

MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT

Creation of a new Department for Exiting the European Union

1. The Prime Minister announced a series of changes to Ministerial responsibilities on 14 July 2016, including the creation of a new Department for Exiting the European Union. This Cabinet Office paper describes the consequences of those changes for the functions of departments.
2. Following the public's decision that the UK should withdraw from the European Union, a new department will be created that will oversee our exit negotiations and those to determine the new relationship between the UK and the European Union. The Government believes that these changes will equip the UK to prepare to make a success of leaving the European Union, and to seize the opportunities that this presents.
3. The department will be led by a new Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, who will also advise the Prime Minister on the progress of EU negotiations.
4. The department will be responsible for:
 - the policy work to support the UK's negotiations to leave the European Union and to establish the future relationship between the EU and the UK;
 - working very closely with the UK's Devolved Administrations, Parliament, other government departments and a wide range of other interested parties on what the approach to those negotiations should be;
 - conducting the negotiations in support of the Prime Minister, including supporting bilateral discussions on EU exit with other European countries; and
 - leading and co-ordinating cross-government work to seize the opportunities and ensure a smooth process of exit on the best possible terms.
5. The department will be made up of the Cabinet Office Europe Unit, staff from the Europe Directorate of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the UK's Permanent Representation to the EU, who will support the new Secretary of State's role in external engagement and negotiations with Ministers in EU 27 countries and the European Parliament.
6. The department will assume the previous responsibilities of the Cabinet Office in respect of the co-ordination of collective European business and direct support to the Prime Minister on European affairs. The department will also be responsible for overseeing associated parliamentary activity including any legislation required. While the UK remains an EU member state, the FCO will retain its responsibility for the EU's external relations.