

# Labour tables targeted amendments to Article 50 Bill

Today

Labour has tabled a number of targeted amendments to the Article 50 Bill (the European Union [Notification of Withdrawal] Bill).

The

amendments seek to improve the process, and would ensure Parliament is able to

hold the Government to account throughout the Brexit negotiations.

Labour

is also tabling an anti-tax haven amendment to ensure the Prime Minister doesn't use Brexit to weaken Britain's laws concerning tax avoidance and evasion.

Labour

will also support two amendments drafted by Melanie Onn MP which would protect

workers' rights and ensure there is no drop in employment protection after the

UK leaves the EU.

Labour's

amendments will:

i)

Allow a meaningful vote in Parliament on the final Brexit deal. **Labour's amendment would ensure that the House of Commons has the first say on any proposed deal** and that the consent of Parliament would be required before the deal is referred to the European Council and Parliament.

ii)

Establish a number of key principles the Government must seek to negotiate during the process, including **protecting workers' rights, securing full tariff and impediment free access to the Single Market.**

iii)

Ensure there is robust and regular Parliamentary scrutiny by requiring the Secretary of State to **report to the House at least every two months** on the progress being made on negotiations throughout the Brexit process

iv)

**Guarantee legal rights for EU nationals living in the UK.** Labour has repeatedly called for the Government to take this step, and this amendment would ensure EU citizens' rights are not part of the Brexit negotiations.

v)

Require the Government to **consult regularly with the governments in Wales,**

**Scotland and Northern Ireland** throughout Brexit negotiations. Labour's amendment would put the Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC) on a statutory footing and require the UK Government to consult the JMC at least every two months.

vi)

Require the Government to **publish impact assessments** conducted since the referendum of any new proposed trading relationship with the EU. This amendment

seeks to ensure there is much greater clarity on the likely impact of the Government's decision to exit the Single Market and seek new relationship with the Customs Union

vii)

Ensure

the Government must **seek to retain all existing EU tax avoidance and evasion measures** post-Brexit

**Jeremy**

**Corbyn, leader of the Labour Party, said:**

"Labour

will seek to amend the Article 50 Bill to prevent the Government using Brexit to turn Britain into a bargain basement tax haven off the coast of Europe.

Our

country can do much better than that.

"We

respect the will of the British people, but not the will of this Tory government to impose fewer rights at work and worse public services, while the

largest corporations pay even less tax.

"Labour

will ensure that the British people, through Parliament, have genuine accountability and oversight over the Brexit negotiations because no one voted

to give Prime Minister Theresa May a free hand over our future."

**Keir**

**Starmer, Shadow Secretary of State for Exiting the EU, said:**

"Now

that Parliament has the right to trigger Article 50, we need to ensure there is

proper grip and accountability built into the process.

"Labour's

amendments will also seek to ensure the Prime Minister secures the best deal for the whole country – including tariff and impediment free access to the Single Market and that there is no drop in workers' rights.

"Labour's

amendments will significantly improve the Government's Bill – in particular by ensuring the House of Commons has the first say on the final Brexit deal and that there are regular opportunities to hold the Government to account.

"Labour's amendments will also seek to ensure the Prime Minister secures the best deal for the whole country – including tariff and impediment free access to the Single Market and that there is no drop in workers' rights. We will also vigorously oppose any plans to reduce powers to tackle tax avoidance or evasion'.

"The Article 50 Bill will be the start, not the end of the Brexit process and Labour will hold the Government to account all the way"

**Melanie**

**Onn MP,**

who has tabled two amendments with Frontbench support on workers' rights said:

"The Tories can't be allowed to use Brexit as an excuse to water-down people's rights at work.

"That's why I am introducing amendments to protect in British law all workers' rights which originate from the EU, including maternity pay, equal rights for agency and part-time workers, and the working time directive.

"The British people voted to leave the EU, but I don't think anyone was voting for more insecure contracts or a less safe workplace."

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## **A simple and important Bill**

A BILL TO

Confer power on the Prime Minister to notify, under Article 50(2) of the Treaty on European Union, the United Kingdom's intention to withdraw from the EU.

Be it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

## 1 Power to notify withdrawal from the EU

(1) The Prime Minister may notify, under Article 50(2) of the Treaty on European Union, the United Kingdom's intention to withdraw from the EU.

(2) This section has effect despite any provision made by or under the European Communities Act 1972 or any other enactment.

## 2 Short title

This Act may be cited as the European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Act 2017.

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## China punishes damage of cultural heritages

Chinese government has punished the acts of damaging important cultural heritages or revolutionary site in three cases.

The State Administration of Cultural Heritage on Thursday made public the cases, one of them involving the damage of more than 100 ancient tombs dating back to more than 1,500 years ago in central China's Henan Province.

Another case in the same province involved illegal dismantling of some commercial and civil residence sites which could date back to the late Qing Dynasty.

The third case was about dismantling of a site in Hubei where a negotiation between the Communist Party of China and Kuomintang took place.

The administration said in a statement that people responsible for the violations have either been held for further investigation or received due punishments.

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## Only this government's distorted

## austerity agenda could lead to such contradictory policies – Debbie Abrahams

**Debbie Abrahams MP, Labour's Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary,**

responding to the Government's announcement of jobcentre closures, said:

"At a time when the Tories are cutting social security and introducing sanctions for low-paid workers, it's reckless at best and perverse at worst for the Government to close so many Jobcentres.

"Only this government's distorted austerity agenda could lead to such contradictory policies.

"This Tory Government's decision to close Jobcentres across the country shows they are not serious about helping people to find decent, secure and well-paid work'.

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## Charter flights to Sansha make trips easier



Passengers get off a charter flight at Yongxing Airport in Sansha city of south China's Hainan province on Thursday, January 26, 2017. [Photo: hineews.cn]

A charter flight linking China's southernmost cities of Haikou and Sansha is taking Chinese home to their loved ones in Sansha for the upcoming Chinese lunar New Year.

"Eventually I can see my daughter during Spring Festival," said Li Chang'an who arrived at Yongxing Airport, Sansha, Thursday morning, together with 112 other passengers.

He came to Haikou from his home in central China's Henan Province to catch the flight to Sansha. His daughter is a civil servant at Sansha's industry and commerce bureau.

The charter flights started five weeks ago from Haikou, capital of Hainan, to Yongxing Island, one of the Xisha Islands and the administrative base.

Li could have joined his daughter last Spring Festival by sea but never made it, fearful of a voyage of more than 10 hours.

An air ticket to Sansha might be the best gift that Jin Honglian has ever received. Wife of a soldier stationed in Sansha, Jin previously had to lay in bed for more than 10 hours because of seasickness when she visited her husband. With the charter flight, her trip is much shorter and more comfortable.

"I'm planning to spend more time here with my husband," said Jin, who also enjoyed a discount for military families.

Sansha City was officially established in 2012 to administer the Xisha, Zhongsha and Nansha Islands, and their surrounding waters in the South China Sea.

The daily charter flight has carried more than 3,300 passengers since Dec. 22.