

[Blog postings](#)

I am extremely busy this week-end as there is a lot going on that matters to Wokingham and the wider nation. If people persist in offering multiple postings and long postings it may take time to moderate them. I am not slowing them down to censor them but slowing them down because I do not have the time to moderate them. The dreadful inferno at the flats needs proper attention. The Brexit talks tomorrow are an important and fast moving story.

[News story: Defence Secretary welcomes new Canadian Defence Policy](#)

The Second Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry today (18 June) took over the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace for the first time in history.

The role will involve 85 soldiers from the unit, as well as musicians from the Royal Canadian Artillery band, who are based at Garrison Edmonton, Alberta. The Canadian troops will be instantly recognisable by the distinctive French Grey colour on the collar and cuff – known as regimental facings – of their full dress scarlet tunic.

In another demonstration of the UK and Canada's strong Defence relationship, Sir Michael has given his backing to Canada's new Defence Policy.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

I welcome the new Canadian Defence Policy. Its commitments to remain Engaged in the World, and maintain Canadian contributions to peace and stabilisation, mirror our own.

I am greatly encouraged by the Policy's commitment to an uplift in the Canadian Defence budget and new capabilities. In particular, the commitment to invest \$108 billion in purchasing and upgrading Canadian Forces equipment, including a full complement of 15 new warships and 88 advanced fighter jets, is a welcome development. This is representative of the way that NATO members across the alliance are stepping up to ensure that our collective defence will have the modern capabilities needed in a changing world.

[John McDonnell calls on Tories to stop using EU before Brexit to aide tax avoidance](#)

John

McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, calling on the Government not to block tax avoidance measures at the European Parliament following a vote last week when Tory MEPs voted to water down country-by-country reporting, said:

"Last week at the European Parliament Theresa May gave an insight into what a Tory Brexit will truly look like, as Tory MEPs voted to water down measures to clampdown on tax avoidance.

"Once again the Tories have shown their true colours on tax avoidance and evasion by voting to grant potentially permanent exemptions from scrutiny for large multinationals.

"Theresa May could have instructed her Tory MEPs to support public country-by-country reporting but has chosen not to; as she continues not to lead her party, but to be led by it.

"While the Tories say one thing on tax avoidance when they think the public is listening, they do another when they think no one is watching. Because deep down they really just want to turn our country into a tax haven off the coast of Europe.

"The Tories need to commit to stop using the European Parliament as a vehicle to block or hold up measures to clamp down on tax avoidance and evasion.

"Only a Labour Government would be prepared to work with our European neighbours in clamping down on tax evasion and avoidance, and introduce our Tax Transparency Enforcement Programme that would end the injustice where a few big corporations in our country are paying lower rates of tax than many of their employees."

Statement by Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides on the deadly forest fires in Portugal

All our thoughts are with the families and friends of those affected by the deadly forest fires that have struck several parts of Portugal.

We express our condolences to those that have lost loved ones.

The EU is fully ready to help. All will be done to assist the authorities and people of Portugal at this time of need.

In an immediate response to a request for assistance by the Portuguese authorities, the EU's Civil Protection Mechanism has been activated to provide firefighting aircraft.

Immediately, France has offered three planes through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and they will be quickly sent to assist the local emergency efforts. In addition, Spain has also sent aircraft on a bilateral basis.

We commend the bravery of the firefighters and emergency services on the scene risking their own lives to save others.

The European Commission's Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC), which monitors natural disasters 24/7, is in constant contact with the national civil protection authorities.

The EU's emergency centre has sent a liaison officer to Portugal and will coordinate the delivery of support and any further requests.

Building a fairer, greener Scotland

We all know there are many, complex factors which define the character of modern Scotland.