

Principaux résultats de la réunion ministérielle du Partenariat oriental, 19 juin 2017

On 23 June 2016 citizens of the United Kingdom (UK) voted to leave the European Union (EU). On 29 March 2017 the UK formally notified the European Council of its intention to leave the EU by...

Over the past 20 years, the European Union has put in place some of the highest common asylum standards in the world. And in the past two years, European migration policy has advanced in leaps and...

'Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity.' Robert Schuman 9 May 1950 On 25 March 2017,...

In response to the illegal annexation of Crimea and deliberate destabilisation of a neighbouring sovereign country, the EU has imposed restrictive measures against the Russian Federation. Overview...

European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker delivered his annual State of the Union speech at the European Parliament on 14 September 2016, just two days ahead of the informal meeting of 27...

Enlargement is the process whereby countries join the EU. Since it was founded in 1957, the EU has grown from 6 member countries to 28. Any European country that respects the principles of liberty,...

News story: Chief Constable Alfred Hitchcock

Alf became the Chief Constable four years ago and during that time he established strong links and working relationships with a wide range of colleagues across the MOD.

Alf committed the whole of his working life to public service having joined Lancashire Constabulary in 1977 and during the past 40 years he had worked in the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), the National Policing Improvement

Agency, Bedfordshire Police and, since 2013, the MOD as Chief Constable of the MDP.

In 2005, Alf led the Safer Neighbourhoods Programme within the MPS and delivered the successful roll-out of Neighbourhood Policing across the whole of London by the end of 2006. In 2007, he was appointed as a Deputy Assistant Commissioner within the MPS with responsibility for Operational Services, with portfolios including Professional Standards, Command and Control, Diversity and Citizen Focus.

In 2009, Alf was appointed Deputy Chief Constable at the National Policing Improvement Agency at Bramshill to help set up the new National College of Police Leadership and to review its leadership courses.

Alf was the national policing lead for equality and human rights for four years until 2016. He was also the national police spokesman on Knife Crime, and in 2008 he was appointed by the then Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith, to develop and lead the National Tackling Knives Action Programme.

Moving to Bedfordshire Police in 2011 as the Chief Constable, Alf led a complete restructuring of the force, which resulted in double the national average levels of crime reduction and similar improvements in detection of crimes across the county, whilst meeting the budgetary challenges during this period. It was these skills and qualities that led to his appointment as the Chief Constable of the MDP in 2013.

Mark Lancaster, Minister for the Armed Forces who until recently had ministerial responsibility for the Ministry of Defence Police, said:

I was deeply saddened to hear about the untimely death of Alf Hitchcock. I knew Alf very well in his capacity as the Chief Constable of the Ministry of Defence Police and held him in the highest possible regard. He was a consummate professional and I echo the sentiments that have been made by others. My sympathies go to Alf's family and friends at this very difficult time."

On Alf Hitchcock's contribution to policing within the UK, Andy Adams Deputy Chief Constable for the MDP said:

there are few in policing who won't recognise the name Alf Hitchcock; his impact upon policing has been felt across many police forces as well as at a national level. The sadness felt within the MDP at his loss is palpable – he will be sorely missed as a cop, as a colleague and as a friend to many.

Julie Taylor, Director General Head Office & Commissioning Services commented:

Alf will be sorely missed. He has been an inspirational leader for the Ministry of Defence Police, modernising the force and ensuring they could rise to the new and demanding challenges they face. He was liked and respected by his officers and by everyone who knew him in the wider MOD. Above all, I will remember him as someone who was passionate about public service, relentless in pursuit of excellence and consistently positive and optimistic. Our thoughts are with his family.

David Riddle, the Chair of the Ministry of Defence Police Committee, said:

Alf Hitchcock's sudden death last week after a very short illness was a great loss for everyone who knew him, for the force and for policing as a whole. We will miss him greatly for his kindness, his approachability, his boundless energy and his sense of fun. We will miss him above all for his belief in the importance of policing, and in the police officers under his command who do amazing things day in and day out to deliver security. All the Members of the Ministry of Defence Police Committee send their condolences to Alf's wife and family, and to all in the force.

Alf was awarded the Queen's Police Medal (QPM) in 2008 for distinguished services to policing. He was subsequently made a Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the 2017 New Year's Honours list for services to Defence and Policing. Alf is survived by his wife Helen, his two daughters and two grandchildren.

SNP Westminster frontbench team and spokespeople

New SNP Westminster Leader Ian Blackford has announced the new SNP frontbench team. Here's the list in full.

More than 10 injured in NE China gas blast



More than 10 people were injured after a gas blast at a night market in northeast China's Liaoning Province on Tuesday. [Photo/Weibo.com]

More than 10 people were injured after a gas blast at a night market in northeast China's Liaoning Province on Tuesday, said local authorities.

The blast happened at 8:20 p.m. at a pancake booth in Jinzhou City, Liaoning, due to the owner's misoperation of the gas cylinder, said the city authorities.

The injured have received treatment. None is in critical condition.

Rainstorm to sweep away heat wave in Beijing

The recent heat wave in Beijing and neighboring areas will be swept away by a rainstorm, according to the Beijing Meteorological Observatory Tuesday.

From Wednesday to Saturday, heavy rain will hit Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei Province, the observatory said.

Beijing will experience thunderstorms from Wednesday afternoon, and heavy rainfall Thursday, with precipitation of 40 mm to 150 mm, said Guo Jinlan, chief forecaster of the Beijing Meteorological Bureau.

Accumulative precipitation in Hebei and Tianjin is also forecast to reach rainstorm levels, Guo said.

The bureau has reminded citizens to stay away from dangerous sites such as rivers, reservoirs and construction venues during the rainstorm and called for prevention of rain-triggered flood and landslides.

Four tourists and one herder died, with another missing, after a rainstorm triggered a flash flood in a mountainous area of Beijing and Hebei Province Sunday.