

China to tighten environmental data fraud prevention and control

Chinese environment authorities will establish a system to prevent and punish environmental data fraud, according to an official.

Since environmental monitoring is an important part of technical support in environment management, the ministry will give administrative penalties to people involved in environmental data fraud and transfer them to judicial organs for investigation if necessary, said the official with the Ministry of Environmental Protection.

Xi'an Intermediate People's Court in northwest China's Shaanxi Province Friday sentenced seven people, including the heads of two environmental protection branches, to imprisonments of over one year for falsifying air quality monitoring data.

The court said they interfered in the data collection of air quality, and used cotton to fill sampling instruments to lower pollution data, in February and March 2016.

Letter from John McDonnell to Philip Hammond

Today the Shadow Chancellor has written to Philip Hammond calling on him to make public the cost of any secret deals he has made with the DUP in order to prop up the Government in parliament.

Please find below the text of the letter sent today by John McDonnell to Philip Hammond:

Dear Chancellor,

I am writing to seek information on a specific element of the deal being discussed between the Prime Minister and representatives of the Democratic Unionist Party, which has emerged in the press.

It is reported that the DUP is seeking the ending of Air Passenger Duty levied on passengers at airports in Northern Ireland.

HMRC estimated the total revenue from APD in Northern Ireland in 2015/16 to be in the region of £90 million.

This figure is an estimate and may need adjustment to take into account further devolved matters.

However a revenue stream of this scale is significant and would pay for the equivalent of, for example, an additional 2000 firefighters.

I am writing to ask whether the Government has been asked for this measure by the DUP, has agreed to it or is considering it.

In the interest of basic openness and transparency in government I am writing to ask that you publish any financial measures that have been discussed with the DUP and set out the financial implications of any measures agreed with this party.

I look forward to a prompt response given the considerable public interest in this matter and its consequences on our public finances.

Yours sincerely,

John McDonnell MP

Shadow Chancellor

[EU channels extra support for Portugal to help with forest fires](#)

This morning President **Juncker** and Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides** immediately offered the EU's full readiness and capacity to do all possible to help and expressed their condolences to all those affected.

The European Commission is in constant contact and coordination with the Portuguese authorities. Earlier this morning Commissioner Stylianides called Portugal's Minister of Interior de Sousa to express the Commission's solidarity to the people of Portugal and its authorities.

In addition to immediate EU support mobilised already this morning, further assistance is now on its way.

"Portugal is not alone in these difficult times. Europe is about solidarity and we have acted quickly to send concrete support since the early hours. Following France's three firefighting planes dispatched this morning, let me now thank Italy and Spain who have also offered four additional planes through the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism.

This vital support will help the heroic Portuguese firefighters who are

risking their lives to bring the fires under control. I encourage participating states to now also offer firefighters to Portugal, following their latest request for assistance. The EU continues to be ready to provide additional emergency support Portugal requires," said Commissioner **Stylianides**.

Portugal activated the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism today, requesting firefighting aircraft. It has now requested firefighters.

The European Commission, through its 24/7 Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), has been in constant contact with EU Member States to channel support through the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism.

A liaison officer from the ERCC has arrived in the country to help coordinate offers of assistance.

Background

The planes channelled through the Civil Protection Mechanism will operate in the affected areas such as Vila Real, Coimbra and Leiria.

Through the mechanism France has offered three planes, Spain two and Italy two. Spain also offered four on a bilateral basis.

The European Commission coordinates voluntary offers made by participating states through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, and can co-finance the transport of relief items and experts to the country in question.

The mobilisation of assistance is coordinated through the Commission's Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), which closely monitors developments and offers the possibility of transport co-financing for the offered assistance.

The assistance can consist of items for immediate relief as well as experts and supporting intervention teams. In the case of fires, this can include fire-extinguishing aircraft. The Commission cannot send planes or equipment itself via the Mechanism.

Overall, the Mechanism facilitates the cooperation in disaster response among 34 European states (28 EU Member States, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Norway, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey).

[EU Civil Protection Mechanism Factsheet](#)

Wokingham Choral Society at All Saints

Yesterday I enjoyed the concert put on by Wokingham Choral Society in All

Saints Church. Patrick Allies conducted the choir well as they sang a number of pieces about evening. The music included soothing lullabies and Evening service music, with works by Rachmaninov, Benjamin Britten, Herbert Howells , Elgar, Holst and others.

I would like to thank all involved in organising the evening and in performing. The singing was great, and the organ pieces were well played by Benedict Lewis-Smith.

Chancellor agrees with government policy on Brexit

As forecast here, the Chancellor does support the Lancaster House Speech and White Paper, approved by Parliament, which he helped compose.

The BBC, of course, cannot bring themselves to make that the headline, having forecast the opposite. So they are now trying to suggest the Chancellor disagrees that No deal is better than a bad deal. Yet he clearly stated that a punishment deal would be unacceptable and worse than no deal!

Come on BBC, accept you lost on this one.