

Press release: Foreign Secretary to visit Moscow

The Foreign Secretary will visit Moscow towards the end of the year following an invitation from Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov, as the UK continues its robust engagement with Russia.

Boris Johnson and Sergei Lavrov last met at the UN General Assembly in September, and now is an important time for both countries to be talking about international security. As permanent members of the UN Security Council, shared concerns include reducing the risk from North Korea's nuclear and missile programmes.

The visit will be an important opportunity to cover the Iran nuclear deal and other issues of shared interest, including regional stability in the Middle East, and containing threats to international peace. It will also enable us to discuss security co-operation ahead of next summer's World Cup, on which the UK and Russia are constructively working together.

The UK has deep differences with Russia, in particular over Syria and Ukraine, including the Russian Government's illegal annexation of Crimea. That's why we cannot return to 'business as usual' but it is vital to continue dialogue on matters of UK national interest.

The visit comes as part of the UK's sustained, robust engagement with the Russian government. The Prime Minister also made it clear to President Putin at the G20 that it is in both sides' interests to continue these channels of communication.

The Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

Russia is a fellow permanent member of the UN Security Council and there are global security issues we need to discuss from Iran to North Korea. Of course we will continue to challenge Russia's approach where we disagree, whether that is Russia's actions in Syria or its aggression towards Ukraine. My visit will provide an opportunity to talk about these issues and more, face-to-face.

Our relationship with Russia is not straightforward. That is all the more reason to be talking to Russia – to manage our differences and co-operate where possible for the security of both our nations and the international community.

I am looking forward to visiting Moscow, to engaging with the Russian government and a wider range of Russian people including civil society and the all important next generation.