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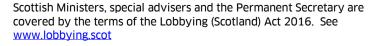
Dear Convener

SECOND BI-ANNUAL SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT REUL ACT UPDATE

Further to the confirmation of the Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2024-25 I attach the second Scottish Government update on the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 ("REUL Act"), covering the reporting period from 23 December 2023 to 23 June 2024.

This update follows the publication on 23 July 2024 of the second UK Government statutory report under section 17 of the REUL Act. Given the risks the Act continues to pose to the safeguards and standards Scotland benefitted from as part of the European Union, it is welcome that the UK Government's report does not reiterate previous UK Ministers' intention to revoke or reform half of all such law.

As the First Minister made clear in his initial meeting with the Prime Minister, we are committed to an approach of finding consensus and forging constructive relationships between our two Governments, with joint working and cooperation on a voluntary basis, in a way that respects devolved decision-making. I was also pleased to note that, in his letter to the Committee of 19 August 2024, the new Minister for the Constitution and EU Relations said, "My approach to UK-EU relations will always respect the role of devolved governments and legislatures." I am therefore hopeful that UK Ministers' proposals for the future treatment of assimilated law will respect devolution and, as part of that, the Scottish Government's alignment policy.









Nonetheless, UK Ministers continue to have powers to deregulate devolved law and diverge from EU standards without consent and this is clearly unacceptable to the Scottish Government. We will continue to keep the Scottish Parliament appraised on developments through this update series, and other appropriate means.

Yours sincerely,

ANGUS ROBERTSON

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SECOND BI-ANNUAL SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT REUL ACT UPDATE (SEPTEMBER 2024)

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1. Introduction

This is the second Scottish Government update in a bi-annual series of updates that follow the bi-annual UK Government reports published each January and July in 2024, 2025 and 2026. The Scottish Government has agreed with the Scottish Parliament's Constitution, External Affairs and Culture that Scottish updates should be sent each February and September of these years(1).

The second UK Government report on the REUL Act was published on 23 July 2023(2). On 22 March 2024 the Welsh Government published its first bi-annual update on the REUL Act(3) and the second update is expected to be published around the time of this Scottish update. The Scottish and Welsh updates adopt the same reporting periods as the respective UK reports, which for this second update is January to June 2024.

Assimilated law is the new name for the law that was retained from the period of the UK's membership of the European Union ("EU"). Assimilated law gives a 'snapshot' of EU law as it previously applied (with some exceptions, like free movement rights) before the UK ceased to be subject to EU law. Assimilated law is classed as domestic law and can be changed or updated like other devolved laws. In this update, the terminology of "assimilated law" is used consistently in place of "retained EU law" in line with the now prevailing legal position.

The REUL Act was enacted under the previous UK Government without the legislative consent of the Scottish Parliament. The REUL Act gives UK Ministers powers to remove or change laws in devolved areas with no requirement to obtain the consent of the Scottish Ministers or the Scottish Parliament. It is, however, open to UK Ministers to limit use of their powers to amend devolved law and to demonstrate respect for the Statutory Instrument Protocol with the Scottish Parliament(4); the UK Government's commitment to devolution and to strengthening its work with the Devolved Governments is worth noting in this regard(5).

https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-kings-speech-2024 Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot







The Scottish Government maintains information about the REUL Act on this webpage: https://www.gov.scot/policies/europe/retained-eu-law/.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/retained-eu-law-reul-parliamentary-report.

⁽³⁾ https://www.gov.wales/first-bi-annual-welsh-government-retained-eu-law-reul-act-update-july-2023december-2023-html

https://www.parliament.scot/-/media/files/committees/statutory-instrument-protocol.pdf

2. Scottish Government policy for future treatment of devolved assimilated law

In October 2024 the Scottish Government will lay in draft the Annual Report under the UK Withdrawal from the European Union (Continuity) (Scotland) Act 2021 ("Continuity Act") for the reporting period 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024. The draft Continuity Act report will report on the Government's ongoing commitment to continue to seek alignment with the EU where appropriate – that means where it is possible and meaningful to do so.

In light of Scottish Ministers' continued commitment to the alignment policy. Scottish Government policy remains that there is no intention to revoke or reform assimilated law simply because it is the law that was retained from the period of the UK's membership of the EU.

As mentioned in the first REUL Act update, the Scottish Government recognises that there may be particular cases for reforming particular assimilated law, and in the medium to longer term devolved assimilated law will need to be reformed and updated so that there is alignment with new EU standards. The Continuity Act is one means by which the Scottish Government can maintain alignment with new EU law, to the extent devolved competence allows.

It remains the position that the Scottish Government considers that any case for reforming devolved assimilated law is best progressed through the ordinary Scottish Parliament legislative processes. But the Government also recognises that UK Parliament legislative vehicles may from time to time be acceptable, and compatible with the alignment policy, in particular instances where proposals are consented to by the Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament has due time for policy consideration and scrutiny. The Scottish Government continues to recognise the value of Common Frameworks as intergovernmental mechanisms for collaboration and co-operation on regulatory policy in a devolved UK, in a manner that respects devolution.

The Scottish Government continues to give case-by-case consideration to individual UK Government SI proposals affecting assimilated law, whether proposed to be made under the REUL Act or under other enabling powers. This continues to be handled under the Statutory Instrument Protocol mentioned and experience continues to indicate these pre-REUL Act arrangements are workable for handling REUL Act proposals. The low number of UK Statutory Instrument ("SI") proposals consented to – as set out in following Section 3 of this update - demonstrates that the Scottish Government will not support any UK REUL Act proposals that impair standards or protections.

The Scottish Government notes that UK Ministers are legally required under section 17 of the REUL Act to maintain a "dashboard" of individual measures comprising assimilated law(6). For Scotland, the dashboard is intended to include assimilated law in the form of UK SIs for Scotland, irrespective of whether provision within them is reserved or devolved, but the dashboard will not include assimilated law in the form of SSIs.

Scottish Government policy continues to be that preparing a list of Scottish devolved assimilated law would not be useful given there is no ideological revocation or reform agenda, and in any event such work would be a distraction from the need to focus on the First Minister's identified priorities including eradicating child poverty and building prosperity;

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/retained-eu-law-dashboard Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot







working with the UK Government in this regard where possible. Perhaps demonstrating the significant challenge of attempting to reliably list the volume of instruments of assimilated law, the Scottish Government notes that the total number of instruments recorded on the July 2024 dashboard has fallen from 6,757 to 6,735 (the original June 2022 dashboard figure having been 2,417).

3. REUL Act secondary legislation in reporting period

This Section sets out relevant instruments for the reporting period ending June 2024. Cumulative tables of instruments are set out in the Annex.

No REUL Act Scottish Statutory Instruments ("SSIs") were made in the reporting period.

Update on certain REUL Act UK SIs notified in the previous (first) reporting period

The first report highlighted that SI (iii) (as listed in the Annex) did not preserve devolved air pollution instruments as formally requested by the Scottish Government and thus they were revoked at the end of 2023 by virtue of schedule 1 of the REUL Act. The Scottish Government sought to work with the previous UK Government to develop an agreed non-legislative replacement for the former National Air Pollution Control Programme. The position reached with the former UK administration was set out in a letter to the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee on 26 June 2024(7). Work continues with the new administration with the aim of resolving the issues set out in the letter.

SI (vi) (also as listed in the Annex) has not yet been laid in draft. The final position for this SI will be confirmed by means of "Annex H letter" sent to the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee under the Statutory Instrument Protocol when the position of the new UK Government has been settled for the SI proposal.

REUL Act SIs notified in the relevant (second) reporting period

SI in order notified	Detail
(ix) Notification on the Official Controls (Fees and Charges) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 (sent 19 January 2024) The Official Controls (Fees and Charges) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 (SI 2024/547) (made 22 April 2024, having been laid in draft 26 February 2024)	Amended the Official Controls Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2017/625) to enable fees and charges for official controls to reflect changes to the sanitary and phytosanitary ("SPS") border official controls regime as set out in the Border Target Operating Model ("BTOM") as published by the UK Government in August 2023(8).

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-border-target-operating-model-august-2023
Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are
covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See
www.lobbying.scot







^{(7) &}lt;a href="https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/committees/current-and-previous-committees/session-6-net-zero-energy-and-transport-committee/correspondence/2024/retained-eu-law-revocation-and-reform-act-2023-national-air-pollution-control-programme-replacement">https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/committees/current-and-previous-committees/session-6-net-zero-energy-and-transport-committees/correspondence/2024/retained-eu-law-revocation-and-reform-act-2023-national-air-pollution-control-programme-replacement

(x) Notification to RAI Committee on the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 (Revocation) Regulations 2024;

Notification to NZET Committee on the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 (Revocation) Regulations 2024 (both sent 30 January 2024)

The Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 (Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) (Revocation) Regulations 2024 (SI 2024/513) (made 15 April 2024, having been initially laid under Westminster proposed negative (sift) procedure 13 March 2024)

Revoked 73 obsolete instruments in the policy areas of marine, agriculture and the environment.

The Scottish Government considers an instrument to be obsolete if it can be determined with confidence that it is redundant in Scotland and, additionally, that there will be no adverse effect if it is revoked.

(xi) Notification on the Health Claims (Revocation) Regulations 2024 | Scottish Parliament Website (sent 19 March 2024)

SI was initially laid under Westminster proposed negative (sift) procedure 19 March 2024 but has not vet been finally laid Would revoke 60 obsolete instruments of assimilated direct legislation concerning the authorisation of the use of, or refusal to authorise the use of, health claims in respect of food.

The instruments proposed to be revoked have no ongoing legal purpose, as the health claims which have been authorised have already taken effect in law and the health claims rejected have no effect in law.

(xii) Notification on the Official Controls (Amendment) Regulations 2024 (sent 20 May 2024)

SI has not yet been laid

This SI's principal aim is to protect biosecurity and support trade between Great Britain and third countries by ensuring that Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) controls can be applied to goods entering GB, in response to changing levels of risk to plant, animal and public health through further statutory instruments.

Forming part of the UK Government's BTOM implementation, the SI focusses on making amendments to official controls on animals and goods entering GB in Chapter 5 of Title 2 of the Official Controls Regulation and other direct assimilated law governing the import conditions for animals and animal products entering GB.







All listed SIs are referenced in the second UK report, except SI (xii) which as mentioned in the table has not yet been laid(9). SIs (x) and (xi) were referenced in the first UK report but none of the other potential forthcoming reforms listed there led to SI notifications in the second reporting period. Common Frameworks were applicable to all of the SIs notified in the second reporting period as described in the respective notification documents.

With regards to the section of the second UK report headed "Preservation of Section 4" Rights", the Scottish Government remains of the view that confusion may be caused since the relevant rights were revoked by section 2 of the REUL Act, as part of a package of changes to the status of EU law that took effect on 1 January 2024 as follows:

- the sunset of certain directly effective rights (section 2 of the REUL Act);
- the abolition (inversion) of the supremacy of EU law (section 3 of the REUL Act); and
- the abolition of the general principles of EU law (section 4 of the REUL Act).

The Scottish Government can confirm that none of the SIs notified in the second reporting period were concerned with these changes to the status of EU law.

The Scottish Government continues to work with the UK Government and Devolved Governments to ensure that the impacts of the package of changes mentioned is kept under review. The Scottish Government welcomes that the second UK report commits to redoubling efforts to ensure that no issues have been presented for reserved employment law, where the Scottish Government lacks the legal power to ameliorate any issues should they emerge.

4. Forward look on Scottish Government assimilated law reform proposals

The Scottish Government notes that, reflecting the position of a newly constituted administration, the second UK report gives relatively little detail as to new UK Ministers' future plans to reform assimilated law. The Scottish Government will carefully consider UK Government proposals when they are more firmed up. Scottish Government Directorates and Agencies continue to engage with UK Government Departments in this regard, to establish which proposals will engage devolved competence and, in such instances, to what extent they are acceptable in policy terms to the Scottish Government. The Scottish Government will continue to approach this task on a case-by-case basis under the overarching alignment policy.

In terms of proposals for SSIs, the Scottish Government has a strong policy presumption against using REUL Act powers to alter policy by SSI. Whilst the Act was designed by previous UK Ministers to remove or reduce regulatory standards, the Scottish Ministers will not use powers conferred on them for that purpose. Against that background, the first Scottish update communicated that the Scottish Government would consider making further technical, consequential amendments to those made by SSI (i) in the Annex of cumulative instruments. Having carried out further checks, informed by the UK Government's approach to SIs (iv) and (viii) in the Annex and the Welsh Government's approach to the Retained EU

The SIs referenced in the second UK report are listed together with other REUL Act SIs at https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/reul-revocation-and-reform-act-2023-statutory-instruments. Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot







Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 (Consequential Amendments) (Wales) Regulations 2023 (WSI 2023/1332), the Scottish Government can confirm that no further cross-portfolio SSI requires to be made. It is possible that a small number of portfolio-specific SSIs, potentially to be laid in the third reporting period, will make consequential provision similar to that in the previous instruments mentioned. Any such SSIs will be reported on in future updates.

More generally, it continues to be the position that the Scottish Government has no Revocation and Reform Programme and the overarching alignment policy continues to apply to all SSIs that engage assimilated law, irrespective of their enabling power. The Scottish Government will continue, through the Continuity Act statutory reporting process, to give indications as to where alignment with new EU law is under consideration, which could result in substantive reforms to assimilated law in future reporting periods.

At the point of sending this second update, there are no live consultation processes with a particular focus on assimilated law reform. The Scottish Government welcomes stakeholder views given on consultation exercises previously conducted, and on consultation exercises to be initiated in future.

In terms of primary legislation, on 18 June 2024 the Scottish Parliament unanimously passed the Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Act 2024(10) which among other things amends and extends existing provisions in the Agriculture (Retained EU Law and Data) (Scotland) Act 2020. This will enable the Scottish Ministers to adjust the devolved assimilated law relating to the EU Common Agricultural Policy, so that current payment rules and schemes can continue as needed, and so that the transition to a new payment framework can be facilitated as set out in the Scottish Government Agricultural Reform Route Map¹¹.

The Programme for Government 2024-25 confirms a Year 4 Natural Environment Bill that, amongst other things, will take forward consultation proposals for powers to update environmental impact assessment and habitats legislation to support delivery of the Scottish Government's net zero and biodiversity goals(12). A full public consultation on this issue was held between 18 March and 13 May 2024(13), and a consultation analysis report will be published in the autumn. These proposals will undergo full parliamentary scrutiny when the Bill is introduced.

5. Next Report

The Scottish Government proposes to send the third REUL Act update in February 2025 in respect of instruments to December 2024.







https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2024/11/enacted

⁽¹¹⁾ https://www.ruralpayments.org/topics/agricultural-reform-programme/arp-route-map/

⁽¹²⁾ https://www.gov.scot/collections/programme-for-government/

https://consult.gov.scot/environment/eia-and-hra-consultation/

Annex: Cumulative tables of instruments

Cumulative list of REUL Act SSIs made

SSI in order made	Detail
(i) The Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 (Consequential Amendments) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 (SSI 2023/374) (made 7 December 2023, having been laid in draft 18 October 2023)	Replaced references to retained EU law terminology with assimilated law terminology in the devolved statute book, and updated one "EU obligation" reference accordingly.
(ii) The Importation of Animals and Related Products (Miscellaneous Amendment and Revocation) (Scotland) Order 2023 (SSI 2023/391) (made 21 December 2023) This SSI was not made under the REUL Act but was made with the primary purpose of directly handling REUL Act changes that took effect on 1 January 2024. Any further such instruments will be reported on in future updates as if REUL Act SSIs.	Amended certain orders made or having effect under the Animal Health Act 1981 which prohibit the importation of animals and animal-related products except under the authority of a licence, in order to clarify and restate the pre-2024 application of these orders as they were affected by the abolition (inversion) of supremacy and other REUL Act changes; and made associated revocations.

Cumulative list of REUL Act UK SIs notified

SI in order notified	Detail
(i) Notification on the Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases (Amendment) Regulations 2023 Scottish Parliament Website (sent 31 August 2023)	Corrected a technical error in dates in Regulation 517/2014 which required to be corrected by 31 October 2023.
The Fluorinated Greenhouse Gases (Amendment) Regulations 2023 (SI 2023/1161) (made 30 October 2023, having been laid in draft on 4 September 2023)	
(ii) Notification on the Plant Protection Products (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2023 (revised version sent 26 September 2023, original notification date having been 4 September 2023)	Revoked and replaced Article 52 of Regulation 1107/2009 in relation to parallel trade permits and modified domestic regulations to extend the maximum period during which treated seeds not authorised for use in GB, but authorised in another EU
The Plant Protection Products (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2023 (SSI 2023/1321) (made 6 December 2023, having been laid in draft 25 October 2023)	or EEA state immediately before IP completion day, may be placed on the marked from 1 January 2023 to 1 July 2027.







(iii) Notification on the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 (Revocation and Sunset Disapplication) Regulations 2023 (sent 5 September 2023)

The Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 (Revocation and Sunset Disapplication) Regulations 2023 (SI 2023/1143) (made 25 October 2023, having been laid in draft 4 September 2023)

Only the preservation ("sunset disapplication") element engaged devolved competence. Preserved devolved biocidal products instruments but did not preserve devolved air pollution instruments as formally requested by the Scottish Government. The latter instruments were therefore revoked ("sunset") at the end of 2023 by virtue of schedule 1 of the REUL Act.

(iv) Notification on the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act (Consequential Amendment) Regulations 2023 (sent 7 September 2023)

The Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 (Consequential Amendment) Regulations 2023 (SI 2023/1424) (made 19 December 2023)

Replaced references to retained EU law terminology with assimilated law terminology in Acts of the UK Parliament. Also made consequential amendments to UK Acts to reflect the repeal by the REUL Act of section 4 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 and the abolition the general principles of EU law.

(v) Notification on the Public Service Obligations in Transport Regulations 2023 (sent 8 September 2023)

The Public Service Obligations in Transport Regulations 2023 (SI 2023/1369) (made 11 December 2023, having been laid in draft 16 October 2023)

Revoked and replaced Regulation 1370/2007 on public passenger transport services by rail and by road, reinstating powers to make direct awards of UK rail PSO contracts which were due to expire on 25 December 2023 under a sunset provision in the Regulation.

(vi) Notification on the Heavy Goods Vehicles (Charging for the Use of Certain Infrastructure on the Trans-European Road Network) (Revocation and Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2023 (sent 18 October 2023)

SI has not yet been laid in draft.

Would revoke certain regulations and make minor amendments in consequence. The Regulations would have no immediate practical impact given that there are no devolved tolls or charges currently in place in Scotland. Following EU exit, the UK is no longer part of the trans-European road network.

(vii) Notification on the Civil Jurisdiction and **Judgments Saving Provision Regulations** 2023 (sent 9 November 2023)

The Civil Jurisdiction and Judgments (Saving Provision) Regulations 2023 (SI 2023/1395) (made 14 December 2023)

Re-saved saving provision made at EU Exit to ensure that the 2007 Lugano Convention on jurisdiction and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters. a private international law agreement, can continue to apply to certain legacy cases.







(viii) Notification on the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 (Consequential Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2023 (sent 12 December 2023)

The Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 (Consequential Provision) Regulations 2024 (SI 2024/80) (made 23 January 2024, laid 24 January 2024)

Amended or revoked UK SIs to reflect the repeal by the REUL Act of section 4 of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018, and replaced references to retained EU law terminology with assimilated law terminology in some of the SIs being amended.

(ix) Notification on the Official Controls (Fees and Charges) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 (sent 19 January 2024)

The Official Controls (Fees and Charges) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 (SI 2024/547) (made 22 April 2024, having been laid in draft 26 February 2024)

Amended the Official Controls Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2017/625) to enable fees and charges for official controls to reflect changes to the sanitary and phytosanitary ("SPS") border official controls regime as set out in the Border Target Operating Model ("BTOM") as published by the UK Government in August 2023.

(x) Notification to RAI Committee on the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 (Revocation) Regulations 2024;

Revoked 73 obsolete instruments in the policy areas of marine, agriculture and the environment.

Notification to NZET Committee on the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 (Revocation) Regulations 2024 (both sent 30 January 2024)

The Scottish Government considers an instrument to be obsolete if it can be determined with confidence that it is redundant in Scotland and, additionally, that there will be no adverse effect if it is revoked.

The Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 (Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) (Revocation) Regulations 2024 (SI 2024/513) (made 15 April 2024, having been initially laid under Westminster proposed negative (sift) procedure 13 March 2024)

(xi) Notification on the Health Claims (Revocation) Regulations 2024 | Scottish Parliament Website (sent 19 March 2024)

SI was initially laid under Westminster proposed negative (sift) procedure 19 March 2024 but has not yet been finally laid Would revoke 60 obsolete instruments of assimilated direct legislation concerning the authorisation of the use of, or refusal to authorise the use of, health claims in respect of food.

The instruments proposed to be revoked have no ongoing legal purpose, as the health claims which have been authorised have already taken effect in law and the health claims rejected have no effect in law.







(xii) Notification on the Official Controls (Amendment) Regulations 2024 (sent 20 May 2024)

SI has not yet been laid

This SI's principal aim is to protect biosecurity and support trade between Great Britain and third countries by ensuring that Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) controls can be applied to goods entering GB, in response to changing levels of risk to plant, animal and public health through further statutory instruments.

Forming part of the UK Government's BTOM implementation, the SI focusses on making amendments to official controls on animals and goods entering GB in Chapter 5 of Title 2 of the Official Controls Regulation and other direct assimilated law governing the import conditions for animals and animal products entering GB.

