

Brexit Update

In the know

Theresa May gave a speech recently which set out 12 objectives as part of the plan on the strategy for leaving the European Union. Not long after, the Supreme Court gave its ruling on how May can progress with the Brexit process. Here, we look at the most important objectives for employers.

Prime Minister's Speech

The Prime Minister's speech on the plans for Brexit was highly anticipated by businesses and sectors wanting clarity on the upcoming Brexit negotiations. The speech set out the government's current plans on the strategy for leaving the European Union (EU) with twelve objectives for the upcoming negotiations

- **Objective 1:** Free Trade with the EU – To remain within the single market, Britain would have to accept all four fundamental freedoms including freedom of movement and this was something that was rejected by referendum voters. Instead a new trade agreement would ensure British companies would have the maximum freedom to trade with, and operate in, EU markets and EU companies will be able to do the same in Britain.
- **Objective 2:** Control of Immigration – The speech clarified that the government will control the number of people who come to Britain from Europe. Although immigration is important to fill skills shortages and deliver important public services, May accepted that it had created negatives within the economy. The Home Office is currently working on the exact structure and rules which will achieve maximum control of immigration.

- **Objective 3:** Enhancing Rights of Workers – The Prime Minister reiterated that the Great Repeal Bill will be used to immediately entrench EU law in domestic law at the point of exit. This will ensure that workers' rights contained in EU legislation such as maternity and consultation rights, will be fully protected and maintained and built on. May repeated the government's commitment of ensuring legal protection for workers is changing with the labour market and that employees will be heard on boards of public companies.

Supreme Court Ruling

In December 2016, the Supreme Court heard the Government's appeal to the earlier finding that Theresa May cannot trigger Article 50 without the consent of Parliament. The Court announced on 24 January 2017 that it agrees with the earlier finding which now places another procedural hurdle of a parliamentary vote to overcome before the process can begin. Theoretically, this step provides the opportunity for MPs to vote against the triggering of Article 50 and hinder the exit. However this is not likely and the Prime Minister confirmed she is still on course to trigger Article 50 by the end of March 2017 meaning that the exit is set to take place by the end of March 2019.

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