

Report on spurious or damaging laws from the EU – December 2015

Introduction

In this Parliament alone, **a total of 3,589 regulations and directives have been passed by the EU** that affect British businesses.

In order to calculate the time that it would take to read the entire collection of relevant laws, it was taken that an average business person in an average working week can read a total of 144,000 words per day. Using this methodology, we have determined that there have been 3,589 new laws passed between 11 May 2010 and 1 October 2013 that affect British business. This equates to 13,392,652 million words, which would take the average British business person, reading at a speed of 300 words per minute, over 93 days to read in full. It will take a business person 55 minutes every Monday to catch up with all the EU laws that have been introduced in the last week. Or they will have to spend eleven minutes each evening catching up with the laws that have been introduced since that day began. If they only looked once a month they would have to take a morning off to catch up (spending 3 hours 42 minutes reading solidly).

Preamble

Regulation, whether from Whitehall or Brussels, is regularly cited by start-ups and SMEs as being one of the biggest barriers to growth and competitiveness. The red-tape passed by the EU and affecting British businesses is particularly onerous. A report by Open Europe in 2010 found that, since 1998, regulation introduced in the UK had cost the economy £176 billion. 1 Of this, £124 billion, or 71 percent, had its origin in the EU. Similarly, an investigation earlier this year by Conservative MP Priti Patel found that new laws, regulations and rules from Europe had cost over £5 billion (or the equivalent of £9,500 every minute) since the start of 2011.

Silly issues put into EU law – some not enforced

- The EU was forced to backtrack after its scientists claimed there was no proof drinking water helped with dehydration but the regulation was there.
- In a win for weirdly shaped vegetables across Europe, the majority of EU states voted to repeal EU laws which banned "free of abnormal curvature" in cucumbers and bananas three years ago.
- According to newser, (News Curator Site) children under 8 cannot blow up balloons in the EU without adult supervision.
- It's OK to be so hungry you could eat a horse - just make sure you don't own it. EU laws mean it's illegal to eat your pet horse.

- The EU reportedly made it illegal for prunes to be marketed as a food that helps bowel movements.
- The EU decided to make clear the differences between a turnip and a swede (the vegetable, not a native of Sweden.) The two veggies were different, the EU said. However, if swede is contained within a Cornish Pasty (the UK's answer to the empanada) then it is perfectly OK to brand it as turnip. In all other cases, turnips are turnips and swedes are swedes.
- It was reported that sufferers of diabetes across the EU may face driving bans as part of a new directive. Up to one million drivers could have been hit with bans as a result. **Is it real?** It's not currently being enforced, but it is real.
- In 2010 the EU said that food items could no longer be priced by the number (i.e. a dozen eggs or ten apples) and instead had to be priced based on weight.
- Though it's still possible to buy six or 12 eggs at a time, the price paid is based on the weight of those eggs.
- Among the costliest are the Working Time Directive, which costs £4.1 billion a year.
- The various measures on energy and climate change, which cost us £3.4 billion.
- The Temporary Agency Workers' Directive, which gives full employment rights to temporary workers and which is costing the economy £2 billion a year.
- If you are running an energy-intensive factory in Britain, for example, you can close it down, sell your EU carbon permits for a profit and then relocate to Asia where no permits are required. Global carbon emissions won't have reduced one jot but the cost to the UK economy is enormous.
- The Alternative Investment Fund Managers Regulations 2013, which are calculated to cost the economy £1.5 billion a year without giving us a penny in return.
- The Information and Consultation of Employees Regulations 2004, which costs industry £41 million a year with no measurable financial benefit whatsoever.
- EU proposed ban on menthol and electronic cigarettes.
- SMEs are forced by a barmy law to fill in a complex form detailing every item sold in mind-numbing detail. Each product has its own code and staff must spend hours thumbing through a 912 page, 2 inch thick manual to find the right one. The hefty book, called the Intrastat Classification Nomenclature categorises everything from livestock, chemicals and cosmetics to umbrellas,

swords and wigs. It's so detailed that there are even special codes for different types of "wigs, false beards, eyebrows and eyelashes". Another section in the book catalogues "cutlasses, bayonets, lances and similar arms".

- The threat of jam-makers being fined under EU rules for selling or donating produce in re-used jars triggered anger and exasperation. Stalls offering home-made preserves and chutneys are a staple of summer fetes, church fairs and other charity fundraisers; however an advisory body linked to the Church of England has warned parishes that re-using jars breached EU health rules – and could result in a £5,000 fine or even jail.

References

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