

Press release: UK nuclear safeguards on track for EU exit

- government sets out the details of new nuclear safeguards regime
- nuclear safeguards legislation receives Royal Assent – UK on track to be able to meet international commitments once Euratom arrangements cease to apply in the UK
- progress provides certainty to the civil nuclear industry and international partners as the UK prepares for Euratom exit

New proposals on the detail of a new UK nuclear safeguards regime to replace the current regime provided by Euratom, have been set out in a consultation launched today (Monday 9 July 2018).

The [consultation](#) sets out nuclear safeguards regulations that would be made using the powers granted by the Nuclear Safeguards Act, which last month became one of the first pieces of EU Exit legislation to complete its passage through Parliament and receive Royal Assent.

Business and Industry Minister, Richard Harrington said:

The Nuclear Safeguards Act is one of the first pieces of legislation to go through Parliament in preparation for EU Exit and is yet another major milestone in our work to prepare the civil nuclear industry for Euratom exit, ensuring continuity from day 1.

We are setting out proposals for the detail of our own UK framework for safeguards, demonstrating our readiness for EU Exit.

The Nuclear Safeguards Act addresses the United Kingdom's departure from the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom), an international organisation that governs the peaceful use of nuclear energy within the EU. The passing of the Act and today's consultation on a new safeguards regime provide a clear signal to the public, industry and international partners that the UK is on track to meet its international commitments from day one of exit.

Nuclear safeguards are important processes through which the UK demonstrates to the international community that civil nuclear material is not diverted into military or weapons programmes.

Today's announcement comes just weeks after the UK's commitment to international safeguards and nuclear non-proliferation was reaffirmed in Vienna, with the signing of 2 new safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

These key agreements with the IAEA – of which the UK is a founding member – are another major milestone in Euratom exit preparations and provide the basis for civil nuclear trading arrangements. This step will be welcomed by

the industry in the UK and trading partners around the world.

Further progress towards Euratom Exit has been set out in a [Quarterly update to Parliament](#) published on 28 June, which outlines several key achievements, including the Office for Nuclear Regulation's good progress on preparations for implementing the UK's safeguards regime and the confirmation that all Euratom specific text in the Withdrawal Agreement has now been agreed.

The UK signed a new Nuclear Cooperation Agreement (NCA) with the United States of America in May, which will allow the UK and US to continue their mutually beneficial civil nuclear cooperation when the current Euratom arrangements cease to apply to the UK.

This US-UK NCA is expected to be the first in a series of new international agreements ensuring uninterrupted cooperation and trade following the UK's exit from Euratom.

Details on how to respond to the consultation and to register interest for the workshops, can be found on the [consultation web page](#).

The Nuclear Safeguards Act 2018 amends the Energy Act 2013 to:

- provide the Office for Nuclear Regulation with a new safeguards function
- create new powers for the Secretary of State to put in place regulations setting out the detail of the domestic safeguards regime

The Act also creates a limited power for the Secretary of State to amend 3 existing pieces of legislation to update references to the new IAEA agreements.

The UK's Voluntary Offer Agreement and Additional Protocol were signed in Vienna on 7 June.

The UK has been a member of the IAEA since its formation in 1957.

The signing of new bilateral agreements with the IAEA, a Voluntary Offer Agreement and Additional Protocol, will replace existing trilateral arrangements between the IAEA, Euratom and the UK.

The new agreements ensure that the IAEA retains its right to inspect all civil nuclear facilities, and continues to receive current safeguards reporting, thereby ensuring that international verification of our safeguards activity continues to be robust. Such agreements have been put in place on a voluntary basis by the 5 nuclear-weapon states parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The new safeguards regime to be established in the UK will be operated by the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR). The ONR already regulates nuclear safety and security in the UK and has been making preparation to replace Euratom as the regulator of safeguards.