

# Press release: Changes to EU Withdrawal Bill to be discussed at Joint Ministerial Committee meeting

Proposed changes to Clause 11 of the EU Withdrawal Bill to ensure all devolved EU powers transfer directly from Brussels to Belfast, Cardiff and Edinburgh have now been shared with the devolved administrations ahead of a Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC) meeting on European Negotiations (EN) in London on Thursday.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, David Lidington MP, who chairs the JMC meeting, said the new proposals represented a considerable offer that he hoped the devolved governments would engage with constructively.

The changes would mean that the vast majority of powers will automatically flow from the EU to the devolved administrations. As the UK government has made clear, we always expected that the process would result in a significant increase in their decision making abilities. The changes would also ensure the UK Government would have the ability to protect the internal UK market where necessary, in a small number of areas.

Speaking ahead of the JMC meeting, David Lidington said:

The proposal that we have put on the table is a considerable offer that I hope the devolved administrations will engage with constructively.

We have worked closely with the devolved administrations to find a way forward that respects the role of the devolved governments and ensures we are able to protect our vital UK internal market, worth around four times as much to Scotland as the EU's.

All sides agree certain areas will require common frameworks – and it's therefore imperative that we don't make life more difficult for businesses and families across the UK as we manage the process of bringing new powers back from the EU.

We have demonstrated a willingness to listen and adapt our approach in order to find an agreed way forward, and we encourage others to do likewise so we can make good progress.

The UK Government has been working extensively with the devolved administrations through the JMC process, as well as bilaterals and significant engagement between officials.

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## News story: UK ranked 8th least corrupt country in the world

The [Transparency International index](#) (published today – 21 February), drawn up by the leading civil society organisation fighting corruption worldwide, ranks 180 countries on how corrupt a country's public sector is viewed as. In the last year, the UK has moved 2 places from 10th least corrupt in the world to joint 8th.

Drawing on evidence from 13 surveys of business people and expert assessments, the index analysis highlights links between corruption, press freedom and the decline of civil liberties around the world.

Security Minister Ben Wallace said:

I am pleased that Transparency International has ranked UK as one of the least corrupt countries in the world. Our improved position clearly reflects the proactive role this government has taken to combat corruption both at home and abroad.

But we are not complacent and recognise there is more to do. That is why we published the UK's first anti-corruption strategy which establishes an ambitious longer-term commitment to tackle corruption.

I am determined that law enforcement and the government should work together to drive out dirty money and its corrupting effect.

The UK is making concerted efforts to tackle corruption and published the first [UK anti-corruption strategy](#) in December 2017. The strategy contains over 100 fully-resourced commitments to guide government efforts and establishes a 5-year plan to reduce corruption.

The strategy builds upon the UK's strong anti-corruption drive. The UK: was the first G20 country to publish the details of who owns and controls UK companies; was the first G7 country to undergo an international monetary fund fiscal transparency evaluation; and, in 2017, passed the [Criminal Finances Act](#) which established new anti-corruption tools and powers such as Unexplained Wealth Orders. These investigative orders require certain individuals – either politically exposed persons or individuals reasonably suspected of involvement with or connected to serious and organised crime – to explain the source of their wealth, supporting the UK's effort to tackle corruption.

Alongside the department's efforts, the Prime Minister announced the

appointment of John Penrose MP as the new anti-corruption champion. In his role, Mr Penrose will be responsible for challenging and supporting the government in implementing the strategy, as well as promoting the UK's response to corruption both domestically and internationally.

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## Speech: The Responsibility to Adhere to the UN Charter's Ideals

Thank you Your Excellency for convening this session and focusing the Council's attention on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.

And thank you to the Secretary General and his Excellency the former Secretary General Ban Ki-moon for their briefings today.

This session, as you've said, takes place around the 27th anniversary of the liberation of Kuwait. This is a clear example of the United Nations fulfilling its purposes through maintaining international peace and security.

As UN Member States, we have a responsibility to adhere to the Charter's ideals and to work within the UN framework to solve the most challenging global problems.

When the horrific violence in Rakhine forced the Rohingya to flee, the Security Council played a vital role, focusing the world's attention on the situation and encouraging action by the authorities on the ground. We must now take further action to ensure safe and voluntary return to take place, and we should visit the region.

Mr President,

The Council must work together to achieve the Charter's purposes. When we do, we are successful.

We have remained united in our commitment to providing the tools to achieve peace in Colombia and in our support for Cyprus's peace process. We were successful in Liberia and Cote de Ivoire. We have remained united in our condemnation of Daesh and the need for accountability for their atrocious actions.

And we have remained united in our condemnation of the DPRK's flagrant violations of international law, where we have used sanctions to constrain the DPRK's pursuit of illegal nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. In this context sanctions play a crucial role in maintaining international peace and security.

The implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which balances

sanctions relief with strict nuclear restrictions, is another significant achievement of this Council and marks a major step forward in preventing Iran from developing a nuclear weapons capability.

However, there are instances where Council disunity halts our progress.

We cannot ignore Russian attempts to redraw the boundaries of Europe. This month marks the fourth anniversary of the illegal annexation of Crimea in breach of Article 2 of the Charter. We remain deeply concerned by the degradation of human rights in eastern Ukraine and we call upon Russia to abide by the Minsk Agreement commitments that it signed up to. It is crucial that we uphold the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Nor can we ignore the conflict that continues to rage in Syria, or its causes. The Syrian conflict, in all of its abhorrent acts and human misery, is an example of what we all set up this United Nations to prevent.

We have proved that we can work together to ease the suffering of the Syrian people. When we adopted Resolution 2393 it enabled the United Nations to continue to deliver urgently needed humanitarian aid across conflict lines and borders. Knowing that we can deliver results makes our failures even more frustrating.

These failures are having devastating consequences. The Assad regime's brutal assault of Eastern Ghouta, including reports of chemical weapons use, is causing unprecedented levels of suffering. Targeting of civilian infrastructure is a violation of international humanitarian law. Eastern Ghouta is not a de-escalation zone, it is a zone of death and destruction.

We must work together to end the conflict and prevent further suffering of the Syrian people, and I hope this Council will soon be able to pass a resolution to that effect. The Geneva talks represent the only sustainable path to peace. The opposition continues to engage constructively and in good faith and without preconditions. The Assad regime must do the same.

We must also hold the Syrian regime and others to account for the repeated use of chemical weapons. Our failure here is unacceptable. We must demonstrate that such abhorrent actions have consequences. An independent expert international investigation, set up by this Council, concluded that the regime and Da'esh have used chemical weapons. We must not allow Russian actions to force the closure of this investigation to deter us from pursuing accountability.

Mr President, despite our differences in this Council, we have demonstrated our capacity to show unity in the face of adversity. We must strive to do this more and to think creatively about how we find common solutions.

The United Kingdom is a proud signatory to the ACT Code of Conduct and we are committed to never voting against a credible draft resolution on preventing or ending a mass atrocity.

We fully support the Secretary-General's efforts and proposals to improve the

United Nation's ability to prevent and respond to conflict and promote development. This includes reforms to peacekeeping and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the millions of military, police and civilian personnel who have helped to protect civilians around the world.

We must also continue to tackle relentlessly the scourge of sexual violence and sexual exploitation and abuse, and recognise the disproportionate adverse effect of conflict on women, and the important role of women in peacebuilding.

And we must encourage increased cooperation with regional organisations and arrangements, as set out in the Charter, whether with AMISOM in its fight against Al Shabaab in Somalia, ECOWAS in its resolution of conflict, or the G5 Sahel Joint Force to combat terrorism in West Africa.

Mr President,

Our predecessors drafted the United Nations Charter in the name of the peoples of the world to help save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. In some places, we are succeeding. Elsewhere, we are falling woefully short. Let us all reflect on what more we can do to live up to the Charter's – our Charter's – ideals.

Thank you Mr President.

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## [Press release: PM meetings with the leaders of the DUP and Sinn Fein: 21 February 2018](#)



A No 10 spokesperson said:

This afternoon, the Prime Minister had meetings with the leaders of the DUP and Sinn Fein on restoring devolved government to Northern Ireland.

In both meetings, she said it was important for everyone to reflect on the circumstances which have led to this and their positions, so a way forward could be found to restore an Executive.

She made clear how the UK government remains steadfast in its commitment to the Belfast Agreement and its successors and reiterated that devolved government is in the best interests of the people in Northern Ireland.

On next steps, she set out how the Northern Ireland Secretary would continue to work intensively with the parties on the basis for an agreement.

The Prime Minister also made clear how challenging decisions lay ahead as the UK government has a responsibility to ensure the continued delivery of public services in Northern Ireland.

On the weeks ahead, she said she will be working closely with the Northern Ireland Secretary and will continue to engage with the parties and the Irish Government.

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## **Press release: PM meeting with the PM of the Netherlands: 21 February 2018**



A Downing Street spokesperson said:

The Prime Minister Theresa May hosted Prime Minister Mark Rutte of the Netherlands for a working lunch at Downing Street this afternoon.

Mrs May began by welcoming the new Eurostar route between the UK and the Netherlands, noting that this will bring the two countries

who already share close ties, even closer.

She then gave an update on Brexit negotiations with both leaders agreeing on the importance of concluding the terms of the implementation period in March and the terms of the future partnership as soon as possible.

The Prime Minister set out her vision for a bold future economic partnership with the Netherlands and the whole of the EU after the UK leaves, stressing that we should all be optimistic and flexible to achieve a trading relationship which is as frictionless as possible, which Prime Minister Rutte welcomed.

Finally, both leaders discussed the importance of the role that the UK and Dutch forces were both playing in the Baltics and expressed their wish to continue to work closely together on their shared security issues.

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