

Press release: Devolution talks take a considerable step forward

Discussions between the UK Government and the devolved administrations on the EU Withdrawal Bill have taken 'a considerable step forward', the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster David Lidington MP said today after chairing the Joint Ministerial Committee meeting in the Cabinet Office.

Mr Lidington said the Scottish and Welsh Government Ministers had acknowledged that the changes the UK Government is proposing to Clause 11 of the Bill represent good progress. Ministers agreed to meet again as soon as possible to try and reach an agreement.

Speaking after the Joint Ministerial Committee (European Negotiations) meeting in Whitehall, David Lidington said:

We had a constructive discussion today. We have not yet secured an agreement but have agreed to meet again in the very near future to crack this.

The Devolved Administrations acknowledged that the proposal we offered yesterday was a significant step forward.

We want to find an agreed way forward that respects and strengthens the devolution settlements and which also provides certainty for businesses and families as we depart the EU.

As we have always been clear, it is our intention that the Devolved Administrations will have more powers as a result of this process.

It is also very important that we protect the UK internal market and ensure that companies all across the UK are able to buy and sell freely.

Joint Ministerial Committee (EU negotiations) communique, 22 February 2018

The seventh Joint Ministerial Committee (EU Negotiations) met today in 70 Whitehall. The meeting was chaired by the Rt Hon David Lidington MP, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office.

The attending Ministers were:

From the UK Government:

- the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, Rt Hon David Lidington MP

- the Secretary of State for Exiting the EU, Rt Hon David Davis MP
- the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP
- the Secretary of State for Wales, Rt Hon Alun Cairns MP
- the Secretary of State for Scotland, Rt Hon David Mundell MP

From the Welsh Government:

- Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Mark Drakeford AM

From the Scottish Government:

- the Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe, Michael Russell MSP

In the absence of Ministers from the Northern Ireland Executive, a senior civil servant from the Northern Ireland Civil Service was in attendance.

The Chair opened the meeting by summarising the constructive bilateral engagement with the Scottish and Welsh governments, including political developments that had taken place since JMC(EN) last met. The Secretary of State for Exiting the EU provided an update on the previous rounds of negotiations with the EU. The Committee discussed forthcoming priorities, including the implementation period and the future relationship with the EU.

The Committee discussed the role of the Devolved Administrations in contributing to the process of developing the UK position in the next phase of negotiations with the EU on the future relationship. The Committee noted the engagement that had taken place between UK Government and Devolved Administration officials since the previous meeting to open discussion on the future economic and security partnerships. Engagement would continue with the aim of ensuring the Devolved Administrations were fully involved in developing the UK's negotiating position, while respecting the UK Government's role as negotiator.

The Committee discussed the EU (Withdrawal) Bill, including the proposal to amend clause 11. It was noted that progress had been made, but agreement had not yet been reached between the UK Government, Scottish Government and Welsh Government on the form of an amendment. Discussions on further detail would continue in the coming weeks.

The Committee discussed progress on common frameworks. Multilateral official level discussions had explored a range of areas where common frameworks may be required, including where legislative and non-legislative approaches could be appropriate. These discussions were ongoing.

Press release: Aquilon Medical Nebulisers: people urged to stop use immediately

Following withdrawal of CE certification for the Aquilon series of nebulisers, the manufacturer has continued to place the nebulisers on the market. We have issued a [Medical Device Alert](#) today to all relevant healthcare professionals.

The affected nebulisers and packaging do have a CE mark placed on them, however this has not been obtained through appropriate regulatory oversight and therefore, their safety cannot be assured.

A medical device cannot be marketed in Europe without carrying a CE mark. It is applied by the manufacturer and means that the device meets the relevant regulatory requirements and, when used as intended, works properly and is acceptably safe.

This issue affects Aquilon2, Aquilon, Aquilon+ and Aquilon Pro series medical nebulisers manufactured since 01 April 2015. MHRA believes that more than 8,000 Aquilon nebulisers, which have been on the market since 2015 are affected in the UK.

If there is suspicion that a nebuliser is affected, people are advised to stop using immediately, dispose of the device and to use an alternative nebuliser where available. It is advisable that you speak to your healthcare professional or GP who can help you find out if your device is affected, give you advice on how to dispose of it and provide a replacement.

John Wilkinson, MHRA's Director of Medical Devices said:

We have been made aware that the manufacturer has continued to sell nebulisers even after their CE certification was withdrawn. We cannot guarantee they have been manufactured to an appropriate standard.

These devices deliver potential life-saving treatment and it is vital they operate correctly when needed.

We are taking action, as a matter of priority, to make sure people are aware the CE mark has been withdrawn and that these devices should not be used and should be disposed of.

Patient safety is our highest priority and we urge anyone with questions to speak to a healthcare professional as soon as possible.

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[Press release: Child sex offenders sent to prison after Solicitor General's action](#)

Two men who sexually abused two 14 year old girls have been sent to prison after the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland QC MP, appealed their sentences.

Lee Pollard and Marc Allen were each originally sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment suspended for 24 months at Exeter Crown Court for the offence of sexual activity with a child.

Pollard and Allen who were both 24 at the time knew their victims were under-age when they had sex with them but they later denied this. The offences took place while the young girls were under the influence of alcohol and drugs at a party in Dawlish.

Today, after the action of the Solicitor General, the Court of Appeal quashed the original sentences and replaced them with immediate prison terms. Pollard has been sentenced to 2 years 9 months imprisonment and Allen 3 years 6

months imprisonment.

Commenting after the hearing today, the Solicitor General said:

Despite knowing that the girls were only 14 years old Pollard and Allen engaged them in sexual activity and provided them both with alcohol and drugs. They have no excuse for their behaviour. I hope that the increased sentences will bring some comfort to the girls' families.

[Press release: The Destruction of Pharaoh's Host, by John Martin, at risk of leaving the UK](#)

Arts Minister Michael Ellis has placed a temporary export bar on *The Destruction of Pharaoh's Host*, by the British artist John Martin (1789-1854), to provide an opportunity to keep it in the country.

The watercolour is at risk of being exported from the UK unless a buyer can be found to match the asking price of £1,509,102.

The drawing illustrates the Biblical story (Exodus 14) of Moses releasing the waters of the Red Sea, after they had miraculously parted to allow the fleeing Israelites to cross, thereby drowning the pursuing Egyptian army.

Employing a panoramic composition to magnificent effect, Martin plays with the scale of the figures and the scenery to maximise the epic nature of the drama. The emotional force of this scene of deliverance and retribution is heightened by a blood red sunset below a sweeping black sky.

Although Martin is best known for his spectacular oil paintings and mezzotints (a tonal print technique that was ideally suited to capturing his bold use of light and shade for dramatic effect) illustrating John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and the Bible, he also created a series of framed 'exhibition watercolours', which in scale and visual impact were intended to compete for attention and patronage with oil paintings.

Martin's mezzotints of Biblical subjects, such as *The Destruction of Pharaoh's Host* published in 1833, were hugely popular and influential with admirers including Charles Dickens and the Bronte sisters who grew up with them on the walls of their father's parsonage.

Martin's large-scale watercolour treatment of the same subject from three years later was intended to capitalise on his popular success, and *The*

Destruction of Pharaoh's Host demonstrates his bold use of the medium in the eye-catching brightness of the colours, with the tonal range expanded through extensive use of black pigment, bodycolour, and gum arabic.

Martin's artistic reputation did not endure – despite the influence he played in shaping the epic scale and grandeur of Biblical and historical epics in films by directors like Cecil B. DeMille – as his standing suffered from the disapproval of the art critic John Ruskin and the artist's focus later in his life shifted to planning ambitious engineering schemes to deliver clean water and an efficient sewage system to London.

The subsequent and enduring shift in taste away from the use of watercolour for grandiose narrative subjects, allied to a longstanding critical downplaying of the significance of the medium to British art, meant that Martin's stature as a watercolourist was long overlooked, until interest in his work began to revive in the early 1950s.

Martin's importance is now more widely recognised and celebrated, and the ambition, boldness and grandeur of The Destruction of Pharaoh's Host exemplifies his unique contribution to British watercolour history.

Arts Minister Michael Ellis said:

This incredibly dramatic picture captures the imaginative and apocalyptic subjects for which Martin is best known.

I hope it can remain in the UK, where it can be admired and studied for many years to come.

The decision to defer the export licence follows a recommendation by the [Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest \(RCEWA\)](#), administered by The Arts Council.

RCEWA member Lowell Libson said:

Working in watercolour played a significant part in Martin's art throughout his career although he is now best remembered for his exhibition works in oil. The Destruction of Pharaoh's Host not only demonstrates Martin's mastery of the medium but underlines how he employed it to achieve emotional and dramatic effects of a subtlety which were impossible in his larger scale oil paintings. The Destruction of Pharaoh's Host numbers amongst the greatest of Martin's watercolours.

The RCEWA made its recommendation on the grounds of the picture's outstanding significance in the reassessment of John Martin – the most popular artist of his day, dismissed by the art establishment and ignored for almost a century – whose influence on the development of epic, visionary landscape painting, both in Britain and in America, is now widely acknowledged.

The decision on the export licence application for the picture will be deferred until 21 May. This may be extended until 21 September if a serious intention to raise funds to purchase it is made at the recommended price of £1,509,102.

Organisations or individuals interested in purchasing the picture should contact the RCEWA on 0845 300 6200.

An image of the picture can be downloaded via our [flickr site](#).

ENDS

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Notes to editors

1. Details of the picture are as follows:
Watercolour by John Martin (1789-1854), The Destruction of Pharaoh's Host, signed and dated: 'J. Martin/1836' (lower right). Pencil and watercolour with gum arabic heightened with body colour and with scratching out; 23 x 33 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (584 x 857 mm).
 2. Provenance: (Probably) J.E. Jesse, by 1876; with Agnew's, London; with Leger & Son, London, by September 1954, sold in or after 1958 to George Goyder; Sotheby's, London, 11 July 1991, lot 192, where purchased by private owner (sold for world auction record price for watercolour by this artist £107,800); Christie's, London, 3 July 2012, lot 139 (est. £300,000-500,000, sold for £758,050, also world auction record).
 3. The Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest is an independent body, serviced by The Arts Council, which advises the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on whether a cultural object, intended for export, is of national importance under specified criteria.
 4. The Arts Council champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. It supports a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. www.artscouncil.org.uk.
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News story: Emergency Services Network reaches new milestone

This is a significant milestone for the project which will provide emergency services with a new cutting-edge communication system.

Engineers performed the test on 8 February between an EE mobile mast site in Bristol and a location in Basingstoke. This is the first time Motorola Solutions' software has linked together with the live EE mobile phone network and demonstrated prioritisation of emergency services communications on a public network.

Minister for Policing and the Fire Service Nick Hurd said:

This is a complex project which will provide the emergency services with the most advanced communications system of its kind anywhere in the world – which is why successful tests like these are an excellent achievement.

Members of the public are already seeing some of the incidental benefits of the project like its improvement of the 4G mobile network – 90 per cent of the UK is now covered.

Other progress in the delivery of ESN includes:

- the introduction of handheld devices – 130 have now been produced for testing
- the first new rapid response vehicle has been tested and more are currently in production
- Transport for London has now laid 'leaky feeder' cables in almost 100km of tunnels out of a total of 420km in the London Underground
- there have already been over 100 genuine 999 calls received through masts in place due to ESN where there was previously no coverage, demonstrating the ability of ESN to help save lives even before the roll out is complete

More information on the [programme](#).