

Beat: News

## How can we stabilise and strengthen the Union?

### House of Lords Constitution Committee

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**USPA NEWS** - The House of Lords Constitution Committee is launching a new inquiry into the Union and devolution. A Call for evidence has been published and the Committee is inviting written submissions, to arrive no later than 2 October 2015.

#### Purpose -

The Committee is concerned that the current devolution settlement is the result of ad hoc, piecemeal, change rather than the result of a considered and coherent process that takes into account the needs of the UK as a whole. Its inquiry will therefore focus not only on devolution but on the Union itself, to try and identify what binds the constituent parts of the UK together in a single Union, and to consider ways in which that Union might be strengthened and reinforced.

#### Scope -

The Committee is seeking to identify and articulate the principles that should underlie the existence and governance of the Union and how power is exercised both by Westminster and by the devolved nations. It will also consider what practical steps can be taken to stabilise and strengthen the Union in line with those underlying principles.

#### Key questions -

Some of the key questions the Committee are inviting evidence on include:

Is the UK's current constitutional and legal framework able to provide a stable foundation for the devolution settlement?

What are the key principles underlying the Union?

On what principles are the UK's devolution settlements based, or on what principles should they be based?

What is the effect on the Union of the asymmetry of the devolution settlement across the UK? Is the impact of asymmetry an issue that needs to be addressed? If so, how?

What might be the effect of devolving powers over taxation and welfare on the economic and social union within the UK? Are there measures that should be adopted to address the effects of the devolution of tax and welfare powers?

What practical steps, both legislative and non-legislative, can be taken to stabilise or reinforce the Union? How should these be implemented?

#### Chairman's comments

Commenting, Lord Lang of Monkton, Chairman of the Committee, said:

"Since 1998, devolution has significantly changed the way the United Kingdom is governed, and there are proposals for the further devolution of power both to nations within the UK and to English cities and regions in the very near future. We are concerned, however, that this process has not been undertaken in a coherent or considered way; the devolution of powers to each nation has been considered separately with little or no reflection on the impact on the Union as a whole.

"Following Scotland's clear vote last year to remain in the UK, the time is now right for a thorough and detailed look at what the Union is for, and how we can ensure a stable devolution settlement that preserves and strengthens the UK as a whole.

"Our inquiry will span a broad range of constitutional issues and will give witnesses the opportunity to put their views on record on an issue that will profoundly affect the whole of the UK. I would encourage interested parties to send us their evidence by 2 October."

Click on 'more information' link below to view Youtube video.

**Article online:**

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-4615/how-can-we-stabilise-and-strengthen-the-union.html>

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