

Press release: Climate change means more frequent flooding, warns Environment Agency

Intense bouts of flooding are set to become more frequent, the Environment Agency has warned today (Friday 16 February).

The warning follows a pattern of severe flooding over the past 10 years linked to an increase in extreme weather events as the country's climate changes. Met Office records show that since 1910 there have been 17 record breaking rainfall months or seasons – with 9 of them since 2000. As intense storms are becoming more frequent, sea levels are also rising because of climate change.

The Environment Agency has today launched its [Flood Action Campaign](#), targeting younger people through social media and online advertising to encourage them to check their flood risk at GOV.UK, sign up for free warnings and be prepared to take action when flooding hits. Research shows that 18 to 34 year olds are least likely to perceive flood risk to their area, know how to protect their homes or where to go for information. They are also at highest risk of fatality as they are less likely to perceive their personal risk.

Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, said:

Climate change is likely to mean more frequent and intense flooding. Floods destroy – lives, livelihoods, and property.

Our flood defences reduce the risk of flooding, and our flood warnings help keep communities safe when it threatens. But we can never entirely eliminate the risk of flooding. Checking your flood risk is the first step to protecting yourself, your loved ones and your home.

In summer 2012, the lengthy period of drought the country had experienced came to an abrupt end when prolonged and intense rainfall increased the risk of flooding from rivers and surface water for long periods. Almost 8,000 homes and businesses were flooded across the country, particularly in the south west.

The winter of 2013 to 2014 started with a coastal surge and record sea levels on the north and east coasts. This was followed by 12 storms in succession and became the wettest winter for 250 years – 11,000 homes were flooded.

Winter 2015 to 2016 brought widespread flooding to 17,000 properties across the north of England, with named storms Desmond, Eva and Frank causing December 2015 to be the wettest month ever recorded.

The threat of flooding is real and increasing – as is also demonstrated by its listing as one of the [nation's major threats](#).

Last year, the Met Office published new innovative research which found that for England and Wales there is a 1 in 3 chance of a new monthly rainfall record in at least one region each winter.

By their very nature extreme events are rare and a novel research method was needed to quantify the risk of extreme rainfall within the current climate.

Professor Adam Scaife, who leads this area of research at the Met Office, said:

“The Met Office supercomputer was used to simulate thousands of possible winters, some of them much more extreme than we’ve yet witnessed. This gave many more extreme events than have happened in the real world, helping us work out how severe things could get.”

[Remarks by President Donald Tusk after his meeting with President of Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaitė](#)

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We just had, with President Grybauskaitė, a very good meeting, in preparation of next week’s informal European Council.

We discussed in particular the future budget of the EU, a topic which of course your President knows very well.

The future budget of the EU will be a particular challenge to negotiate this time, in the context of Brexit. Not only because the UK’s departure will lead to a financing gap. But also because the UK referendum has made us realise even more, the need to strengthen our efforts on key challenges. By which I mean migration, defence, and the freedom of movement, especially the mobility of young people. And these new priorities will require additional money.

Of course the main reason for my trip to Vilnius is tomorrow’s celebrations of the hundred years of the restoration of Lithuanian independence. Being

here today is, for me – as the President of the European Council, but also as a Pole, as a historian and, first and foremost, as your friend – particularly important. It is no coincidence that when I became Prime Minister of Poland, I decided to pay my first foreign visit to Vilnius.

Today, Lithuania stands tall, as dignified and determined as the white Vytis on your country's great coat of arms. It is a symbol of stable growth and political predictability. But in the decades following the Declaration of the 16th of February 1918, your history was turbulent. And for a long time you have had to rely, almost entirely, on yourselves. This is why no-one can lecture Lithuanians about the difference between declaring independence and winning and keeping it.

Independence in today's world means having your own voice at the table, where countries face common challenges and threats together. So today, the best guarantee of Lithuania's independence is its participation in international organisations: the United Nations, NATO, and of course the European Union. In fact, only by being united can European nations be sovereign and free of dependency on the great superpowers. Lithuania understands this all too well, and that is why it has always played an active, and constructive, role. Your national motto could also be the motto of the whole European community: "Let unity flourish", *Vienybė težydi*.

Thank you. *Ačiū*

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News story: Firing of 50,000th simulated round from turret trainer signals savings of £125M

The trainer, based at Tidworth Garrison in Wiltshire, was first introduced in 2005 to train the commander, gunner and loader of an AS90 – a self-propelled 155mm Howitzer gun.

It is designed to allow gun crews to practice their routine firing drills, turret operating procedures and crew duties without the expense of live firing and offers the immersion and realism of firing, with a reduced safety risk and a highly reduced cost.



Based on a real AS90 turret, the trainer uses an electro-mechanical system to fully replicate a complete firing cycle. This includes the weight and size of the artillery rounds and the noise and turret movement on firing.

Since the trainer was introduced more than 8,500 soldiers have used the equipment. This experience enhances their safety for when they progress to live firing and allows them to focus on more advanced training scenarios.

Defence Minister Guto Bebb said:

This equipment provides high quality training for the British Army that's also cost efficient. As live firing events are extremely expensive and can be logistically challenging, using the AS90 turret trainer is a great alternative. It also offers immersive training that prepares users for live firing both in practice and on the battlefield.

The 50,000th simulated round was fired by Lieutenant General Paul Jaques, Chief of Materiel (Land) at Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S), the MOD's procurement agency based at MOD Abbey Wood in Bristol.

Lt Gen Paul Jaques said:

This firing marks another milestone demonstrating Defence's innovative and cost-saving approach to deliver effective and

worthwhile training for our personnel. I'm exceedingly proud of the team's work and the benefits gained by the soldiers that get to use the training equipment.

The milestone, on February 14, represented savings of approximately £125 million over a 12-year period on the basis that live rounds cost £2,500 per use.

[Call for applications Migration Media Award 2018](#)



The 2018 edition of the Migration Media Award is now accepting applications until 15 May 2018.

The Migration Media Award (www.migration-media-award.eu) funded by the European Union, hosted over 35 winning stories in the 2017 edition showcasing journalistic excellence on migration in the Euro-Mediterranean region. In line with the quality and number of applications received last year, this year's edition will reward up to 48 published stories resulting from time-intensive, un-sensationalistic, in-depth reporting and contributing to balance the narrative on migration, making it, evidence based, nuanced and less polarising. The awards will consist in funding from 750 to 7000 euros towards the production of a second story.

Journalists or media houses based in either EU countries or EU South Partner Countries are eligible to apply by submitting an already published journalistic work along with a proposal for a second production. Both productions, actual and intended, need to address one or more of the following themes in the Euro Mediterranean region:

- **Diaspora**
- **Labour migration**
- **Vulnerable groups**
- **Legal and irregular migration**

Candidates who wish to apply must respect the following criteria: The submitted story must have been published between 15 April 2017 and 15 May 2018. The content of the entry must be related to one of the four themes mentioned above on migration limited to the Euro-Mediterranean region.

1. The entry must be submitted in one of the 3 languages of the Award scheme: English, French or Arabic. Stories in other languages from the Euro Mediterranean region must be accompanied by a translation into

either English, French or Arabic.

2. Multiple entries are accepted in separate and complete applications in the following formats: video, radio, print, online, multimedia and photo.
3. Mid to long length formats are requested and therefore short news items will not be eligible.

Please note that candidates may not submit a story already supported by the MMA 2017.

The MMA panel of judges will be announced in May 2018 and will evaluate the eligible entries in Summer 2018. The 48 winners will be announced at the award ceremony planned in early September 2018.

The online application form and FAQs are available at www.migration-media-award.eu . Interested applicants should check the Eligibility & Application section prior to applying. In case of any questions, kindly contact us on: contact@migration-media-award.eu

This award is a collaboration of the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) funded programs Euromed Migration IV implemented by the International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and the Open Media Hub led by the Thomson Foundation, in partnership with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion of Malta and the European Asylum Support Office (EASO).



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