

# Tackling Plastic Waste and Protecting Our Environment

David Attenborough's Blue Planet II has done much to focus public attention on the estimated 1 million birds, and 100,000 other sea mammals and turtles which die every year from eating and getting tangled in plastic waste.

In the UK alone, during its recent Great British Beach Clean Up, the Marine Conservation Society found 718 pieces of litter for every 100 metre stretch of beach surveyed, and of this rubbish from food and drink made up at least one fifth.

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan addresses this most pressing problem. The measures include extending the 5p carrier bag charge to all retailers, working with supermarkets to encourage them to introduce plastic-free aisles in which all the food is loose, and investing new money in plastics innovation.

The Government will also encourage manufacturers to take responsibility for the impacts of their products and rationalise the number of different types of plastics they use.

Indeed, one major supermarket chain has just announced it will go plastic-free within five years. The current plastic packaging would be replaced with paper and pulp trays and paper bags, which would be recyclable through domestic waste collections or in-store recycling facilities. It can only be a matter of time before other supermarket chains follow suit.

However, the Government recognises that tackling the use of plastic cannot be done in isolation. The sustainable development of our oceans will be on the agenda when it hosts the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in April. It will work to create a Commonwealth Blue Charter and push for strong action to reduce plastic waste in the ocean.

In addition, the Government will direct its development spending to help developing nations reduce plastic waste, increase our own marine protected areas at home, and establish new Blue Belt protections in our Overseas Territories.

The solution to this global problem will require change and effort from all countries around the world, which the UK will work to achieve.

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## [News story: Defence Secretary hosts Qatari counterpart at historic Horse Guards](#)

The Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson and his Qatari counterpart, His Excellency Khalid bin Mohammed Al-Attiyah, have reaffirmed the important long-term relationship between the UK and Qatar during a meeting in London.

The visit follows the Defence Secretary's trip to Qatar last December, where he signed a [£6bn deal](#) for Typhoon jets and missiles, supporting thousands of British jobs at BAE Systems.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Qatar is a vital partner in the fight against Daesh, hosting the headquarters of the coalition air campaign which is still coordinating strikes on targets in Syria every day.

Our two countries face the same threats from violent extremism and a mutual interest in supporting stability in the region, which will deliver security at home.

The visit to London focussed on defence and security cooperation between the UK and Qatar ahead of the 2022 World Cup, which is being hosted by Qatar, and lessons learned from the military support to the London 2012 Olympics. In addition to the Defence Secretary, Al-Attiyah also met with Security Minister Ben Wallace and the Deputy National Security Advisor Paddy McGuinness. His Excellency also inspected the men and horses of the Blues and Royals at the Army's historic London Headquarters at Horse Guards Parade.

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## [Final Showdown on the EU Withdrawal Bill](#)

Christmas and the New Year are already dim and distant memories. Parliament is back in full swing and Brexit Bills again dominate the parliamentary timetable.

The customs and trade bills this week will be followed by the report stage of the EU (Withdrawal) bill next week.

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## **[Recommendation on the specification of the National Vehicle Register and the adoption of the system of organization codes in TAF and TAP TSIs](#)**

Recommendation on the specification for the European Vehicle Register (EVR) referred to in Article 47 of Directive (EU) 2016/797 and repealing Decision 2007/756/EC Reference: 013REC1005 Publication Date : 16/01/2018 Published by: Interoperability Document Types: Recommendation Keywords: EVR, European Vehicle Register, Recommendation Description: Recommendation on the specification for the European Vehicle Register referred to in Article 47 of Directive (EU) 2016/797 and repealing Decision 2007/756/EC Related documents:

- [□ Recommendation 013REC1005 of the European Union Agency for Railways on the specification for the European Vehicle Register referred to in Article 47 of Directive \(EU\) 2016/797 and repealing Decision 2007/756/EC \(EN\)](#)

- [Annex to Recommendation 013REC1005 \(EN\)](#)

- [Accompanying Report 013REC1055/ACR to the Recommendation of the European Union Agency for Railways on European Vehicle Register \(EN\)](#)

- [Impact Assessment on European Vehicle Register \(EN\)](#)

The Recommendation with its annex, accompanying report and impact assessment were submitted to the European Commission on 15 December 2017.

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