

Corporate report: BEIS annual report and accounts 2016 to 2017

Updated: Errors in the merging of records from BIS and DECC resulted in incorrect diversity data being published. This has now been corrected (page 81).

This report sets out the activities of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) over the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.

It provides detailed information on:

- performance
- how we used our resources
- our progress against supporting economic growth
- our objectives

The resource accounts provide detailed accounting and expenditure information for the financial year 2016 to 2017.

Note: BEIS was created in July 2016 following the merger of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC).

The Tories need to return to the drawing board on the Ebacc – Angela Rayner

Angela Rayner MP, Labour's Shadow

Education Secretary, responding to the publication of the consultation response to the English Baccalaureate (Ebacc), said:

“The Tories have dragged their feet for months on releasing the responses to this consultation and it is clear why.

“It is essential that children have a firm grip of the core subjects at school, but it is just as important that all children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum which over two thirds of respondents highlighted is at threat under the

Ebacc.

“The Tories need to return to the drawing board on the Ebacc and make sure it is delivering the excellent, well-rounded education all children deserve.

“If they were serious about delivering a broad and balanced curriculum for schools they would not be cutting their budgets or imposing a cap on public sector pay that makes it impossible for schools to recruit and retain the staff that they need.”

[Opening remarks of First Vice-President Frans Timmermans: College readout on grave concerns about the clear risks for independence of the judiciary in Poland](#)

As you know, the Commission already concluded in our 2016 Recommendations that there is a systemic threat to the rule of law in Poland.

Let me recall that the Commission’s concerns are shared equally by the European Parliament and the Council, as well as by the Council of Europe, the Venice Commission and many other independent observers.

Just to stress, the analysis made by the leaders of various political groups in the European Parliament is completely shared by the European Commission. That should not come as a surprise since our actions over the last year and a half have been in line with that analysis.

Recent measures taken by the Polish authorities in relation to the judicial system and the judges greatly amplify the threat to the Rule of Law. That is why we had a discussion today in College on how to respond to this.

Let me recall the heart of the matter.

Under its Rule of Law Framework, the Commission has issued an Opinion and two Recommendations in relation to the Polish Constitutional Tribunal – in essence on the fact that the Constitutional Tribunal is no longer composed in accordance with the Polish Constitution and publication of its judgments is taken out of its hands.

Some judges lawfully elected are not appointed, some judges appointed are not

lawfully elected. The legitimacy of the Tribunal is now seriously undermined.

In addition to that situation, four legislative measures reforming the judiciary as a whole have been presented recently to the Polish Parliament:

The first one, the law on the National School of Judiciary, has already entered into force;

The second, the law on the National Council for the Judiciary; the third, the law on the Ordinary Courts Organisation. These two have been adopted and await signing by the President;

And the law on the Supreme Court, which I understand has now been sent to a Committee in the Parliament for further review.

These laws considerably increase the systemic threat to the rule of law in Poland.

Each individual law, if adopted, would seriously erode the independence of the Polish judiciary.

Collectively, they would abolish any remaining judicial independence and put the judiciary under full political control of the government.

This is not the moment to go into a deep legal analysis, but under these reforms judges will serve at the pleasure of the political leaders and be dependent upon them from their appointment to their pension.

There are many reforms I can mention. Let me just mention but a few.

The 15 judges-members of the National Council for the Judiciary will be appointed by the Sejm whilst currently they are chosen by judges.

The mandate of all the current judges-members of the National Council for the Judiciary will be prematurely terminated.

The Minister of Justice will be granted the power to appoint and dismiss presidents of courts without being bound by concrete criteria, with no obligation to state reasons, and with no possibility for the judiciary to block these decisions.

I could mention many more but let me not do that right now.

These reforms raise concerns as to their compatibility with the Polish Constitution. However, an independent constitutional review is no longer possible given the current situation of the Constitutional Tribunal.

The laws also raise concerns of compatibility with Union law, since Polish courts like the courts of all Member States are called upon to provide an effective remedy in case of violations of EU law, in which case they act as the 'judges of the European Union'.

This matters potentially to anybody doing business in and with Poland, or

even anybody visiting the country. I think every single citizen wants to have this, if they need a day in court, without having to think: "Hmm, is this judge going to get a call from the Minister telling him or her what to do." That is not how independent judiciary works.

On 13 July 2017, I wrote to both the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Polish Minister of Justice with my concerns about the new proposals.

I have asked the two Ministers to relaunch a dialogue and I have invited them to Brussels.

The letter explicitly underlined the importance of not adopting the new proposals.

Unfortunately, on 15 July 2017 two of the laws were approved by the Parliament.

The rule of law is one of the values on which our Union is founded and which defines our Union.

This is no matter only for the Polish people. What is happening in Poland affects the Union as a whole. All of us, every single Member State, every citizen of the Union.

The new laws are not all yet officially in place. So today we cannot take formal decisions just yet.

But we can send a clear and strong political message.

First of all, we will swiftly prepare a third recommendation under the Rule of Law Framework to be formally adopted by College next week;

Secondly, we will swiftly prepare infringement procedures for breach of EU law, also to be launched next week;

Finally, with regard to Article 7, the option of triggering Article 7 of the Treaty was part of the discussion and it should come as no surprise to anyone that, given the latest developments, we are coming very close to triggering Article 7.

Having said all of this, our hand is still extended to the Polish authorities for dialogue. But dialogue must be aimed at redressing the situation. And dialogue, if it happens or not, will not stop the Commission from taking any measures it deems necessary in this framework.

Finally, you know, all of you have been following this. A lot of emotions around this. A lot of personal attacks. Putting people's personal credibility or integrity in the discussion. Mine or other people's. I can take it. They should take their best shot.

But what should not be happening is that journalists are intimidated to do their work, their job. What should not be happening is that anybody sitting in this room, who wants to ask critical questions of me, would feel a

reservation, would feel fear for consequences if they do that.

That is not how it works in a free society. That is not how it works. So I would call upon everyone involved in this discussion, to stop it already with this intimidation of journalists if they feel that journalists are asking too critical questions. To stop it already that if a journalist asks a critical question, to brand them enemy of the people or something like that.

“In darkness democracy dies”, I think is the motto of the Washington Post. For democracy we need the press to be able to work unimpeded, free. To be at times annoying, also to me. I have some experience. That is your job. My job is to take it and to answer your questions. This should be the attitude of everyone, involved in politics in the European Union. That is the European way, that is how the European Union can function, that is how our people can live in a free and fair and open society.

Thank you very much.

Statement to Parliament: Conflict, Stability and Security Fund 2016 to 2017 and settlement for 2017 to 2018: written ministerial statement

I wish to update the House on how the Government has been supporting our national security interests through conflict prevention, peace building, stabilisation, peacekeeping and conflict resolution using the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF).

Details of the programmes funded by the CSSF and its impact so far are in the first [Annual Report](#), a copy of which has been placed in the library of the House. The publication of this first report reflects the Government’s commitment to transparency in the delivery of Official Development Assistance. We will be updating GOV.UK pages with more information on the CSSF and individual programmes.

The CSSF replaced the Conflict Pool in April 2015, as part of a new, more strategic approach to enhancing the delivery of our national security interests directed by the National Security Council (NSC).

As announced in the [2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review \(SDSR\)](#), CSSF funding has continued to increase and will be £1.162 billion in 2017 to 2018. The CSSF is now one of the world’s largest mechanisms for addressing conflict and instability. Its programmes deliver against more than 40 cross government strategies set by the National Security Council (NSC). These help to secure

the UK, promote peace and stability overseas and contribute directly to SDR objectives.

Parliamentary accountability for taxpayers' money spent via the CSSF is provided primarily through the Joint Committee for the National Security Strategy (JCNSS). The JCNSS concluded its first inquiry into the CSSF in February. We have responded to the inquiry report and are taking forward many of their recommendations. Further announcements on governance will be made in due course.

Meeting both our legal and policy gender commitments is central to the delivery of the CSSF. Last year the CSSF spent £214.5 million on programmes which addressed gender equality. For example the CSSF in the Democratic Republic of Congo supported the provision of free legal assistance to 269 victims of international war crimes, of which 179 were women, mostly victims of sexual violence.

In addition to supporting peace building activity, CSSF funding is strengthening the multilateral system, supporting the UN and other international organisations to develop more effective multilateral responses to instability. The CSSF funds our contributions (known as assessed costs) to the UN peacekeeping budget. We are the sixth biggest contributor, spending over £300 million in 2016 to 2017. In addition, we have been using CSSF funds to help reform the UN and UN peacekeeping, coordinating outreach to Member States to secure pledges of personnel for peace operations and to assist with the transition from pledges to deployments. In 2016 to 2017 the CSSF provided a further £15 million to fund the doubling of the UK's troop contribution to peacekeeping through 2 new deployments: 70 UK military personnel to support UNSOS in Somalia, which provides essential logistical support for the African Union Mission (AMISOM) that is combating the terrorist organisation Al Shabaab; and 370 UK military personnel to provide engineering and medical support to the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

To address some of the JCNSS recommendations for the CSSF a rapid review is being undertaken of Cross-Whitehall Fund governance and structures.

Conflict, Stability and Security Fund resources, financial year 2017 to 2018

CSSF	2017/18 (millions)
Peacekeeping & Multilateral	391.7
Regional/Country Strategies	606.3
Security & Defence	150
Delivery Support, including the Stabilisation Unit & National School of Government	14.5
Total	1162.5

Read the [CSSF Annual Report](#).

[Press release: Anglers handed fines by court for fishing illegally in Telford](#)

On 12 July 2017 at Telford Magistrates' Court, Ronald Manbord of Coronation Road, Bilston, and Michael Lee of Princes End, Dawley Bank, Telford, were fined for fishing without a licence following a prosecution by the Environment Agency.

Manbord was fined £300, and Lee £250. Both men, who pleaded guilty, were also ordered to pay costs of £100 and a victim surcharge of £30.

Manbord, 57, was caught fishing without a licence on 17 October 2016 at Bayliss Pool in Telford. Lee, 37, was caught on 22 January 2017 fishing on the River Severn at Ironbridge.

Andrew Eardley from the Environment Agency said:

Most anglers enjoying the sport fish legally, but there continues to be a small number of anglers who fail to buy a fishing licence. These few are cheating their fellow anglers and the future of the sport.

An annual licence costs from just £30. It seems ridiculous that anglers risk significant fines and costs, a criminal conviction and the loss of their fishing equipment for such a small fee.

Money from fishing licence sales is invested in England's fisheries and is used to fund a wide range of projects to improve facilities for anglers, including protecting stocks from illegal fishing, pollution and disease; restoring fish stocks through re-stocking; eradicating invasive species; and fish habitat improvements. Licence money is also used to fund the Angling Trust to provide information about fishing and to encourage participation in the sport.

You need a valid Environment Agency fishing licence to fish for salmon, trout, freshwater fish, smelt or eel in England. Buying a rod licence is easy and can be done [online](#). A licence lasts 365 days from the day you buy it.

Anyone witnessing illegal fishing incidents in progress can report it directly to the Environment Agency hotline on 0800 80 70 60. Information on illegal fishing and environmental crime can also be reported anonymously to Crime stoppers on 0800 555 111.