

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM ON EUROPEAN UNION LEGISLATION OR POLICY

Unnumbered Document

COUNCIL DECISION (EU) 2025/1286 of 20 June 2025 authorising the opening of negotiations with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for an agreement on a youth experience scheme.

Submitted by the Cabinet Office on 28 August 2025.

SUBJECT MATTER

1. As set out in the Common Understanding which was agreed at the UK-EU Summit on 19 May 2025, the European Commission and the United Kingdom agreed to work towards a balanced youth experience scheme on terms to be mutually agreed. The scheme should facilitate the participation of young people from the European Union and the United Kingdom in various activities, such as work, studies, au-pairing, volunteering, or simply travelling, for a limited period of time. It should provide a dedicated visa path and ensure that the overall number of participants is acceptable to both sides.
2. Thereafter, the European Council issued Decision (EU) 2025/1286 on 20 June 2025 authorising the opening of negotiations with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for an agreement on a youth experience scheme.

SCRUTINY HISTORY

3. This will be the first time this issue will have been the subject of an Explanatory Memorandum.

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

4. The Minister for the Constitution and European Union Relations will have the primary responsibility for leading negotiations on an agreement to establish a youth experience scheme with the EU, working with other Ministers as appropriate.
5. The Secretary of State for the Home Department has responsibility for the implementation of a youth experience scheme.

INTEREST OF THE DEVOLVED GOVERNMENTS (DGs)

6. Mobility schemes are reserved matters as they concern immigration policies, but the Devolved Governments will be kept informed about progress towards agreeing a scheme. This EM was shared with the Devolved Governments.
7. The Devolved Governments are consulted regularly on the UK's approach to matters arising from the implementation and application of the TCA.

LEGAL AND PROCEDURAL ISSUES

8. **Legal Base:** Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 79(2), in conjunction with Article 218(3) and (4).
9. **Voting Procedure:** Under Article 79(2) the Council and EP acts under the ordinary legislative procedure. The Council adopted the decision under the Qualified Majority Voting procedure.
10. **Timetable for adoption and implementation:** The decision was adopted on 20 June 2025.

POLICY AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11. The UK and the EU agreed to work towards a balanced youth experience scheme on terms to be mutually agreed. The exact parameters will be subject to negotiation, but any scheme will need to be in the UK's national interests. We have agreed that any scheme will be capped, and we have been clear that it will need to be consistent with existing schemes, including being subject to a visa requirement, no access to benefits and no dependants.
12. Council Decision (EU) 2025/1286 envisages that such a scheme be established as a supplementing agreement to the Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the UK and the EU. It envisages that a specialised committee be established to address the matters covered by the supplementing agreement. Denmark is not subject to this Decision.
13. The detailed parameters of any UK-EU youth experience scheme are to be discussed. Any policy and legal implications will be subject to those further discussions.

CONSULTATION

14. No external consultation has been necessary.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

15. There are no financial implications arising from Council Decision (EU) 2025/1286 for the UK. The financial implications of any UK-EU youth experience scheme will depend on the detailed parameters agreed in the next phase of discussions.



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