

UK joins UN convention in view of Brexit 'no deal'

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The UK is signing up to the UN convention on road traffic to prepare for the possibility of exiting the EU without a trade deal. A 'no deal' situation could result in a ban of all UK drivers and vehicles in Member States, because UK-issue driving licences will no longer be valid there. Time-limits for enabling legislation and uncertainty surrounding trade and other EU agreements demonstrate an increasing amount of pressure on the UK to reach a deal with the EU. Andrew Hood, barrister and senior director specialising in international trade at Dechert LLP, places the main responsibility over reaching a deal with the UK, as the party with the impending exit date.

In January 2018, the European Commission announced that UK driving licences will no longer be recognised by the Member States once the UK leaves the EU. In a pre-emptive step to avoid UK drivers, hauliers and traders being denied road access to Member States, the UK is joining the UN convention.

The convention requires all international-travelling trailers to be registered and, since UK licences will not be recognised by the EU after Brexit, vehicles will need to have international driving permits (IDPs) to travel in Member States. The UK has passed the Haulage Permits and Trailer Registration Bill to prepare to implement systems to organise trailer registration and the issuing of IDPs.

Time pressure

Andrew Hood explains that the UK's move to join the convention is one example of the types of agreements which need to be settled to avoid critical uncertainty after Brexit:

'The 1968 Convention is of course important. The big question, however, is actually how many other similar arrangements exist in other areas? There are hundreds of agreements that apply to the UK because of its membership of the EU where arrangements will have to be found with the other parties to the agreement to ensure there is no cliff edge when the UK leaves the EU in March 2019.'

Negotiation will be key to avoiding a 'cliff edge' situation in the UK, such as an influx of applications for a limited number of EU permits, which could have a big impact on the UK commercial and freight industries.

The 9 March 2019 deadline leaves little over a year to agree and pass enabling legislation to secure important UK arrangements, therefore Hood places the responsibility with the UK, saying 'it is not a question of whether the UK and the EU reach agreement, it is the UK that must reach agreement with the other state parties to these international agreements.'

Source: [Convention: 1968 Vienna convention on road traffic](#)

Interviewed by Samantha Gilbert.

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