

## Retained EU Law Bill and Save Our Standards FAQ

### + What is the Retained EU Law Bill?

The Retained EU Law Bill is a change of law going through parliament right now. It is the first step in dismantling regulations and standards protecting our environment, food quality and workers' rights. This Bill – and a series of other measures set to follow – would give government ministers free rein to begin the dismantling of our standards with little democratic oversight.

### + What is the “sunset clause” and why does it matter?

The sunset clause essentially means that the Bill, if passed as it is, would abolish all EU laws and standards still applicable in the UK at the end of 2023, unless Ministers intervene before to maintain or reform them. That would mean huge uncertainties for businesses, workers and consumers and cause chaos in the courts. There are doubts over the capacity of government departments to meet the 2023 deadline, some departments like the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs have over 570 pieces of legislation that originated in EU law.

### + Who will decide what happened to laws that originated in the EU?

Currently, the Bill would give ministers and government officials the power to decide whether to retain, amend or repeal any law that originated in the EU.

### + Is it normal that ministers will decide what happens to these laws?

It is highly unusual for a Bill to give ministers and government officials the ability to impact so many laws. In the UK parliament is the sovereign law-making institution, usually big changes in the law will be debated in Parliament and there would be an opportunity for democratic scrutiny and oversight.

### + How many laws will be impacted?

The REUL Bill impacts over nearly 4,000 pieces of legislation. At time of writing, it will directly impact 3,800 laws.



## What does the Retained EU Law Bill mean for standards and regulations in the UK?

The Bill could mean the lowering of UK goods and employment standards to well below EU levels, it would also make trading with the EU more difficult and break the terms of the Brexit agreement, creating the risk of a trade war. The Bill does not specify exactly what will happen to each of the nearly 4,000 laws affected. The Bill sets out the process by which the government will decide what happens to each law and regulation. It means that there is a huge amount of uncertainty over the levels of standards and regulations.

### + What types of laws are affected by the Retained EU Law Bill?

The UK played a key role in the creation of lots of the laws that originate in the EU. They cover almost every government department and are some of the most important laws that we enjoy today.

Laws affected by the REUL Bill cover everything, from paid holidays to ensuring a reduction on the gender pay gap. They protect rights for people on maternity and paternity leave. They limit the number of hours we can be required to work and protect our rights if we face redundancy.

The laws under risk also protect our environment by helping to tackle climate change, maintain biodiversity and keep air, water and beaches clean. The laws also cover the safety and quality of the food on our plates, as well as hard-won progress on animal welfare.

### + When will we know the implications of the EU Law Bill on our standards and regulations?

As it stands, the Bill has a deadline for decisions set at the end of 2023. We don't know if the government has the time to decide on the future of each law by then. As a result, we won't fully know the impact of the Retained EU Law Bill on our standards until after the sunset clause which causes lots of uncertainty.





# RETAINED EU LAW BILL IMPLICATIONS



The loss of protections could impact 50 native species protected under the Habitats Regulations – this includes otters, dormice, dolphins, fen orchids, and shore dock, it could also impact on species that we are currently protected from killing such as seals and cetaceans.



UK law could diverge away from current protections in EU law against the sale of meat produced using growth-hormone promoters. Also, divergence from current food standards raises the issue of chlorinated chicken again and despite strong opposition from public opinion the REUL Bill could lead to chlorinated chicken appearing on supermarket shelves.



There could be legal uncertainty with respect to the interpretation of several “family-friendly” rights such as: the right to ordinary and additional maternity leave, protection of contractual rights during maternity leave, the right to be given first refusal on any suitable alternative job which is available during a redundancy process whilst on maternity, the right to return to the same job after maternity or parental leave.



REUL includes the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR) which implements the health and safety requirements of the Pregnant Workers Directive. This wider impacts all women of childbearing age and expectant mothers.



There could be legal uncertainty with respect to the interpretation of several “family-friendly” protections such as: the right to parental leave and protections over unfair dismissal if the only principle reason for dismissal is connected to the right to leave for family reasons or requesting flexible work.



REUL has shaped equal pay legislation in the UK for over 40 years. Most REUL has focused on Equal Pay for women. It is a current concern that if the UK diverges from the current law that there could be an inequality between claimants protected by the REUL and those who will just have domestic law protections.



One of the big areas of concern relates to the Working Time Directive. This is limited to working hours in general but also critical for the safety of workers, especially those working in high-energy or high-intensity industries or where long hours could result in serious safety implications.



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## **+ Why is European Movement UK concerned about the Retained EU Law Bill?**

European Movement UK demands the government drop the Retained EU Law Bill and instead focus on protecting our rights. Our specific demands are for the government to:

- Provide a legally binding guarantee that they won't slash our standards or drop EU laws which positively builds on our established regulations and standards;
- Commit to retaining or improving key legislation on wildlife protection, animal welfare, employment rights, environmental protections, food standards;
- The government must engage openly and transparently with third-sector organisations that are raising concerns about the implications of divergence in these areas, and;
- Remove clauses that allow Ministers to change the law without adequate democratic and parliamentary scrutiny.

## **+ What is European Movement UK?**

The European Movement UK is the only cross-party organisation with the courage to expose the calamity of Brexit and fight to win the Battle for the Soul of our Country.

## **+ What can I do?**

We need to show law makers that Brexit was not a vote to lower living standards and remove hard earned rights. There are lots that you can do:

**SIGN OUR PETITION**

**JOIN AS A MEMBER**

