

# Press release: Governments agree a way forward on EU powers

At the Joint Ministerial Committee in London, chaired by the First Secretary of State Damian Green MP and attended by the Scottish and Welsh governments and Northern Ireland civil service, it was agreed how 142 current EU policy areas will be dealt with as they return to the UK, with only a minority requiring a legislative framework.

The First Secretary also highlighted last week's agreement by the Prime Minister securing the rights of EU nationals living in the UK. Mr Green said that this provided reassurance to those living and working in all parts of the UK and would also be welcomed by employers.

The return of powers from the EU will lead to a significant increase in the decision making powers of the Scottish and Welsh governments and a restored Northern Ireland Executive. It had previously been agreed that some policy areas would require a common UK approach in order to protect the benefits of the UK internal market. Ministers had also agreed in October the principles that would be used to decide on the need for any frameworks.

There is now agreement in principle on how the 142 policy areas previously identified will be allocated into the following three groups:

- areas where no further action is necessary
- areas that could require new non-legislative arrangements
- areas that may require a legislative framework

Only in a minority of areas will a legislative framework be required and officials will now carry out further work in these policy areas.

Speaking after the meeting, First Secretary of State Damian Green MP said:

Today we have agreed in principle on the policy areas where legislative frameworks will and will not be required. This is a significant step forward and while there are still areas we disagree on, we will continue to work through these and find solutions.

The powers and responsibilities of the devolved administrations will be enhanced as a result of EU exit and we will continue to work closely with them so that the new framework arrangements work effectively for all parts of the UK.

The co-operation and hard work from all sides will stand us in good stead for resolving other outstanding issues in the weeks and months to come. The devolved administrations have already signed up to principles that recognise the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland.

The agreement reached by the Prime Minister in Brussels last week also provides reassurance to those EU nationals living in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. I know from my many visits throughout the UK in recent months that this reassurance that they can continue to live and work in the UK will be welcome news to them and their employers.

The next steps will be for government officials to continue discussions on the limited number of areas where legislative frameworks may be required. A range of non-legislative frameworks will also be explored. These frameworks will protect the benefits of the UK internal market, ensure the UK can negotiate, enter into and implement new trade agreements and allow us to safeguard the security of the UK.