



**News editor**  
Catherine Baksi

## NewsBites

### Student pro bono winners

Anna McCormack, of Leicester University, received the annual LawWorks/Attorney General prize for the best individual student contribution to pro bono work, presented by the Attorney General, Jeremy Wright QC. Birmingham University took the prize for best law school contribution and Teeside Law Clinic won the best contribution by a team of students.

### Lawyer Portal backed

The Bar Council has given its backing to The Lawyer Portal, an education resource aimed at those considering a career in law. Developed with input from the Bar Council, it provides free information on the routes to legal practice and step-by-step guides on the study of law, work experience and training opportunities, plus advice on applications and interviews.

### Hill joins abuse inquiry

Henrietta Hill QC, of London's Doughty Street Chambers, has been appointed deputy counsel to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, which got under way in February.

### Record divorce ruling

A High Court judge ordered a Russian billionaire to pay his estranged wife £453m in what is believed to be the biggest settlement made by a UK court. Mr Justice Haddon-Cave said the housewife had contributed an equal share to the marriage and awarded her 41.5% of the £1bn marital pot. He also ruled that the parties cannot be identified.

### Judicial diversity report

Targets 'with teeth' are needed to end the domination of the judiciary by white, privately educated men, according to a report from campaign group Justice. *Increasing Judicial Diversity* said the Supreme Court, which has only one female justice out of the 11-strong bench, and which is recruiting to fill three vacancies, should aim to have five women appointed within the next ten years.

# Judge on 'diminishing' legislative scrutiny

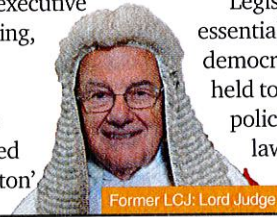
## Constitution

The 'legislative tsunami' triggered by Brexit is the 'greatest challenge' ever faced by our legislative processes, Lord Judge said.

Delivering the annual Bingham Lecture, Judge, who served as Lord Chief Justice between 2008 and 2013, bemoaned the 'torrent' of legislation generally, which he said is not properly scrutinised.

Spending increasing time in the House of Lords, he said, has changed the way he sees the legislative process. 'The process of scrutiny, which provides the basis for Parliamentary control of the executive has... diminished, is diminishing, and ought to be increased'.

While Bills are getting longer, Judge said many are 'not much more than intended political propaganda'. 'Skeleton'



Former L.C.J. Lord Judge  
© REX Shutterstock

Bills, like the Education and Adoption Bill and Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill, he said, leave much of the detail to secondary legislation. While 'Christmas Tree' Bills, which have 'grand' and focused titles, are then 'festooned with multiple miscellaneous' and potentially controversial provisions that have no apparent connection with their titles, in the hope they will escape scrutiny.

Judge said: 'During the last few years something like 3,000 typed pages of primary legislation have been produced annually, and in addition laws are made by some 12,000-13,000 pages of delegated legislation.'

Legislative scrutiny, he said, is an essential ingredient of Parliamentary democracy. 'The government should be held to account for its actions, and its policies, and consequentially for the laws it seeks to enact to implement its policies and legitimise its actions.'

# 'Grave concern' over Polish judicial independence

## International

Senior judges in England and Wales have condemned the Polish authorities for interfering with judicial independence.

The Judges' Council of England and Wales joined European colleagues at the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary, which had issued a press release expressing 'grave concern' about developments taking place in Poland and their impact on judicial independence.

The concern is over proposed legislation from the Polish government that would allow for the dismissal of the presidents and a substantial number of judges of the Supreme Court, as well as all presidents and vice-presidents of common courts by the executive, and the setting up of disciplinary chambers consisting of peoples' representatives in the Supreme Court.

The Network of the Presidents of the Supreme Judicial Courts of the European Union has also drawn attention to the situation.

It voiced disquiet over 'interventions by Polish authorities, including calling into question the constitutionality of the appointment of the first president of the Supreme Court of Poland and the envisaged reform of the National Council of the Judiciary' which it said 'appears to indicate a threat to the independence of the Supreme Court as well as the Polish judiciary as a whole'.

The network warned that the interference will undermine the rule of law and mutual trust in the administration of justice.

Meanwhile, barristers from England and Wales met Polish advocates in Warsaw to exchange experiences in conducting cross-border criminal and family cases at an English-Polish Law Day.