



PRESS NOTICE

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Constitution Unit advice on Coalition Government

A few years ago the Constitution Unit conducted a two year research project on how to make coalition government work, shortly to be published in updated form. The full report and a summary are available at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/publications/unit-publications/84.html>

‘Although rare in the UK, coalition government is the norm in Europe’ said the Unit’s director Prof Robert Hazell. ‘This need not be a step into the unknown. In our report we looked at Denmark, Germany, Ireland and New Zealand, which all have useful experience of coalition government. Much of that now needs to be captured in the new Cabinet Manual, which will be all the more important as a guide to how the coalition arrangements work in day-to-day practice’.

‘One unusual feature in the new arrangements here is the number of ministerial seats offered to the Lib Dems’ Prof Hazell added. ‘Normally these reflect closely the respective parties’ numbers in Parliament. On that basis the Lib Dems would be entitled to 13 per cent, which is three Cabinet posts and nine junior ministers. It looks as though they will get more than that, with five Cabinet post already: and especially if they were to have one minister in each department’.

Key points from the report are:

- The need for mutual trust and understanding between the coalition partners, especially the leaders
- Formal procedures for information sharing, and for signing off policy proposals by both coalition partners
- Additional resources for the Deputy Prime Minister, who will be central to joint signing off arrangements
- The need also to decentralise coalition coordination to departments, to avoid bottlenecks at the centre
- Dispute resolution procedures, possibly through a formal Coalition committee
- A pool of trusted special advisers to help resolve coalition management issues, at the centre and in departments.

The full report, and the summary can be found at <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/files/publications/unit-publications/84.pdf>

Notes for Editors

- Robert Hazell is available for interview and can be contacted on 0207 679 4971 (office). Vicki Spence is the Unit’s Administrator and Prof Hazell’s PA (v.spence@ucl.ac.uk, 0207 679 4977) and Brian Walker is the Unit’s Press Officer (williambrianwalker@gmail.com, 07802 176347).
- The Constitution Unit is an independent and non-partisan research centre based at University College London (www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit).