

New law to protect Welsh devolution passed by Assembly

The Continuity – or LDEU – Bill seeks to transfer EU Law in areas already devolved to Wales into Welsh law on the day the UK leaves the EU. This will provide legal continuity and stability, regardless of the disagreements over the UK Government's EU (Withdrawal) Bill.

The Bill was introduced by the Welsh Government because of serious concerns about the UK Government's EU Withdrawal Bill, which allows the UK Government to take control of devolved policy areas, such as farming and fishing after Brexit.

Welsh Ministers are still working to reach agreement with the UK Government on amendments to the Withdrawal Bill. However, as so much time has passed without agreement between the governments, the Welsh Government had no choice but to take forward the Continuity Bill as a fall-back option to protect Welsh devolution.

First Minister Carwyn Jones said:

“Assembly Members have voted convincingly to back our Bill to protect devolution and make sure powers that are currently devolved, remain devolved.

“The UK Government's EU Withdrawal Bill, as currently drafted, would allow them to take control of laws and policy areas that are devolved. This is wholly unacceptable and must change.

“Our strong preference remains for satisfactory, UK-wide legislation with an EU Withdrawal Bill which is amended to ensure devolution is respected. However, we have introduced the Continuity Bill because the UK Government has been so slow and reluctant to recognise our legitimate concerns. This lack of progress is a matter of real frustration given that we share the same objectives as the UK Government – to create certainty and ensure there are no barriers within the UK's own internal single market. But this has to be done through consent, not by imposition.

“It is not too late to reach agreement – although we urgently need to see further progress before we can give our consent to the EU Withdrawal Bill. These changes need to be made quickly as the Parliamentary timetable is against us.”

The Welsh Government will not proceed with the implementation of the Continuity Bill if satisfactory agreement is reached on the UK Government's EU (Withdrawal) Bill. At that point, Welsh Ministers will recommend the Assembly gives legislative consent to the EU (Withdrawal) Bill and the

Continuity Bill can be repealed.