# UK Parliament recalled to address steel industry crisis



On Saturday, the UK Parliament was abruptly recalled to address the escalating crisis in the steel industry by passing the Steel Industry (Special Measures) Act. The decision to reconvene was met with a great deal of frustration and criticism, reflecting the urgency and gravity of the situation affecting steel production.

This unusual Saturday session marked the first recall of Parliament since the Falklands War, a decision made by the Speaker of the House, Sir Lindsay Hoyle, amidst what has been termed a ‘foul-up’ in government oversight. As the week ended and Parliament prepared to break for the Easter recess, ministers suddenly realised the severity of the crisis, prompting a frantic scramble to address the issue before adjourning. It was noted that rapid legislative action, typically requiring extensive scrutiny, was taken in a fraction of the usual time, reportedly within the time it might take to chill a bottle of wine.

MPs bearing witness to this session expressed a mix of peevishness and incredulity at being called back from their breaks. There was widespread finger-pointing regarding responsibility for the crisis, with accusations directed at various figures and factors ranging from international events involving Donald Trump and the geopolitical climates under China and Russia, to domestic politics involving figures like Kemi Badenoch and Ed Miliband.

Lucy Powell, the Leader of the House, opened the day’s proceedings with an appeal for cooperative effort amongst members, stating that it was imperative that they work 'constructively together'. However, her remarks were met with scepticism, especially from the opposition. Alex Burghart, representing the Conservative Party, characterised the government's handling of the steel industry crisis as a “total pig’s breakfast,” eliciting laughter from opposition members.

Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds defended the government's actions, crediting Labour MP Rachel Reeves with having ‘restored economic stability’ that allowed for potential salvaging of the steel sector. This remark prompted a raucous response from the opposition, questioning the sincerity behind Reynolds’ claim and generating a tense atmosphere in the Commons.

The session revealed a broader discourse on the implications of external costs, particularly regarding energy. Multiple MPs drew attention to the UK’s Net Zero energy expenses, labelled as the highest globally, which some claimed exacerbated the steel industry’s predicament. Sir Edward Leigh, a Conservative MP, specifically highlighted the difficulties facing Scunthorpe's steelworks due to foreign ownership and China's governance.

As the debates unfolded, various factions within the Parliament pointed fingers at one another; the Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru placed blame on the English, while English representatives pointed to external American and Chinese influences. The Liberal Democrats attributed part of the blame to Brexit, while Northern Irish representatives, who did not get a chance to speak, were assumed to hold similar sentiments regarding the Republic of Ireland.

In the House of Lords, concerns were raised about the philosophical and financial ramifications of the Steel Industry (Special Measures) Act. Discussion indicated a return to nationalisation strategies that had historically failed, highlighted by Lord Hannan, who referenced Kipling’s sentiment about folly. Meanwhile, some political figures, including Jeremy Corbyn of the Independent party, appeared supportive of nationalisation, reflecting a significant ideological divide within Parliament regarding economic intervention in industry.

As Parliament navigated through these contentious discussions, the implications of the legislation are set to unfold against a backdrop of mixed sentiments on both the necessity and effectiveness of government intervention in the ailing sector, leaving the future of the UK steel industry hanging in the balance.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2025/april/house-of-lords-recalled-on-saturday-12-april/> - This URL confirms the recall of the House of Lords on Saturday, April 12, 2025, to consider the Steel Industry (Special Measures) Bill, highlighting the urgency of addressing the steel industry crisis.
* <https://www.politico.eu/article/uk-parliament-recalled-to-discuss-future-of-british-steel/> - This article explains the recall of the British parliament to debate emergency legislation related to British Steel, emphasizing the potential for state control and the impact on jobs in Scunthorpe.
* <https://www.ft.com/content/ba2dde93-8dd2-462f-bde3-6cb9e2d38bf8> - This Financial Times article provides insights into the economic challenges facing British Steel, including the closure of the Scunthorpe site and the government's negotiations with Jingye Group.
* <https://www.eciu.net/media/press-releases/2025/comment-parliament-recalled-to-discuss-emergency-legislation-around-british-steel> - This piece from the Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit discusses the recall of Parliament for emergency legislation that would allow the government to direct steel companies in England, highlighting broader energy policy challenges.
* <https://britishsteel.co.uk/news/british-steel-to-consult-on-proposed-closure-of-scunthorpe-blast-furnaces-rod-mill-and-steelmaking-operation/> - This source details British Steel's announcement regarding the proposed closure of its Scunthorpe operations, setting the stage for the crisis that prompted Parliament's recall.