

Passage of the European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Bill through the UK Parliament

General

The European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Bill was introduced on 26 January 2017. The text of the Bill, of all amendments tabled, and of debates, can be found on the [Bill pages](#) of the UK Parliament website.

House of Commons

The Bill received its First Reading (a formal reading of the Bill title) on Thursday 26 January. Second Reading (a general debate on all aspects of the Bill) took place on 31 January and 1 February. After the debate, MPs voted by 498 to 114 for the Bill to progress to the next stage, and they also agreed the Programme Motion, which set out the timetable for further debate on the Bill.

The final three Stages of the Bill (Committee Stage, Consideration and Third Reading) took place on Monday 6, Tuesday 7, and Wednesday 8 February, all in the main House of Commons Chamber. MPs finally voted in favour of the Bill, without passing any amendments, by 494 to 122. The Bill was then passed to the House of Lords.

House of Lords

The Bill received a First Reading in the Lords (a purely formal stage) on Wednesday 8 February and later went through Second Reading unopposed. During the Committee stage of the Bill (which took place on 27 February and 1 March), the Lords voted on 1 March by 358 votes to 256 in favour of an amendment:

“() Within three months of exercising the power under section 1(1), Ministers of the Crown must bring forward proposals to ensure that citizens of another European Union or European Economic Area country and their family members, who are legally resident in the United Kingdom on the day on which this Act is passed, continue to be treated in the same way with regards to their EU derived-rights and, in the case of residency, their potential to acquire such rights in the future.”

During the Report stage of the Bill on 7 March, the Lords voted by 366 to 268 in favour of an amendment:

*“Parliamentary approval for the outcome of negotiations with the European Union
(1) The Prime Minister may not conclude an agreement with the European Union under Article 50(2) of the Treaty on European Union, on the terms of the United Kingdom’s withdrawal from the European Union, without the approval of both Houses of Parliament.
(2) Such approval shall be required before the European Parliament debates and votes on that agreement.
(3) The prior approval of both Houses of Parliament shall also be required in relation to an agreement on the future relationship of the United Kingdom with the European Union.*

(4) The prior approval of both Houses of Parliament shall also be required in relation to any decision by the Prime Minister that the United Kingdom shall leave the European Union without an agreement as to the applicable terms.”

The Third Reading of the Bill also took place on 7 March. A fatal amendment declining to pass the Bill was defeated by 340 votes to 95. Accordingly, the Bill was passed by the House of Lords, as amended.

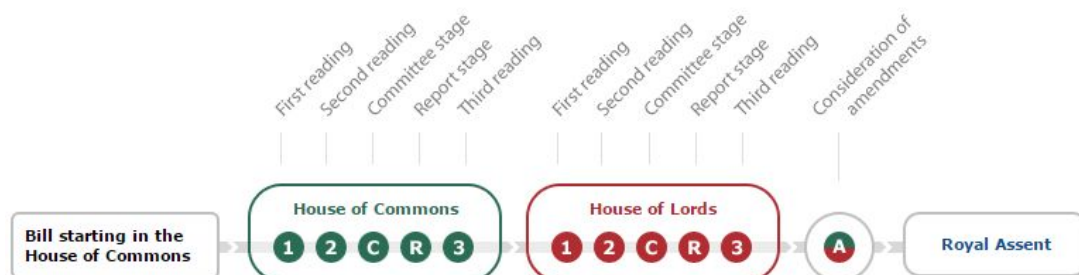
House of Commons consideration of Lords amendments, and ‘ping-pong’

On Thursday 9 March, the Leader of the House of Commons will announce the [business](#) for the forthcoming ten days. It is expected that this Statement (expected around 13.00 (CET)) will set out the date that the House of Commons will consider the Lords Amendments to the Bill.

Normally, the House of Commons would have one hour to consider the Lords Amendments. MPs can decide to either accept the two amendments outright, accept them with changes, reject them outright, or reject them with changes. Only the first of these four options would see the Bill go directly to Her Majesty for Royal Assent. Any others mean that the Bill goes back to the House of Lords for another round of ‘ping pong’. It is understood that the UK Government will oppose the two Lords’ amendments, but it is unclear if the Government has enough support from backbench MPs. The duration of ping-pong between the two Houses is not limited in any way.

The House of Commons has a page dedicated to information on the Bill at:

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/europeanunionnotificationofwithdrawal.html>



If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact the UK Parliament Office in Brussels:

House of Commons

Alison Groves +32 (0)2 2843703

alison.groves@natparl.ep.europa.eu

Fraser McIntosh +32 (0)2 2844656

fraser.mcintosh@natparl.ep.europa.eu

House of Lords

Paul Dowling +32 (0)2 2831496

paul.dowling@natparl.ep.europa.eu