

# International Agreements

Agreements considered on 7 and 14  
March 2022

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## 1. Background

1. The Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee is responsible for the scrutiny of non-trade international agreements in the Sixth Senedd.
2. International agreements signed by the UK Government can cover matters within devolved competence or matters which have important policy implications for Wales.
3. The Committee will consider the impact on Wales of international agreements laid in the UK Parliament under the process established by the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 (CRaG Act 2010). It provides an initial 21 day scrutiny period.
4. Our consideration of an international agreement takes into account:
  - whether it engages the Senedd's competence; and/or
  - whether there are potential policy implications for Wales.
5. On 7 and 14 March 2022 we considered three international agreements that have recently been laid in the UK Parliament.<sup>1</sup>
6. The agreements we considered were:
  - UK/Serbia: Readmission of Persons Residing without Authorisation;
  - Convention on the International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation (IOMAN); and
  - Sixth Protocol to the Convention on the Construction and Operation of a Very High Neutron Flux Reactor.
7. We agreed to take further action on two of the agreements and to note the third for information only. Further details on each of the agreements are set out below.

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<sup>1</sup> Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, 7 March 2022; Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee, 14 March 2022.

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## 2. Agreements requiring further action

### **Convention on the International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation (IOMAN)**

**8.** This international agreement was laid in the UK Parliament on 1 March 2022. Its scrutiny deadline, as required by the Crag Act 2010, is 26 April 2022. We considered the agreement at our meeting on 14 March.

**9.** The purpose of the agreement is to transition the former International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities, a non-governmental body, to become a new intergovernmental organisation, the International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation (IOMAN). The role of IOMAN is to ensure that seafarers are provided with effective and harmonised marine aids to navigation to assist in the safe navigation of shipping.

**10.** The agreement relates to the establishment of an international organisation. International relations is a reserved matter, as provided by paragraph 10 of Schedule 7A to the *Government of Wales Act 2006* (GoWA 2006). Coastguard services and maritime search and rescue are also reserved under Schedule 7A. The [Explanatory Memorandum](#) states that the devolved governments were consulted on the drafting of the Convention and are content, despite it relating to matters which are fully reserved.

**11.** We noted the agreement and agreed to request from the Welsh Government:

- an outline of the consultation process used for this agreement;
- confirmation of whether it is satisfied that its views were adequately taken into account; and
- confirmation that it is content with the agreement.

### **Sixth Protocol to the Convention on the Construction and Operation of a Very High Neutron Flux Reactor (UK-France-Germany)**

**12.** This international agreement was laid in the UK Parliament on 1 March 2022. Its scrutiny deadline, as required by the Crag Act 2010, is 26 April 2022. We considered the agreement at our meeting on 14 March.

**13.** The purpose of this agreement is to extend existing arrangements between the UK, France and Germany in running the Institut Laue–Langevin (ILL), a world-leading research facility for scientific research using neutrons, situated in Grenoble, France, by 10 years from 2024 to 2033.

The ILL's research supports advancements in materials science, low-carbon energy technologies, the digital economy and healthcare treatments.

**14.** The Explanatory Memorandum does not include information on devolution. UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is the shareholder in ILL on behalf of the UK. UKRI and Research Councils within the meaning of the *Science and Technology Act 1965* are reserved as provided by paragraph 87 of Schedule 7A to GoWA 2006. The funding of scientific research in so far as it relates to UKRI and those Councils is also reserved.

**15.** In November 2021, the Welsh Government published five priorities for research, development and innovation, including to:

- ensure Wales has a fair share of available research, development and innovation funding;
- secure funding levels at least equivalent to those received historically, via the EU; and
- develop a new cross-Welsh Government innovation strategy, with a particular focus on driving impact.

**16.** The Explanatory Memorandum states that an independent review carried out in 2017 made recommendations for ensuring that researchers could continue to access neutron sources in support of the UK's science and technology needs. An update conducted in 2020 confirmed these findings and reported that continued UK access to ILL had become "more important" since the previous review in order to maintain the capacity for the UK neutron user community.

**17.** We noted the agreement and agreed to write to the Welsh Government to clarify whether it was consulted in the development of this agreement; and its assessment of the impact, if any, on Wales's research, development and innovation sectors.

### 3. Agreements noted for information

#### **UK/Serbia: Readmission of Persons Residing without Authorisation**

**18.** This international agreement was laid in the UK Parliament on 24 February 2022. Its scrutiny deadline, as required by the CRaG Act 2010, is 30 March 2022. We considered the agreement at our meeting on 7 March.

**19.** The purpose of the agreement is to provide an agreed mechanism for the return of individuals in violation of immigration laws, policies and procedures. It is a reciprocal agreement and applies to Serbian/British citizens, persons with right of abode in Serbia/UK as well as third-party nationals, who have a verified connection to Serbia/UK. The agreement is a result of the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

**20.** The agreement's Explanatory Memorandum does not include a section on devolution, which is ordinarily included in explanatory memoranda to international agreements. However, information relating to devolution is included elsewhere. This states that as the agreement relates to immigration policy, which is not a devolved issue, the devolved governments were not consulted during its negotiation.

**21.** We noted the agreement for information and that information related to devolution is not included in a specific section on devolution, although it is included elsewhere in a section on consultation.