

Prime Minister pledges Brexit Freedoms Bill to cut EU red tape

- ‘Brexit Freedoms’ Bill will be brought forward to end to the special status of EU law and ensure that it can be more easily amended or removed
- Major cross-government drive to cut £1 billion of red tape for businesses and improve regulation
- Announcement follows PM’s New Years Day pledge to go “further and faster” to maximise the benefits of Brexit in 2022

A new ‘Brexit Freedoms’ Bill will be brought forward by the government, under plans unveiled by the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, to mark the two-year anniversary of Getting Brexit Done.

The Bill will make it easier to amend or remove outdated ‘retained EU law’ – legacy EU law kept on the statute book after Brexit as a bridging measure – and will accompany a major cross-government drive to reform, repeal and replace outdated EU law.

These reforms will cut £1 billion of red tape for UK businesses, ease regulatory burdens and contribute to the government’s mission to unite and level up the country.

Many EU laws kept on after Brexit were agreed as a messy compromise between 28 different EU member states and often did not reflect the UK’s own priorities or objectives – nor did many receive sufficient scrutiny in our democratic institutions.

Having regained our independence, we can now ensure that our regulations are tailor-made to the UK’s own needs. However, under current rules, reforming and repealing this pipeline of outdated EU law would take several years because of the need for primary legislation for many changes, even if minor and technical.

The new legislation will ensure that changes can be made more easily, so that the UK can capitalise on Brexit freedoms more quickly.

The Bill is also expected to end the special status that EU law still enjoys in our legal framework. Despite our exit from the bloc, EU laws made before 1 January 2020 continue to have precedence in our domestic framework. This is simply not compatible with our status as a sovereign, independent country and the government will bring it to an end as quickly as possible.

Officials across government are currently reviewing all EU retained laws to determine if they are beneficial to the UK. It is right that people know how much EU-derived law there is and how much progress government is making to reform it, so the government will make this catalogue public in due course.

The Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, said:

“Getting Brexit Done two years ago today was a truly historic moment and the start of an exciting new chapter for our country.

“We have made huge strides since then to capitalise on our newfound freedoms and restore the UK’s status as a sovereign, independent country that can determine its own future.

“The plans we have set out today will further unleash the benefits of Brexit and ensure that businesses can spend more of their money investing, innovating and creating jobs.

“Our new Brexit Freedoms Bill will end the special status of EU law in our legal framework and ensure that we can more easily amend or remove outdated EU law in future”.

The Attorney General, Suella Braverman, said:

“Setting up a mechanism to deal with these legacy EU rules is essential. It underpins our ability to grasp important opportunities provided by Brexit. It means we can move away from outdated EU laws that were the result of unsatisfactory compromises within the EU, some of which the UK voted and lobbied against – but was required to adopt without question.

“These rules often had limited meaningful parliamentary scrutiny, and no democratic legitimacy in the UK at all. It is vital that we take the steps necessary, in this Parliament, to remove unnecessary rules altogether, and where regulation is needed, ensure that it meets the UK’s objectives.

“This work is key to us taking charge of our regained sovereignty which the British people voted for in 2016 and 2019”.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Steve Barclay, said:

“Leaving the EU has given us the opportunity to establish our own rules for how we live and govern our lives in Britain, from how our farmers are funded, our data is managed to unlock more innovation, and our public procurement spent in ways that unlocks greater social value.

“These reforms will cut £1 billion of EU red tape for businesses and provide them with exciting new opportunities to flourish.

“The Brexit Freedoms Bill will continue to make it easier to remove cumbersome EU laws which were initially retained to ease our transition but which do not meet the future needs of the UK.”

Alongside today’s announcement, a new policy document ‘The Benefits of Brexit: how the UK is taking advantage of leaving the EU’ will set out how the government is using new freedoms in different sectors to transform the UK into the best regulated economy in the world.

From artificial intelligence and gene editing to the future of transport and data protection, these reforms will create a new pro-growth, high-standards regulatory framework that gives businesses the confidence to innovate, invest

and create jobs. This includes:

Data and AI – moving in a faster, more agile way to regulate new digital markets and AI and creating a more proportionate and less burdensome data rights regime compared to the EU's GDPR.

Infrastructure and Levelling Up – modernising outdated vehicle standards, improving public procurement so that we can more easily exclude poorly performing suppliers and enhancing our public health system by reforming clinical trials and medical devices legislation.

Climate, the Environment and Agriculture – reforming our environmental regulation, 80% of which came from the EU, to deliver cleaner air, create new habitats, and reduce waste, while changing the rules on gene edited organisms, to enable more sustainable and efficient farming.

Business and Industry – establishing a domestic subsidy control regime to allow us to better support the UK economy, taking an ambitious approach in financial services areas previously regulated by the EU and simplifying unnecessary reporting burdens for small and medium-sized companies.

Global Britain – making the most of an unprecedented opportunity to forge new alliances and strengthen our partnerships around the world. The interests of the British people now lie at the heart of everything we do around the world – from our trade policy to our sanctions policy.

The government's recent Plan for Growth sets out how our approach to regulation is changing to focus on delivering growth and innovation. In support of these objectives, the Government has today set out five new regulatory principles to further guide that approach (see notes to editors).

Today's announcement also builds on the significant progress already made since the UK delivered Brexit on 31 January 2020, including:

- Ending free movement and taken back control of our borders – replacing freedom of movement with a points-based immigration system and making it easier to kick out foreign criminals.
- Securing the vaccine rollout – streamlining procurement processes and avoiding cumbersome EU bureaucracy to deliver the fastest vaccine rollout anywhere in Europe last year.
- Striking new free trade deals – with over 70 countries including landmark deals with Australia and New Zealand. We have also launched negotiations on a trade deal with India – a market of 1.4 billion people.
- Cutting back on EU red tape – including ending the Tampon Tax and simplifying complex EU alcohol duty rates.

- Strengthening our standards – allowing the UK to go further than the EU and set improved environmental, animal welfare and product safety standards.