

Nuclear liabilities: UK approaches accession to Convention on Supplementary Compensation

18 September 2025

The UK's planned accession to the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage ("CSC") will finally connect the UK nuclear liabilities regime with those of existing CSC members - including the US, Canada, India, Japan and the UAE.

The period for UK parliamentary scrutiny of the CSC expired on 10 September 2025, clearing the way for UK accession. Changes to UK law to allow accession and implementation of the CSC in UK law, in the form of amendments to the Nuclear Installations Act 1965, have already been made in the Energy Act 2023 (Schedule 22) and now the Nuclear Installations (Compensation for Nuclear Damage) (Amendment) Regulations 2025, made on 22 July 2025. These changes will come into force automatically when UK accession to the CSC takes effect.

UK focus on accession to the CSC is driven by a desire to link the UK nuclear liabilities regime with countries seen as the most likely origin of investment in the UK's nuclear sector.

Pending accession to the CSC, the UK is a member of the Paris and Brussels nuclear liabilities conventions only. This means that, currently, the UK nuclear liabilities regime has no connection with liabilities regimes in either CSC or Vienna Convention member countries.

None of the eleven existing CSC members are Paris Convention countries, although six (including Romania and the UAE) are also members of both the Vienna Convention and the Joint Protocol linking the Vienna and Paris Conventions. UK membership of the CSC will be a first in establishing dual Paris Convention and CSC membership.

The objective of the CSC is to establish a global regime, bringing together countries that are party to the Vienna, Paris and Brussels Conventions or that have their own stand-alone liabilities regime meeting threshold requirements for CSC membership.

The CSC establishes a regime for members to contribute to a fund providing supplementary compensation in the event of a nuclear incident in a member country. Crucially, CSC members also agree that if a nuclear incident occurs in a member country the courts of that country have exclusive jurisdiction over resulting compensation claims.

Exclusive jurisdiction is particularly important for industry participants operating internationally. Without mutual recognition of exclusive jurisdiction, there is a risk that claims may be brought in different jurisdictions under different law. If this happens, expected allocation of nuclear liability risks and financial limits on liability are unlikely to apply, re-creating the very uncertainties and risks that nuclear liabilities conventions were intended to remove. UK accession to the CSC should therefore eliminate a significant area of risk for industry participants working between an existing CSC member country and the UK.

Membership of the Vienna Convention and the Joint Protocol is also growing, with notable additions of Spain and Belgium to the Joint Protocol in the last two years. Despite this, the possibility of UK ratification of the Joint Protocol remains no more an option for the future.



Rupert Cowen
Solicitor and Director
M: +44 7957 201707
D: +44 20 8064 0698
E: rupert.cowen@vectlaw.com



Jonathan Leech
Solicitor and Director
M: +44 7825 171093
D: +44 20 8064 0719
E: jonathan.leech@vectlaw.com