

# Internal Market Bill published today – the start of the controversy?

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The Bill aims to pave the way to preventing barriers to trade between the all-UK Internal Market, forming the basis on which the UK economy will function outside of the EU. It will ensure a number of powers, currently governed by Brussels, including issues of state aid, will be reserved for Westminster.

It also has the potential to remove legal force from a number of aspects of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement - something which has been confirmed by Northern Ireland Secretary, Brandon Lewis, and reportedly forced the resignation of Sir Jonathan Jones, the government's most senior lawyer.

The Bill has attracted cross-party criticism and outcries from the UK's devolved administrations. Although its full impact remains to be seen, it does afford the government the power to undermine an international treaty. Some might argue the timing of the Bill is a tactical move in relation to the ongoing EU trade negotiations, and merely provides a fall-back option in event of a "no deal" outcome, but failing to implement an international treaty in its entirety raises questions about the rule of law and how that may potentially damage the UK's reputation in a global trade deal context.

We will have to wait to confirm the full impact of this legislation, and the potential full force of its provisions may only be exploited in event of a "no deal" outcome with the EU. However, going forward, checking for regular updates on this matter will be essential to ensuring those affected by any changes are able to react accordingly and in a timely manner.

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