UK/EU SUMMIT EXPLAINER: EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP BILL

OVERVIEW

The **European Partnership Bill** enables the agreements announced at the summit to be implemented in UK law. The Bill refers to these agreements as "**partnership treaties"** (the **sanitary and phytosanitary ("SPS")** and **emissions trading ("ETS")** agreements concluded between the UK and the EU). The Bill will also be capable of implementing further agreements with the EU like those set out in the Joint Statement, or with third countries where they correspond with treaties already agreed with the EU, such as EEA countries which also have SPS agreements with the EU. The Bill does not breach the manifesto red lines: no Freedom of Movement of People, no rejoining the Single Market and no rejoining the Customs Union.

In order to implement the agreements, the Bill:

- Provides powers to the government and devolved governments to implement our treaty obligations, referred to as **partnership treaty instruments,** in secondary legislation;
- The agreements do not include any direct jurisdiction of the CJEU - it will be for UK courts to determine the law that applies in the UK, as is currently the case. In targeted sectors where we have made a sovereign choice to dynamically align, UK courts will need to interpret those rules in line with relevant CJEU case law - but it will always be for UK courts to make the final decision.
- Enables the government to implement further agreements, if they have been designated following appropriate Parliamentary scrutiny. The Bill has the manifesto red lines written onto its face: no Free Movement of People, no single market and no Customs Union.

The Devolved Governments will be able to make secondary legislation, where appropriate, using powers given to them by the Bill within areas of devolved competence.

The SPS agreement will apply in Great Britain, and the ETS agreement will apply UK-wide. The benefits of the SPS agreement will be extended to Northern Ireland through its interplay with the Windsor Framework. The existing arrangements under the Windsor Framework, and the domestic arrangements provided for in the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018, remain unchanged.

BACKGROUND

- The Bill provides legal powers to implement two agreements reached at the November 2026 UK-EU Summit: the Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement and the Emissions Trading Systems (ETS) Linking Agreement. The Youth Experience Scheme will be implemented using existing legal powers.
- Europe is the UK's largest trading partner, buying 58% of UK food and drink exports, and the UK Government wants to make the cost of doing business with Europe cheaper and easier.
- The Bill will enable the elimination of post-Brexit trade friction, cut regulatory red tape, lower operating costs for British businesses, and exempt £6.5 billion worth of British industrial exports from new EU carbon border taxes.
- The SPS and ETS agreements involve **dynamic alignment** with the EU on areas that are in scope of the agreements. This means the UK will interpret and apply the same rules at the same time on an ongoing basis. Having a consistent set of rules provides the basis for controls to be lifted and UK goods to be able to flow into the EU market.

BILL DESIGN

Adoption and Implementation

The Bill contains two key powers to implement **partnership treaty instruments** to reflect the different types of EU law that will need to apply:

- An **implementation power for Ministers of the Crown or devolved governments or other appropriate authorities [e.g. regulators]** to change UK law to implement an EU law (e.g. a Directive) under our agreements. There is flexibility for the government to write these laws in a way that works best for the UK and meet its international obligations.

- An **adoption power** for Ministers of the Crown to apply "**qualifying partnership treaty instruments"** as written, in UK law. This is appropriate for certain kinds of EU law (e.g. Regulations and Decisions) where there is no flexibility in how these obligations apply in the UK.

Reconciliation and Interpretation

- The agreements do not include any direct jurisdiction of the CJEU - it will be for UK courts to determine the law that applies here, as is currently the case. In targeted sectors where we have made a sovereign choice to dynamically align, UK courts will need to interpret those rules in line with relevant CJEU case law. This ensures that common rules are interpreted and applied in the same way in the UK and the EU.

Suspension, Remedial Measures and Disputes

- The Bill follows the same approach for legislating to respond to any treaty disputes as is in place for the Trade and Cooperation Agreement. It provides a power in the event partnership treaties are not functioning as intended for the government to legislate to reflect the suspension, in full or in part, of an agreement, or implement remedial measures. It also means that the government will be able to implement the outcome of any dispute decided by the international arbitration panel.

Further partnership treaties

- The Bill also enables the government to implement further agreements, if they have been designated following appropriate Parliamentary scrutiny.