



# Boating after Brexit

The Customs Bill, one of eight Brexit-related bills announced in the Queen's Speech, makes clear that the Government intends to create a separate domestic customs and tax regime, based on existing EU law. The Immigration Bill will end free movement for EU nationals, but exactly what the new restrictions will be have yet to be worked out.

RYA Director of External Affairs, Jeanette Hopkins, says, 'We are continuing our work with our member committees, other marine bodies and the Government to understand the impact of these issues on recreational boating and to develop a position which can form part of the UK's negotiations.'

'With the Great Repeal Bill set to place around 19,000 pieces of EU regulation into UK law, we are also assessing what opportunities there may be for our 109,000 members and the wider boating community.'

## Key issues

In particular, the RYA is concerned about what the Brexit-related bills may mean for border controls, time limits on duration of stay for individuals and vessels wishing to visit Europe, the future ability of recreational craft and their contents to travel freely in Europe without customs restrictions, and the ability of RYA qualification-holders to work in EU territory.

Many of the challenges currently faced by British recreational boaters have an EU dimension – such as red diesel, invasive non-native species, biocides, and European marine protected areas. Our exit from the EU might have an impact on all of these issues, but the nature and extent of that impact remains unclear.

## Behind the scenes

We continue to ensure that the Government understands, and takes

account of, the activities of our members as it negotiates the UK's exit position. It has been made clear that no progress will be made on the UK's new trading relationship with the EU until significant progress is made on the country's exit. This means agreeing positions on the future of EU nationals in the UK and vice versa, and the size of the UK's exit payment.

National security and public safety, together with economic pressures, are more significant in today's political agenda than ever. For these reasons, it is vital that members' interests are represented effectively to ensure that the Government is aware of the potential impacts on our activities when balancing competing interests.

## Border controls

Jeanette continues, 'The RYA is representing boating interests as negotiations get underway on the shape of future border controls for

**Brexit-related bills may affect the future ability of craft to travel freely in Europe**

recreational boats entering or leaving the UK. In the past, we've worked with the UK Government to ensure that plans for greater control of the UK sea border are proportionate and take account of recreational boating activity.

As the Government clarifies its intentions for the UK border, the RYA will work to minimise any adverse impact or unintended consequences for recreational boaters, and identify opportunities for improvement. The RYA has in the past argued that, to be effective, any sea border security programme must be simple and embrace, rather than alienate, the recreational boating community.

'We are maintaining our regular dialogue with the Home Office and Border Force to ensure that our position on border controls is understood. Ultimately, we will be striving for a system that is simple to understand and to comply with.'

### Union Goods status

The RYA also has a role to play in ensuring that the Government understands the impact that loss of Union Goods status would have on those who wish to visit or base their boats on EU waters.

The ability for recreational boats, together with their equipment, to navigate free of customs procedures and time limits throughout the waters of the European Union is



**Having Union Goods status is crucial for recreational boaters to navigate EU waters free of customs procedures**

currently dependent on them having Union Goods status.

As the Government clarifies its future relationship with the EU VAT and Customs area, the RYA will endeavour to clarify the future status of recreational boats and to minimise any adverse impacts or unintended consequences once the UK leaves the EU.

### Use of RYA qualifications

The RYA aspires to maintain the acceptability of RYA instructor qualifications for use in RYA-

recognised training centres located in EU member states.

Richard Falk, RYA Director of Training and Qualifications, says, 'We have developed the quality, reputation and scope of RYA training schemes such that RYA-qualified instructors have access to what is the most extensive recreational boat training network within the European Union.'

'We believe that holders of RYA instructor qualifications wishing to instruct at RYA-recognised training centres located in EU member states should be able to do so with minimal additional regulatory, financial or administrative burdens. We are developing stronger links with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and the Department for Exiting the European Union, as well as other relevant departments and agencies.'

The RYA also wishes to minimise unfavourable impact on, or unintended consequences for, the eligibility of UK citizens holding RYA qualifications to work in EU member states in occupations relevant to those qualifications.

We believe that UK citizens holding RYA qualifications who wish to work in EU member states or visit on business (e.g. seasonal staff and permanent occupations) should be able to obtain the permissions to do so with as little administrative burden and cost as possible.

## Help us help you

In support of our work representing recreational boaters during the Brexit process, the RYA needs data on how and where boat owners use their boats.

If you own a boat, please complete our short questionnaire at [www.rya.org.uk/go/Brexit-Survey](http://www.rya.org.uk/go/Brexit-Survey)

to give us details of where you keep and use your boat. Completing the survey is easy and should take most people less than three minutes. Your participation will enable us to deliver robust data and an accurate picture of recreational boating, both here and abroad,



as part of our negotiation work with the Government.

As the representative voice of boating, we will seek to influence all legislation that may impact on any aspect of recreational boating or navigational safety. We will resist any proposed legislation that we believe to be

disproportionate, ineffective or unenforceable.

**If you have questions or topics to raise, you can call the RYA Cruising, Legal and Government Affairs team on 023 8060 4221, or email [legal@rya.org.uk](mailto:legal@rya.org.uk)**