

Crimea: Media Freedom Coalition statement

Media Freedom Coalition statement:

The undersigned members of the Media Freedom Coalition express their deep concern over the deteriorating media freedom situation in occupied Crimea, Ukraine, and the continued harassment, violence, and prosecution of journalists by the Russian Federation.

Despite the risks, human rights defenders and independent journalists continue to call attention to the ongoing violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and efforts to unduly restrict media freedom in the region. Such is the case with Vladyslav Yesypenko, a freelance journalist associated with the Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty 'Crimea.Reality' project, who had been reporting on social and environmental issues and filming the views of Crimean residents prior to his arrest by the Russian Federation's Federal Security Service (FSB) on March 10, 2021.

We are concerned by reports of mistreatment and abuse while Mr Yesypenko has been detained.

In addition, 9 Crimean Tatar citizen journalists, (Server Mustafayev, Tymur Ibrahimov, Marlen Asanov, Seyran Saliyev, Remzi Bekirov, Ruslan Suleymanov, Osman Aryfmemetov, Rustem Sheyhaliyev, Amet Suleymanov) are currently being held in pre-trial detention centers and prisons in Russia and occupied Crimea.

We call on the Russian Federation to immediately release Vladyslav Yesypenko and all journalists who have been unjustly detained for their work and to allow journalists and media workers to practice their profession without fear of persecution, arbitrary imprisonment, violence, and forced disappearance.

We are also concerned with Russia's efforts to stifle independent print and broadcast media on the peninsula through its continued harassment and intimidation which has effectively forced independent media underground or into exile.

Together with the international community, we will continue to shine a light on the Russian Federation's efforts to curtail media freedom in Crimea. We also bring attention to the continued and systematic restrictions on the freedom of expression and opinion, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information, faced by the residents of Crimea, one of the issues that the Crimea Platform initiative aims to address.

Signed by: Austria, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States

Winners of National Highways competition to help wipe out graffiti are revealed

National Highways is on a mission to tackle the blight of graffiti by finding new products to remove graffiti but also potential solutions that will prevent the vandalism appearing in the first place.

A competition was launched to harvest innovative and modern solutions to the problem that continues to plague the road network.

Grffiti on bridges and next to roads can be distracting for drivers and the clean-up often requires lane or road closures, disrupting traffic. And it is costly – up to £10,000 to remove one instance of graffiti.

National Highways, formerly Highways England, has launched the competition with partners Kier and Connected Places Catapult to identify new solutions for dealing with graffiti.

More than a dozen companies submitted their concepts and products and the five most promising entries have now been announced. These winning ideas will each get up to £30,000 to spend taking their products forward.

The HausBots wall-climbing robot which can apply graffiti-preventative paints

National Highways Head of Innovation Annette Pass said:

We are very excited about taking forward these fascinating, innovative solutions that could help us tackle the relentless problem of graffiti which takes up time and money that would be better spent elsewhere on our network.

The standard of entries was very high and difficult decisions had to be made to whittle them down to a final five. But we are confident that as we develop these ideas further we will be able to identify modern solutions to this age-old problem.

The five winning ideas from the competition are:

Innovation Factory

Audio sensors will detect the application of graffiti in order to alert authorities and trigger audio and visual deterrents.

Sensing Feeling

AI software will analyse behaviour to detect vandals at graffiti hotspots and then deterrents such as alarms and lights can be activated.

HausBots

Wall-climbing robotics will be used to apply graffiti preventative paints, reducing the risk of such hazards as working at heights for the workforce.

Powerlase

This innovation will use lasers to remove graffiti from surfaces whilst preventing additional damage to the finish of surface coatings and films.

Nano Eco Group

A 3D chemical coating to prevent the adhesion of graffiti to a variety of surfaces and films.

Each of the winners will use the money to develop their idea and produce a feasibility study for National Highways which will then decide the most promising products to take forward for use on the road network.

Kier Head of Innovation Tom Tideswell said:

Tackling graffiti is an everyday labour-intensive occurrence for our maintenance teams and we are always on the look-out for innovative solutions to speed up the identification and reduce time on site removing graffiti.

Connected Places Catapult Technical Director Paul Bate said:

Connected Places Catapult are here to help UK companies with great new innovations and get them into the market. We've been really pleased at the quality of the applications and range of different technologies that these companies have brought to this competition. We're looking forward to seeing the outcome of all the feasibility studies and seeing which ones have the most promise for future use on National Highways' network.

The competition follows a recent trial of new solutions that took place over

two days at an off-road site at Gravelly Hill Interchange – more commonly known as Spaghetti Junction – in Birmingham.

Three products or methods were tested to help identify those that most successfully remove graffiti quickly and safely whilst being eco-friendly. And there were another three trialled that go beyond coatings traditionally used to prevent graffiti appearing.

The aim of the trials was to evaluate the performance of newly identified products and increase the range of solutions available for use on the road network.

The cost of both initiatives has been met through the Innovation and Modernisation Designated Fund. This is a ringfenced National Highways fund dedicated to the exploration and adoption of modern and innovative working practices.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the National Highways customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the National Highways press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[The Government's new International Data Transfers Expert Council](#)

The International Data Transfers Expert Council is a subgroup of the [National Data Strategy Forum](#), which was launched in May and held its first meeting in June.

As part of our ambitious, pro-growth [National Data Strategy](#), the UK will work globally to remove unnecessary barriers to cross-border data flows. Doing so brings countless benefits for the economy and society. The free flow of data enables scientific researchers to better understand and diagnose rare genetic diseases; it ensures our money is kept safe by allowing financial institutions to monitor and detect fraudulent activity in real time; and it boosts UK businesses and consumers by delivering cheaper digital services and opening up overseas markets and supply chains.

To achieve our ambitions, the government is seeking the brightest and best minds from across the globe, with unique experience and expertise in this area, to become members of the International Data Transfers Expert Council.

The International Data Transfers Expert Council will consist of 15 leading individuals, drawn from academia, industry and civil society. The members will provide independent and expert advice, of both a technical and tactical nature, which will enable the government to deliver on its mission to champion the international flow of data.

The International Data Transfers Expert Council will play a vital role in the government's work to forge strategic data partnerships with key economies worldwide.

Apply to become a member of the Expert Council

To apply to become a member of the Expert Council, please complete this [application form](#). The deadline for applications is Sunday 12 September at 11.59pm BST.

Applicants will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Ability to provide independent, expert advice to the UK government on international data transfers policy
- Relevant experience working on one or more of the following areas or sectors: data transfers, data protection, international data policy, digital tech, trade, economic policy, law enforcement, national security, academia, science, health, finance or business
- Relevant experience working with, or expert knowledge of, specific countries (including the UK) and regions of strategic interest for the UK
- Global mindset, intercultural understanding, and experience working on international and diplomatic affairs

We will ensure that the membership is representative and diverse in terms of the sectors, geographies, perspectives, and sources of expertise which are represented. DCMS is committed to equality of opportunity and is committed to ensuring that we can better represent the views of the communities which we serve. We particularly encourage applicants from underrepresented groups, those based outside London and the South-East of England, and applicants who have achieved success through non-traditional educational routes.

Members will be expected to consistently attend and engage in meetings, which are expected to be held approximately every two months. Members will also be expected to sign non-disclosure agreements in the event that sensitive information is being discussed.

Please note that members will be selected from both this open recruitment call, as well as by direct invitation by the Secretary of State for Digital (also on the basis of the selection criteria listed above).

ENDS

Find our more about [post-Brexit global data plans](#) to boost growth, increase trade and improve healthcare

UK unveils post-Brexit global data plans to boost growth, increase trade and improve healthcare

- UK announces intention for new multi-billion pound global data partnerships with the US, Australia and Republic of Korea
- International privacy expert John Edwards named as [preferred new Information Commissioner](#) to oversee shake-up
- Consultation to be launched shortly to look at ways to increase trade and innovation through data regime

Data underpins innovation and the global digital economy, everyday apps and cloud computing systems. It allows businesses to trade, drives international investment, supports law enforcement agencies tackling crime, the delivery of critical public services and health and scientific research.

The government is outlining the first territories with which it [will prioritise striking 'data adequacy' partnerships](#) now it has left the EU as the United States, Australia, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, the Dubai International Finance Centre and Colombia.

It is also confirming that future partnerships with India, Brazil, Kenya and Indonesia are being prioritised.

These new data adequacy partnerships, which will be subject to assessments that ensure high data protection standards, will build significantly on the £80 billion of data-enabled service exports to these 10 destinations from the UK every year.

Estimates suggest there is as much as £11 billion worth of trade that goes unrealised around the world due to barriers associated with data transfers*.

The aim is to move quickly and creatively to develop global partnerships which will make it easier for UK organisations to exchange data with important markets and fast-growing economies. These new partnerships will build on the existing 42 adequacy arrangements the UK has in place with countries around the world.

It is part of new plans to use the power of data to drive growth and create jobs while keeping high data protection standards. It will work hand in hand with the UK's trade agreements and support the country's ambitious trade agenda to unlock data flows and minimize unjustified barriers or conditions.

The government also today names New Zealand Privacy Commissioner John Edwards as its preferred candidate to be the UK's next Information Commissioner, following a global search.

As Information Commissioner and head of the UK regulator responsible for enforcing data protection law, he will be empowered to go beyond the regulator's traditional role of focusing only on protecting data rights, with a clear mandate to take a balanced approach that promotes further innovation and economic growth.

Plans to consult on the future of the country's data regime are also being confirmed. The aim is to make the country's data regime even more ambitious, pro-growth and innovation-friendly, while still being underpinned by secure and trustworthy privacy standards.

Digital Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

Now that we have left the EU I'm determined to seize the opportunity by developing a world-leading data policy that will deliver a Brexit dividend for individuals and businesses across the UK.

That means seeking exciting new international data partnerships with some of the world's fastest growing economies, for the benefit of British firms and British customers alike.

It means reforming our own data laws so that they're based on common sense, not box-ticking. And it means having the leadership in place at the Information Commissioner's Office to pursue a new era of data-driven growth and innovation. John Edwards's vast experience makes him the ideal candidate to ensure data is used responsibly to achieve those goals.

John Edwards said:

It is a great honour and responsibility to be considered for appointment to this key role as a watchdog for the information rights of the people of the United Kingdom.

There is a great opportunity to build on the wonderful work already done and I look forward to the challenge of steering the organisation and the British economy into a position of international leadership in the safe and trusted use of data for the benefit of all.

International data partnerships

Having left the EU, the Digital Secretary now holds powers to strike data adequacy partnerships with partners around the world.

The government believes it can unlock more trade and innovation by reducing unnecessary barriers and burdens on international data transfers, thereby opening up global markets to UK businesses. In turn this will help give UK

customers faster, cheaper and more reliable products and services from around the world.

International data transfers are vital for everyday activities such as GPS navigation, video calls with family and friends, online banking, powering apps people use on a daily basis, retail, and businesses' back office delivery.

Data adequacy partnerships, with countries or sectors which have high data protection standards, means organisations do not have to implement costly compliance measures to share personal data internationally.

Securing these arrangements will be a significant step in the UK's ongoing plans to unlock the power of data to drive UK growth and innovation.

It will build on the adequacy arrangements the UK already has in place with international partners including New Zealand, Japan and Canada, as well the Crown Dependencies of Jersey, the Bailiwick of Guernsey and the Isle of Man.

The move will strengthen existing relationships and make data-enabled trade easier, quicker and safer.

A [Mission Statement](#) on the UK's approach to international data transfers and the 'UK Adequacy Manual' are also being published today. These will be used to inform the assessment of a territory's commitment to high data protection standards.

These are alongside a call for experts to form a new [council](#) to inform and consult on the UK's international data transfers policy. The [council](#) will consist of the brightest and best minds from across the globe and be drawn from industry, academia and civil society.

The government is also looking at potential future data sharing partnerships with other fast-growing economies such as Kenya, India, Brazil and Indonesia and will set out more details in the coming months.

New Information Commissioner

The country's experience of fighting the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the power of using personal data responsibly in the public interest and the benefits of collaboration between the public and private sectors.

Data empowered startups to build real-time dashboards with the NHS to pinpoint where ventilators, beds and medics were needed the most. It helped the National Shielding Service to prioritise grocery deliveries to the vulnerable during the height of the pandemic; and major drug treatment and vaccine breakthroughs were driven by big data analytics and artificial intelligence.

The government wants to [empower the Information Commissioner](#) to promote the responsible use of data to stimulate innovation and economic growth and for Mr Edwards to bring a new perspective to the role alongside his wealth of data regulatory experience and 20-year career practising and specialising in

information law.

His experience overseeing an independent country's unique data regime also deemed 'adequate' to the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) will be vital.

He will be able to help the UK achieve its aims of maintaining equivalence with the EU's data standards, so personal data can continue to flow freely, while developing a new pro-growth approach to data law.

The UK's future data protection regime

The UK is already a highly connected hub for data flows and consulting on reforms to UK data law will help build on this strength to ensure the country is the best place in the world to start and grow a digital business.

The government wants to improve the UK's data protection regime to make it even more ambitious and innovation-friendly while still being underpinned by secure and trustworthy privacy standards. It believes improved data sharing can help deliver more agile, effective and efficient public services and help make the UK a science and technology superpower.

For example, [NHSX's national database](#) of chest X-Rays and images taken from hospital patients is being made available to researchers, clinicians and all those wanting to investigate COVID-19. This is helping professionals better understand the disease and develop technology enabling faster patient assessment and care in A&E, ultimately saving time and lives.

In the coming weeks the government will launch a consultation on changes to break down barriers to innovative and responsible uses of data so it can boost growth, especially for startups and small firms, speed up scientific discoveries and improve public services.

The consultation is expected to include the role of the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) so it can be empowered to encourage the responsible use of data to achieve economic and social goals as well as preventing privacy breaches before they occur.

The proposal comes after the UK launched its [Innovation Strategy](#) and a plan to make the country a global leader in innovation-focused digital regulation to help cement the UK's position as a world-leader in science, research and innovation.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

*Based on the [UNCTAD](#) definition of data-enabled services sectors.

Unlocking the power of data is one of the government's [10 tech priorities](#).

Last year the government published its [National Data Strategy](#) to build a world-leading data economy that works for everyone.

In the strategy the government committed to championing the international flow of data, which fuels global business operations, supply chains and trade. It also plays a wider societal role, as the transfer of personal data ensures people's salaries are paid and helps them connect with loved ones from afar.

A [consultation](#) asked the nation to help shape the core principles of the strategy and the UK's ambitions for the use of data, including plans for new data adequacy arrangements. Respondents expressed broad support for UK adequacy assessment plans and the government's international vision to position the UK as a global champion of safe and secure data flows.

The US was identified as a priority country with which to secure an adequacy arrangement, particularly in light of the disruption caused by last year's [ruling by the EU Court of Justice](#) which invalidated the EU-US Privacy Shield adequacy arrangement.

The Republic of Korea and Australia were also cited as priorities and there were calls for the UK to explore potential arrangements with emerging markets in Africa, the Middle East, South America and the Indian Subcontinent.

Earlier this year, the government made clear its [intention](#) to expand the list of adequate destinations in line with its global ambitions and commitment to high standards of data protection.

This includes the United States, Australia, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, the Dubai International Finance Centre and Colombia. Future partnerships with India, Brazil, Kenya and Indonesia are also being prioritised.

Australia

The UK has significant total trade, services trade, and data dependent trade with Australia, which is in the top 10 of the UK's largest trading partners without any form of adequacy arrangement in place.

Australia has a rapidly growing digital market and tech sector focused in the main cities and a growing number of successful global tech companies.

Australia has a strong data protection regime, which is designed to foster transparent and robust personal data handling practices and business accountability.

Colombia

Colombia is the third largest economy in South America and has seen strong economic growth and development over the past decade (among the strongest in Latin America and Caribbean). It was the UK's third largest trading partner in South America in 2019.

Colombia's green infrastructure push is attracting UK investment and involves outsourcing for engineering and marketing staff, key data driven industries.

UK and Colombian companies and universities collaborate in pharmaceuticals

and intellectual property, for example for Covid-19 clinical trials. Such collaboration requires the cross-border transfer of personal data.

Colombia operates a comprehensive data protection framework that incorporates many principles and rights contained in UK legislation.

Dubai International Finance Centre

Dubai International Finance Centre has strong links with UK financial services, and is one of the most reputable and recognised centres for investment in the region.

The Dubai International Finance Centre has developed a strong data protection law that contains similar principles and protections to UK law.

The United Arab Emirates is the UK's largest export market in the Middle East and the 18th biggest globally, and the UK's sixth largest export market outside the EU.

There are 5,000 British companies operating in the UAE, many of which depend on data transfers, including BP, Shell, Rolls Royce, BAE Systems, SERCO, Standard Chartered, HSBC and John Lewis / Waitrose. 107 entities in the DIFC are branches of businesses based in the UK. 16% of DIFC's financial service companies are originally based in the UK.

DIFC has several Memoranda of Understanding with a number of UK regulators and UK organisations such as the Financial Conduct Authority.

Republic of Korea

The Republic of Korea has a comprehensive data protection framework that has many parallels with the principles and rights contained in UK data protection law.

Both the UK and the Republic of Korea were founding members of the D9 (previously D5 and D7), the world's leading digital governments network and cooperate bilaterally on a number of digital and tech issues such as creative industries, AI, and 5G.

In the four quarters to Q2 2019, Republic of Korea was the UK's 24th largest trading partner, accounting for £13.7 billion or 1.0% of total UK trade in goods and services.

Singapore

Singapore is the UK's biggest trading partner in South East Asia and is a like-minded, innovative and forward-looking partner with nearly 5,000 UK companies open a base in Singapore or use Singapore as a headquarters for their Asia business.

Between 2016 and 2019, UK services exports increased by £1.3 billion with 70% of these exports delivered remotely.

Singapore has a strong private sector data protection regime which has evolved to suit the increasingly digital world on which the global economy relies.

United States of America

The US is the UK's most important national trading partner in data-enabled exports. 92% of the UK's service exports to the US are data-enabled, amounting to £67.03bn, and the government is working to remove barriers with the US to enable easier data-enabled flows and help support this strong trading relationship.

The UK government intervened in the Schrems II ruling last year. The Court of Justice of the European Union invalidated the Privacy Shield, which was a critically important framework for transatlantic data transfer. The UK government made clear it was disappointed in that ruling and it has heard from stakeholders how important it is that there is a solid and seamless mechanism for data transfers to the US.

Government announces preferred candidate for Information Commissioner

News story

John Edwards is the Government's preferred candidate for Information Commissioner, the Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden announced today.



John Edwards is currently New Zealand's Privacy Commissioner and will bring with him a wealth of data regulatory experience, as Privacy Commissioner but also from 20 years of practicing law and specialising in information law.

Mr Edwards will now appear before MPs on the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee for pre-appointment scrutiny on 9th September 2021.

Under the Data Protection Act, the Information Commissioner is appointed by Her Majesty by Letters Patent on the basis of fair and open competition and on the recommendation from ministers (the Secretary of State for Digital Culture, Media and Sport, through the Prime Minister).

Ministers were assisted in their decision-making by an Advisory Assessment Panel which included a departmental official and a senior independent panel member approved by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Notes to editors

- John Edwards was appointed to the independent statutory position of New Zealand's Privacy Commissioner in February 2014.
- He is currently serving his second five-year term, responsible for the implementation of New Zealand's newly passed Privacy Act 2020.
- His Office provides independent comment, advice and compliance action on significant personal information policies and issues.
- He chaired the Global Privacy Assembly (then known as the International Conference of Data Protection and Privacy Commissioners) from 2014-17, and has chaired and hosted a number of international conferences.
- Prior to his appointment, John practiced law in Wellington, New Zealand, for more than 20 years specialising in information law, representing a wide range of public and private sector clients.
- He has held a number of independent statutory appointments, including as watchdog for those in compulsory mental health care, and intellectual disability services.
- This appointment process was run in accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

Published 26 August 2021