domestic law on the day we leave the EU.

The paper sets out how the Great Repeal Bill will deliver a smooth and orderly exit from the EU, by:

- repealing the European Communities Act 1972 — returning power to UK elected representatives and institutions;
- converting EU law into domestic law at the point of departure — giving certainty and allowing any changes to be made in a sensible, timely and considered fashion; and
- correcting EU law that will not function as it is converted into UK law — ensuring the statute book operates effectively.

This process will ensure that the same rules and laws will apply after we leave the EU as they did before, from the moment we leave. After the UK has left the EU and sovereignty has

returned to the UK Parliament, it will be able to decide which elements of law to keep, change or repeal.

Secretary of State for Exiting the EU David Davis said:

This White Paper lays out a pragmatic and principled approach to converting EU law into UK law on the day we leave the EU — giving businesses, workers and investors as much certainty as possible.

It also means the negotiation over our future economic partnership with the EU will be unlike any other in history, because we will start from a point of exact equivalence.

After that, it will be for Parliament to determine what EU legislation it wants to amend, repeal or improve — finally ending the supremacy of EU lawmakers.

Our plan will also give the UK Parliament and the devolved legislatures the ability to make changes to law where necessary, so that our legal system continues to operate correctly on exit day.

The White Paper, called ‘Legislating for the United Kingdom’s withdrawal from the European Union’, makes clear that existing workers’ legal rights will continue to be guaranteed in law.

A significant proportion of existing EU law will cease to work properly without changes being made.

To enable these laws to function properly on exit, providing certainty and stability, the Government needs to undertake a programme of legislation to correct the statute book while Article 50 negotiations take place.

The White Paper sets out how the Government will look to address those issues through a new time limited correcting power, to apply before the UK leaves the EU and for a limited period afterwards.

This will enable changes through secondary legislation, and ensure there is a smooth transition as EU law becomes UK law.

Enabling technical changes to be made quickly will also allow for Parliament to have the appropriate amount of time to fully scrutinise substantive policy changes that require primary legislation, such as new Immigration and Customs Bills.

And the White Paper proposes there is a time limit on the power to make changes through secondary legislation.

The Government plans also makes clear that during this process, no decisions currently taken by the devolved administrations will be removed from them.

The Government will use this opportunity to make sure more decisions are devolved — and Ministers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will be given the same powers to fix broken laws in devolved legislation.

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