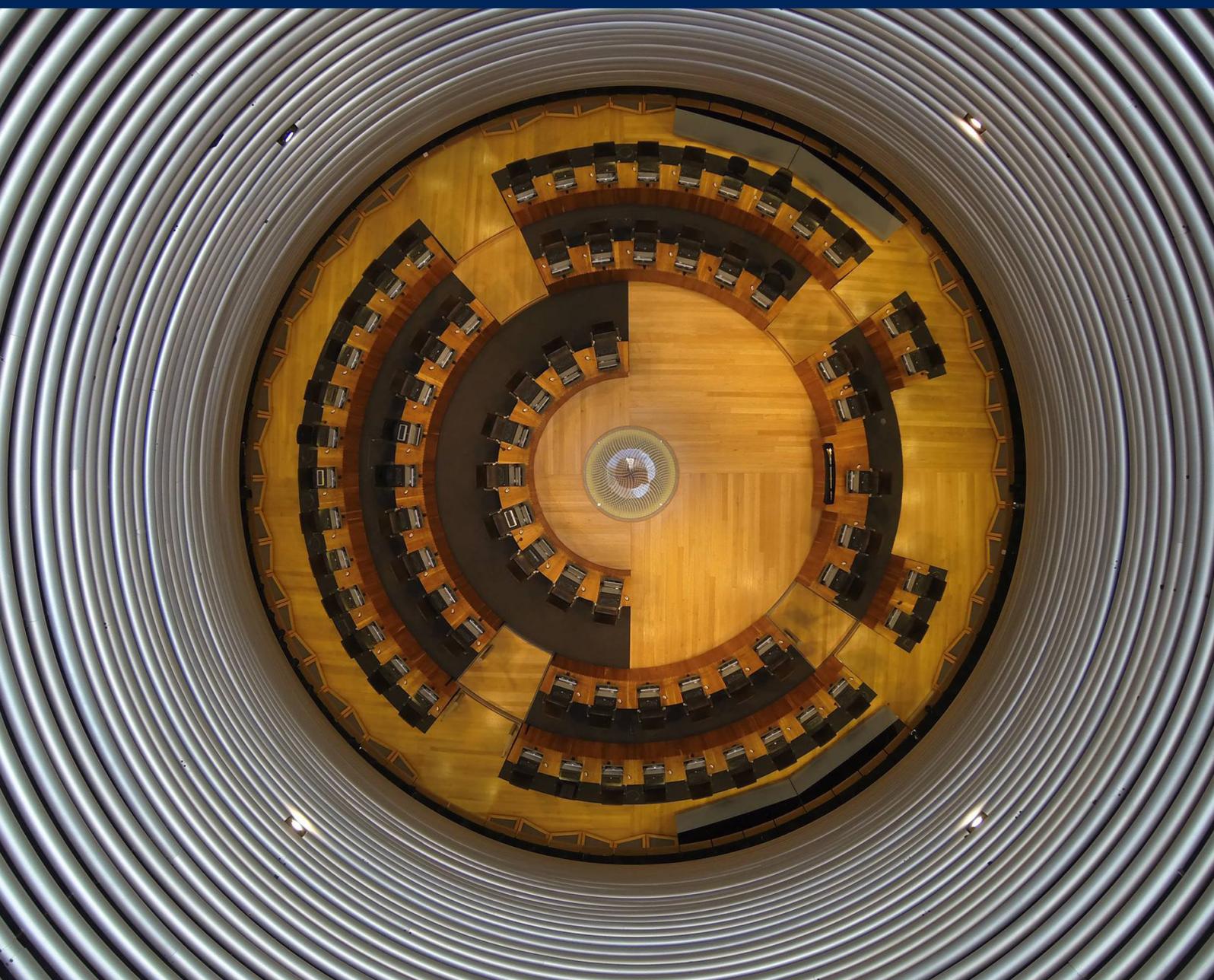


Negotiations on the UK's withdrawal from the EU

Brexit Monitoring Report

08 October 2019



The Assembly and

BREXIT

The National Assembly for Wales is the democratically elected body that represents the interests of Wales and its people, makes laws for Wales, agrees Welsh taxes and holds the Welsh Government to account.

National Assembly for Wales
Senedd Research

Negotiations on the UK's withdrawal from the EU

Brexit Monitoring Report

08 October 2019

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The Assembly and

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Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
Summary of developments	1
2. Developments in Westminster	3
Operation Yellowhammer	3
Supreme Court decision.....	3
Resumption of UK Parliament	4
UK Parliament: Second prorogation	5
Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Exiting the EU: Evidence to the Assembly	5
Secretary of State for Wales: Brexit will make the Union stronger	6
UK Government: replacement backstop proposals	6
3. Developments in Brussels	8
Prime Minister meets with EU leadership	8
European Parliament supports a further Article 50 extension.....	8

4. Developments in Wales 10

Joint Ministerial Committee.....	10
No deal preparations.....	10
Welsh Government and the Supreme Court ruling.....	13
First Minister: latest statements	13
Counsel General and Brexit Minister: latest statements.....	15
Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language.....	16

1. Introduction

This report provides an update on developments relating to the Article 50 Negotiations on the UK's withdrawal from the EU since 18 September 2019.

This paper provides:

- A headline summary of the latest developments in the negotiations and related UK legislation;
- A more detailed analysis of the key developments at Westminster and Brussels;
- Analysis of the Welsh Government and National Assembly for Wales' response to the latest developments; and
- An analysis of issues of interest to the External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee (the Committee).

Summary of developments

The UK Government published its Operation Yellowhammer (no deal) papers following a motion voted on by MPs directing it to do so. Among other risks, the document details 'worst case assumptions', including a disruption of food and medicine supplies, transport, law enforcement data, financial services, localised energy and water supplies, and UK-EU personal data flow. It identifies the potential for civil unrest and concurrent risks associated with autumn and winter (such as severe weather, flooding and flu) stretching resources.

The UK Supreme Court ruled on 17 September that the Prime Minister's proroguing of the UK Parliament was unlawful because it had the effect of 'frustrating or preventing the ability of Parliament to carry out its constitutional functions without reasonable justification.' Parliament resumed on 25 September, where the Prime Minister stated that the Court had been 'wrong' in its ruling.

The Prime Minister announced on 2 October that he will request that Parliament be prorogued for a second time between 8 – 14 October ahead of the Queen's Speech on 14 October.

The UK Government published its proposals to replace the Irish backstop on 2 October. The documents confirm that the UK Government intends to pursue a future relationship with the EU via a Free Trade Agreement. The proposals would establish separate arrangements for Northern Ireland from the rest of the UK, including a separate regulatory system and customs checks.

The European Parliament passed a resolution reaffirming its support to grant a third extension of Article 50 to the UK, should it be requested.

In Wales, the Welsh Government published its own no deal action plan on 16 September, *Preparing for a no deal Brexit*. The document makes clear the Welsh Government's view that there are limits to what it can do to minimise the full impact of a no deal Brexit. The Welsh Government later published a new report, *A brighter future for Wales* on 26 September, setting out why Wales should remain in the EU and called on the Prime Minister to seek a third extension of the Article 50 period.

2. Developments in Westminster

Operation Yellowhammer

On 11 September, the UK Government published its no deal, **Operation Yellowhammer** documents following a **motion voted on by MPs** on 9 September directing it to do so. The document details 'reasonable worst case assumptions'. Among other risks, the document details disruption to food and medicine supplies, transport, law enforcement data, financial services, localised energy and water supplies and the flow of personal data between the UK and EU. It acknowledges that 'low income groups will be disproportionately affected by any price rises in food and fuel'. The document also details how the loss of EU citizenship is likely to impact citizens' rights. It identifies the potential for civil unrest 'which may absorb significant amounts of police resource.' On fishing, it describes an increase in illegal activities, potential 'clashes between fishing vessels and an increase in non-compliance in the domestic fleet.' Concurrent risks associated with autumn and winter (for instance, severe weather, flooding and flu), are identified as exacerbators of a number of impacts and could 'stretch resources'.

Supreme Court decision

Following the **prorogation of the UK Parliament** on 10 September, the UK Government faced legal challenges that reached the Supreme Court on 17 September. The two main issues for the Supreme Court to consider were:

- firstly, whether the decision of the Prime Minister to advise Her Majesty the Queen to prorogue Parliament was a matter on which the Court could take a view (i.e. was it justiciable in the courts), and
- secondly, if the decision was justiciable and the appeal was not academic, whether the advice given by the Prime Minister was lawful.

On the first issue, the **Supreme Court held** that the lawfulness of the Prime Minister's advice to the Queen was justiciable and that the Courts have jurisdiction to decide upon the existence and limits of a prerogative power. The Court concluded that this case is about the limits of the power to advise the Queen to prorogue Parliament.

On the second issue, the Court held that the decision to advise the Queen to prorogue Parliament was unlawful because it had the effect of **'frustrating or preventing the ability of Parliament to carry out its constitutional functions without reasonable justification.'** President of the Supreme Court, Lady Hale, concluded that the effect (of prorogation) upon the fundamentals of our democracy was 'extreme', and that there was 'no reason – let alone a good reason' to prorogue Parliament for five weeks. Furthermore, the Court held that the **Order in Council** (to which the Prime Minister's unlawful advice led) was also unlawful, 'void and of no effect' and should be quashed. All 11 justices were unanimous in their verdict that Parliament has not been prorogued.

The Supreme Court agreed that it was for Parliament, and the Speaker and Lord Speaker to decide what to do next. The Speaker **issued a statement** shortly after the ruling, welcoming the judgment and called for the House of Commons to resume on 25 September.

Resumption of UK Parliament

The UK Parliament resumed following the Supreme Court judgment on 24 September (see above). During the session, the **Attorney General, Geoffrey Cox, responded** to an urgent question regarding the prorogation. He described the current Parliament as a 'disgrace' and stated that:

This parliament is a dead parliament. It should no longer sit. It has no moral right to sit on these green benches, and whatever – *[interruption]*

Later, the Prime Minister provided an **update to Parliament**. On the Supreme Court ruling on prorogation, he said:

I followed the exact same process as my predecessors in calling a Queen's Speech, the Supreme Court was asked to intervene in that process for the first time ever. It is absolutely no disrespect to the judiciary to say that I think that **the court was wrong** to pronounce on what is essentially a political question, at a time—*[Interruption.]*

On the **European Union (Withdrawal) Act (No.2) 2019** (the 'Benn Act'), which places obligations on the UK Government designed to avoid a no deal, he said:

[The Act] did indeed have a profound psychological impact on our friends and partners over the channel; and it has had an impact on the negotiations, and it has made things more difficult.

And that:

On the point about whether or not we are on the verge of getting a deal, it is absolutely true that negotiations are difficult, but we are making progress. All I will say to the Leader of the Opposition and his friends is that the negotiations have not been made easier by the surrender Act he passed.

Parliament **debated compliance with the legislation** the following day, when Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, James Duddridge, repeatedly stated that the UK Government 'will obey the law'.

For more information on the legislation, see our **Brexit Monitoring Report** published on 18 September.

UK Parliament: Second prorogation

The Cabinet Office announced on 2 October that the Prime Minister intends to request a second prorogation of the UK Parliament ahead of the Queen's Speech on 14 October. A **Cabinet Office press release** explains:

The Prime Minister has been consistently clear that he wants to set out a fresh legislative programme in a Queen's Speech. He therefore **intends to request that the current session of Parliament be prorogued from the evening of Tuesday 8 October, with a Queen's Speech on Monday 14 October** [...] These timings would mean Parliament is prorogued for the shortest time possible to enable all the necessary logistical preparations for a State Opening to be undertaken, including those done by the House Authorities.

No further details regarding when the request will be made were available at the time of publishing.

Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Exiting the EU: Evidence to the Assembly

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Exiting the EU, James Duddridge, gave evidence to the National Assembly for Wales' External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee on 23 September. He provided an update on the UK Government's position on the withdrawal negotiations and its work with the devolved governments. In an exchange with David Melding AM, the Under-Secretary outlined that Northern Ireland would be treated the same way as the rest of the United Kingdom in any alternate proposals to the current 'backstop' contained in the Withdrawal Agreement

David Melding: So, it's not envisaged, then, that in a transition phase, there would be any border down the Irish sea by the sound of what you're saying; it's just not what's part of the deal, even if it's only for two years whilst we set in place the alternatives.

James Duddridge: Northern Ireland will remain part of the United Kingdom in the same way as the rest of the United Kingdom.

Secretary of State for Wales: Brexit will make the Union stronger

On 2 October, the Secretary of State for Wales, Alun Cairns spoke at the Conservative Party Conference. He stated that Brexit will allow the UK to 'reshape our Union ambition' and '**respond to the growing opportunities rights across the globe**':

Brexit will give us the prospect to strengthen our Union - where a Global Britain serves all parts of our country and where nations and regions serve a Global Britain. [...] Now is not the time to be looking inward. We need to think big, act decisively and grasp the many opportunities before us.

UK Government: replacement backstop proposals

On 2 October, the UK Government **published its proposals** to replace the Irish backstop. In a **letter to EU Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker**, the Prime Minister stated:

Both sides now need to consider whether there is sufficient willingness to compromise and move beyond existing positions to get us to an agreement in time. We are ready to do that, and this letter sets out what I regard as a reasonable compromise: the broad landing zone in which I believe a deal can begin to take shape.

The proposals would establish separate arrangements for Northern Ireland from the rest of the UK, including a separate regulatory system and customs checks. He confirmed that the UK Government intends to pursue a future relationship with the EU via a Free Trade Agreement 'in which the UK takes control of its own regulatory affairs and trade policy.' To this end, the proposals are based on five elements. The Letter states:

1. 'First and foremost, our proposal is centred on our commitment to find solutions which are compatible with the **Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement**;
2. Second, it confirms our commitment to long-standing areas of UK / Ireland collaboration;
3. Third, it provides for the potential creation of an all-island regulatory zone on the island of Ireland;

4. Fourth, this regulatory zone must depend on the consent of those affected by it;
5. Fifth, and finally, under these arrangements Northern Ireland will be fully part of the UK customs territory, not the EU Customs Union, after the end of the transition period.'

The letter is accompanied by **an Explanatory Note** which provides further detail. In **a statement**, EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, welcomed the Prime Minister's 'determination to advance the talks' but noted that there remain 'some problematic points'. The statement reaffirms the EU's objectives in 'preventing a hard border, preserving North-South cooperation and the all-island economy, and protecting the EU's Single Market and Ireland's place in it.'

3. Developments in Brussels

Prime Minister meets with EU leadership

On 16 September, EU Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker, Chief Negotiator, Michel Barnier, met with the Prime Minister in Luxembourg. A **press release was issued** following the meeting:

The aim of the meeting was to take stock of the ongoing technical talks between the EU and the UK and to discuss the next steps.

President Juncker recalled that it is the UK's responsibility to come forward with legally operational solutions that are compatible with the Withdrawal Agreement. President Juncker underlined the Commission's continued willingness and openness to examine whether such proposals meet the objectives of the backstop. Such proposals have not yet been made.

The Commission will remain available to work 24/7. The October European Council will be an important milestone in the process. The EU27 remain united.

European Parliament supports a further Article 50 extension

On 18 September, the **European Parliament passed a resolution** by **544 votes to 126 (with 38 abstentions)** reaffirming its support for a further extension:

Indicates that it would support an extension of the period provided for in Article 50 if there are reasons and a purpose for such an extension (such as to avoid a 'no-deal exit', to hold a general election or a referendum, to revoke Article 50, or to approve a withdrawal agreement) and that the work and functioning of the EU institutions are not adversely affected.

Chief Brexit Negotiator, Michel Barnier, **stated during the session** that:

The consequences of Brexit are not theoretical. It's often been said that they are innumerable and often underestimated in terms of their social and human impact, financial and budgetary impact, their legal and technical impact. They are considerable.

During the following week, UK and EU negotiators met to discuss proposals put forward by the UK as a solution to replace the Irish backstop. **Politico reported** that Michel Barnier described these as 'unacceptable'. A **statement issued** on 27 September by the EU Commission stated that:

Michel Barnier met Steve Barclay in Brussels today. Michel Barnier stressed that it is essential that there is a fully operational solution in the Withdrawal Agreement to avoid a hard border on the island of Ireland, protect the all-island economy and the integrity of the Single Market. The EU remains open and willing to examine any workable and legally operative proposals that meet all these objectives.

The UK Government published its proposals on 2 October (see above).

4. Developments in Wales

Joint Ministerial Committee

The Joint Ministerial Committee on European Negotiations (JMC(EN)) met on 12 September. It is the first time it has met since the new UK Government took office. A **Communiqué was published** following the meeting which states:

The Committee discussed the UK's exit from the EU, including developments on negotiations and exit readiness. The Committee also discussed domestic issues, including the joint work on common frameworks.

Speaking in **Plenary on the 17 September** the Counsel General and Brexit Minister, Jeremy Miles stated:

I was at the JMC(EN) last Thursday and asked for an update on the negotiations that the UK Government says it's undertaking, and I'm afraid I left with no confidence at all that we were looking at a negotiation as we would understand it—a substantive, advanced process of bargaining and exchange. So I'm not at all confident that I can give [...] any reassurance that there's a negotiation in the way that we would understand it, meaningfully, under way.

During **plenary on 2 October**, he also confirmed that he would be attending the next JMC(EN) 'in the coming days'.

No deal preparations

Operation Yellowhammer response

The Welsh Government **published its response** to the UK Government's Operation Yellowhammer on 13 September:

It is regrettable the UK government had to be compelled to share this information. The assumptions underline and endorse what the Welsh Government has said for many months about the enormity of the challenges a self-inflicted no-deal Brexit would present to Wales.

We continue to press the UK government to rule out a no-deal exit from the European Union, despite the Prime Minister's apparent determination to keep it as a very real possibility. This is partly because we have no assurance the Prime Minister intends to obey the law with regard to requesting an extension, and partly because if he does we cannot be sure the EU27 will unanimously agree such a request.

[N]o level of planning and preparation either here, or by the UK government, will adequately address the level of disruption a no deal exit would mean for the people of Wales.

Welsh Government's no deal action plan

On 16 September, the Welsh Government published its no deal Brexit action plan, **Preparing for a no deal Brexit**. The plan sets out the potential consequences of a no deal Brexit on all aspects of Welsh life and summarises the measures being taken to help limit some of the worst effects of leaving the EU without a deal. The plan states that:

This paper sets out the Welsh Government's overview of the main strategic risks of no deal for Wales and explains the actions we are putting in place to mitigate them as far as is possible. These include assumptions set out in the Operation Yellowhammer documents, published by the UK Government on 11 September.

Speaking in **plenary on 17 September**, the Counsel General and Brexit Minister stated:

Yesterday, we published the Welsh Government's 'no deal' action plan. This echoes the sobering analysis of the risks that we face that the forced publication of the UK Government's Yellowhammer assumptions revealed to the general public. We, as a Government, have been saying for months that the sort of consequences mentioned in those documents are a very real risk of a 'no deal' Brexit and completely unthinkable, which is why we have called for it to be ruled out. We have been clear that where we have the ability to take action to mitigate against the implications of 'no deal' we have done so.

The action plan sets out what the Welsh Government has already done, what it is currently doing, and what it will do in future in order to try to limit the 'inevitable damage from a no deal Brexit'. The document makes clear the Welsh Government's view that there are limits to what it can do to minimise the full impact of a no deal. As is outlined in the plan, preparations are focused on four main areas:

- **UK-wide preparedness** – working with UK Government departments and other devolved administrations on projects extending beyond Wales;
- **Welsh Government action** – working with key stakeholders to develop and implement actions to address the strategic risks of a no deal Brexit;
- **Legislation** – ensuring Wales has a functioning statute book for exit day; and
- **Civil contingencies** – developing a response to the most immediate and urgent issues.

Under each strategic risk there are a number of issues, with each issue detailing the actions taken, and who is responsible for delivering on those actions e.g. Welsh Government, UK Government and other public bodies such as Natural Resources Wales. In total, the plan includes **13 strategic risks, 60 issues, and 146 actions**.

No deal statements in Plenary

On 1 October, **five Brexit-related statements were delivered** on the impact of a no deal Brexit on Wales in plenary:

1. Statement by the Counsel General and Brexit Minister: **Update on the UK Government's proposals for the UK's exit from the EU**;
2. Statement by the Minister for Economy and Transport: **Preparing the economy in Wales for a no deal Brexit**;
3. Statement by the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs: **Preparing the rural economy and fisheries sector for a no deal Brexit**;
4. Statement by the Minister for Health and Social Services: **Preparing the health and care services in Wales for a no deal Brexit**; and
5. Statement by the Minister for Housing and Local Government: **Preparing our public services in Wales for a no deal Brexit**.

Introducing the statements, the Counsel General and Brexit Minister, Jeremy Miles, stated that:

The statements this afternoon demonstrate the vast array of short-term, negative consequences across all aspects of Welsh life, whilst devastating the economy in the longer term [...] With just a fortnight to go until the European Council summit, it doesn't seem likely that we will have time to reach agreement.

He described Welsh-UK Government relations:

The single biggest determining factor impacting on our ability to put in place preparedness plans is the UK Government's willingness to share information with us, to meaningfully work with us and to provide us with the necessary funds. Here again, the UK Government has failed in its responsibilities, and, as the clock to a 'no deal' exit has ticked on, Welsh Ministers have been locked out of the vital 'no deal' meetings being held in Whitehall. While under Theresa May we were routinely invited to UK Cabinet committee meetings on preparedness, we are now only invited selectively, based on the UK Government's narrow assessment of our devolution settlement. We have had assurances this will change—but, in any case, vital time has been lost needlessly.

Welsh Government and the Supreme Court ruling

On the Welsh Government's intervention in the Supreme Court case in support of campaigner Gina Miller, the **Counsel General and Brexit Minister, Jeremy Miles**, advised that Welsh Government:

[I]ntervened in the case because it is appropriate, necessary and proportionate to do so in order to safeguard the interests of Wales and this Assembly.

The **Welsh Government submissions** argued that the Prime Minister's actions were unlawful, as he had 'consciously and purposely' impeded the constitutional principle of Parliamentary Sovereignty. On the particular and distinct consequences for Wales, it was submitted that:

- The Prime Minister's actions impeded the ability of the National Assembly to engage in dialogue with the Westminster Parliament, at a critical time;
- Prorogation would mean that major Brexit Bills would fall as a result of prorogation. The Brexit Bills included topics such as fisheries, trade and agriculture which are of significant importance for Wales. The National Assembly had not legislated in this area, and had consented to Westminster doing so on the understanding that the Westminster Parliament would make appropriate legislative provision on these matters in good time for the UK's withdrawal;
- Prorogation severely curtailed proper scrutiny by both the Westminster Parliament and devolved administrations (including the National Assembly) over Ministerial exercise of broad powers to make secondary legislation under the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018.

Responding to an Emergency Question in plenary following the ruling, the **First Minister advised** the Assembly that he 'cannot see any way in which Boris Johnson can remain in office following the judgment of the Court today.'

First Minister: latest statements

Evidence to External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee

The First Minister gave evidence to the **External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee on 16 September**. The First Minister answered questions on the Brexit negotiations, the Welsh Government's preparedness, Brexit legislation and intergovernmental relations. In his evidence the First Minister stated that the relationship with the UK Government has changed under the new UK Prime Minister and that opportunities for the Welsh Government to engage with the UK Government have 'receded'. He stated:

There have been major changes at the UK level, all of which lead to an impact on the work that the Welsh Government does. We have a new Government and a new Prime Minister and apparently a different sense of direction. When I met the new Prime Minister here in Cardiff, he told me that the risk of leaving the European Union without a deal was 'vanishingly small', but you turn on the radio later the same day to hear that we're leaving the European Union on 31 October come what may. So, dealing with a Government that oscillates between determination to leave with a deal and determination to leave without a deal on the same day creates a different context for our relationships with the UK Government.

[...]

We were dealing when we last met with a Government that wanted to be there and apparently saw itself there for the rest of this Parliament. We now have a Government that doesn't want to be there, that declares it wants to be in a general election, and that creates a very different context when trying to carry out inter-governmental relationships

The First Minister also stated that the Welsh Government was reaching a point where Brexit work would impact on the Welsh Government's ability to carry on with work on other areas:

As a Welsh Government we have done our very best through the whole Brexit period to continue to discharge all those day-in, day-out responsibilities that matter in people's daily lives. Everything that we do in health, in education, in transport, in housing—all those things that matter day in and day out—we have done our best to keep all of that going at the rate that we had originally planned, while coping with Brexit as well. I believe we are coming close to the end of our ability to be able to do that. Simply to continue everything that we were planning already plus Brexit on top of it, especially if we end up leaving the European Union without a deal at the end of October—there will be a period when the Welsh Government will be so focused on dealing with the immediate and emergency impacts of a 'no deal' Brexit I think that it is inevitable that some things will take longer than we had otherwise planned.

Future of the Union

During **First Minister's Questions** on 17 September, the First Minister stated that:

The bright future for Wales lies in a strong Wales with an entrenched devolution settlement, taking domestic decisions here in our hands, in a strong United Kingdom and in a successful Europe. That's what I believe the best future for Wales will be: Wales in the United Kingdom, the United Kingdom in the European Union.

The following week, the **First Minister advised** the Labour Party conference that:

Brexit has torn at the very fabric of the things we cherish, including the United Kingdom itself. Those pursuing Brexit have used – and misused – the union for their own, narrow and ideological ends. [...] We should be under no doubt that the voluntary union of our four sovereign nations here in the UK is under threat if that we do not act. It's at risk of splintering. Replacing one narrow nationalism with another.

New Welsh Government report: Why Wales should remain in the EU

On 26 September, the Welsh Government published its latest report, **A brighter future for Wales: Why we should remain in the EU**. The report makes the case for continued membership of the EU and sets out the Welsh Government's view on the potential damage of leaving the EU without a deal:

Faced by the imminent threat of a no deal Brexit, the Welsh Government and the National Assembly for Wales are clear, that the decision should go back to the people, and that it is in the interests of all the people of Wales for the UK to remain in the EU. This paper sets out why and also explains how, within the EU, we can still pursue the necessary changes and reforms to secure Wales' long-term prosperity and stability.

The report includes sections on the economy, migration, funding and investment, social and environmental protections and values, and constitutional and devolution issues. It also includes an updated economic assessment of the impact of leaving the EU.

Counsel General and Brexit Minister: latest statements

Future of the Union

As part of its **inquiry into Wales' Changing Constitution**, the Assembly's **Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee** received evidence from Counsel General and Brexit Minister, Jeremy Miles, on 16 September. He advised that the Welsh Government is 'absolutely' supportive of the establishment of a constitutional convention for Wales:

...these are big challenges in all parts of the UK, aren't they, and I think it would be a missed opportunity for us not to address what we now know to be the fragility, in many ways, of the UK constitution, which Brexit has cast a light on. And the UK Government's carelessness in how it has treated the integrity of the union in the context of Brexit I think is quite surprising and quite shocking, given that it claims to be a unionist Government. I think contemplating a hard or a 'no deal' Brexit is going to create tensions within the union that are, I think, obvious at this point, and I think it's a matter of— . I'm surprised that the UK Government is prepared to run that risk.

Extending Article 50

On 1 October, the **Counsel General and Brexit Minister, Jeremy Miles called on** the Prime Minister to seek a third extension of the Article 50 period:

It is time for the Prime Minister to stop lying to the country. He now surely has no other chance than to seek an extension and allow a general election to be held so the people in this country can ultimately decide who they want to lead.

Second referendum / General election

On whether a second referendum should be held before a General Election, the Counsel General and Brexit Minister **advised the BBC** that:

A referendum before (a general election) would be ideal but a referendum afterwards would be acceptable. From our point of view the important thing is that there's a chance to vote again and we would recommend that people vote to remain and we'd campaign in favour of that if there's an opportunity.

Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language

The Minister for International Relations and Welsh Language, Eluned Morgan, appeared before the **External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee** on 23 September to discuss the Welsh Government's **draft International Strategy**. In relation to Brexit, the Minister stated that uncertainty over the outcome had impacted the date for the publication of the strategy:

Well, it is difficult to lock down what the final strategy will look like because so much of this is wrapped up in our response to Brexit and where we end up in relation to Brexit. So, of course, I don't think we can wait forever, which is why I thought it was important for us to make sure that we published a draft document, so that we can just get some kind of response in terms of whether we're heading in the right kind of direction, but I'm hopeful that—we'll see if we get some kind of outcome before 31 October. If not, we may be looking at January. My guess is that we probably need to do something, irrespective of what happens with Brexit, by February. We'd have to go with something. But it's not to say that we're not working on some of the issues that we've been promoting in here already. So, we're not waiting for the strategy to change some of the things that I was hoping to change anyway.

The Minister also stated that Brexit has affected the sectors the Welsh Government had chosen to promote in the draft strategy and that the Welsh Government had focussed on sectors not affected by Brexit:

That was one of the main points that we—which is why we didn't go for manufacturing, for example. We are a centre of excellence for aerospace; we didn't follow that for that very reason. So, Brexit immunity was absolutely a key feature and obviously we've talked to—I've met with the cyber clusters, I've met with the compound semiconductor clusters and asked them, 'Look, how is this going to impact on you?', and that's the message they give—'Actually we do feel that the Brexit impact will not be as great on our industries.'