

News story: Young professionals promote the industry

Sellafield Ltd materials engineers Jenny Robinson and Bethan Murray helped promote the expertise, progress and challenges that accompany the waste management and clean up of the UK's nuclear sites, to an audience of young nuclear professionals.

They were volunteering at the 3 day Young Generation Network event at Energus in West Cumbria.

The event attracted workers from across the nuclear industry, who heard from leading scientists and engineers on the technical and socio-economical aspects of one of the most complex, long term environmental challenges in Britain – decommissioning 17 nuclear locations in the UK.

The network gives its 650 UK members regular opportunities to meet and share knowledge with young nuclear professionals from across the globe.

Jenny said:

Events like this offer a great opportunity to share experiences and meet likeminded professionals outside of the usual circles, while hearing from world class experts in their field, such as our own head of legacy ponds, Dorothy Gradden.

The event included over 40 delegates from around the UK, and Jenny said:

Events like these raise the profile of the challenges faced here at Sellafield, as well as the future opportunities of the world-wide decommissioning market.

Bethan added:

It was great to hear from attendees about opportunities across the nuclear industry both in the UK and abroad. This is a very exciting sector and I want to remain in this industry for many years to come.

As part of the event, the attendees visited the Sellafield and Low level waste repository sites, and Emily Janzen, Canadian Nuclear Laboratories said:

It's been really useful to travel internationally to see different nuclear sites, how they compare and the different processes that

they use.

Information sharing and knowledge transfer is essential in an industry like this, and I'm hoping that the future of nuclear involves more nuclear energy.

Please visit the [Young Generation Network](#) for further information.

[News story: Secretary of State Dominic Raab's statement – update on EU Exit negotiations](#)

With permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to update the House on the progress in negotiations to leave the EU, and the government's planning for No Deal.

Negotiations

Since I last updated the House, our negotiations with the EU have continued and intensified.

Over the recess break, we have been engaging constructively with our EU counterparts.

Let me take the main areas of the negotiations in turn.

On the Withdrawal Agreement, while there remain some differences, we are closing in on workable solutions to all the key outstanding issues, building on the progress we made during the summer on issues such as data and information, the treatment of ongoing police and judicial co-operation in criminal matters, and ongoing Union judicial and administrative procedures after the date of exit.

We have also been discussing proposals on the linkage needed between the Withdrawal Agreement and the Future Relationship, and the EU is engaging constructively.

On the Northern Ireland Protocol, we remain committed to the undertakings we made in the Joint Report back in December, to agree a backstop in case there is a delay between the end of the Implementation Period and the entry into force of the treaty on our future relationship.

That was agreed to avoid any risk of a return to a hard border in the intervening period.

But we will not accept anything that threatens the constitutional or economic

integrity of the United Kingdom.

Creating any form of customs border between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, which is what the EU had proposed, would put that at risk and that it is unacceptable.

As my Rt Hon friend the Prime Minister has said, it is not something she, nor any British Prime Minister, could conceivably agree to.

We are engaging with the EU on our alternative proposals that preserve the integrity of the UK.

They will be in line with the commitments we made back in December, including the commitment that no new regulatory barriers should be created between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK unless the Northern Ireland Executive and the Assembly agree.

On the Future Relationship, we continue to make progress, for example, on both the internal and the external security arrangements for future cooperation, although there is still some way to go.

And as the House will know, the Prime Minister presented our proposals on the economic partnership to EU leaders, at the informal Salzburg Summit.

We understand that the EU has raised some concerns, particularly around the distinction between goods and services under the common rule book and with respect to the Facilitated Customs Arrangement.

We continue to engage constructively with the EU, we continue to press our case.

The UK's White Paper proposals are the best way of ensuring there is continued frictionless trade in goods after Britain leaves the EU, whilst fulfilling the joint commitment to avoid a hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland, and respecting the referendum.

These negotiations, Mr Speaker, were always bound to be tough in the final stretch.

That is all the more reason why we should hold our nerve, stay resolute and focused, and I remain confident that we will reach a deal this autumn.

Because it is still in the best interests of the UK, and the European Union.

It is the best way of protecting trade between Britain and the EU, trade which underpins millions of jobs across Europe.

It is the best way of making sure we continue to cooperate seamlessly on security matters, to tackle crime and terrorism to keep UK and EU citizens safe.

And it is the best way to avoid a hard border in Northern Ireland that would adversely affect communities living there, or indeed separating Northern

Ireland from Great Britain which we will not countenance.

To achieve these aims, the UK has brought forward serious and credible proposals.

We continue to engage with the EU to press our case, and to better understand the nature of some of their concerns.

Equally, it is time for the EU to match the ambition and pragmatism that we have shown.

No Deal

Mr Speaker, while we intensify negotiations to secure the deal we want, the deal that we expect, we are also expediting preparations for no deal.

In case the EU do not match the ambition and pragmatism we have demonstrated.

As the Prime Minister stated on 21 September after the Salzburg Summit.

The government has made clear we will unilaterally protect the rights of EU citizens in the UK in the event of No Deal.

To the 3 million here, we say: you are our friends, our neighbours, our colleagues, we want you to stay.

And we will be setting out all of the details as soon as is practical.

We also now urge the EU and all its member states to step up and give UK citizens on the continent the same reassurances.

Mr Speaker it is time, on both sides, to provide all our citizens with that comfort and with that confidence.

Since I last updated the House in September, we have published 52 more technical notices, in two further batches.

They inform people, businesses and other key stakeholders of the steps they need to take, if we don't reach a deal with the EU.

They cover a wide range of sectors, building on other work that has taken place across government over the last two years.

They enable us to prepare the UK for Brexit irrespective of the outcome of the negotiations.

They acknowledge that there are risks to a no deal scenario.

But they also demonstrate the steps we will take to avoid, mitigate and manage any potential short-term risks and disruption.

Overall now we have published 77 technical notices which form part of the sensible, proportionate, measures that we are taking to prepare the country for every eventuality.

Mr Speaker our most recent batch of technical notices were published on the 24th of September they are set out in a written Ministerial statement today.

There are 24 and they range from aviation, and the advice for airlines on the impact of 'no deal' and the actions for them to consider to maintain services on the day we leave the EU, through to car insurance, and the arrangements to ensure Green Cards will be available free of charge from insurance companies to enable UK drivers to continue to drive on the continent.

The publication of the technical notices enables further engagement as part of our No Deal planning.

So for example, our earlier technical notice on VAT set out the VAT changes that companies will need to prepare for when importing or exporting goods from the EU, when supplying services to the EU, or interacting with EU VAT IT systems.

That one was welcomed by the British Chamber of Commerce, and we are grateful to them and to all of our stakeholders for their constructive ongoing engagement on that necessary planning.

More broadly, I met with the British Chamber of Commerce, the CBI, the IoD, EEF and the Federation of Small Businesses as part of the government's Business Advisory Group on the 17th of September, to make sure we are explaining our negotiating proposals and No Deal planning, and listening to UK businesses of all sizes, and across all sectors.

We will keep providing people and businesses with the advice they need as we negotiate our exit from the European Union.

We also keep working with the devolved administrations on all aspects of our planning for exit.

I attended the joint ministerial committee on the 13th September.

It has now met 12 times, and our last meeting was a valuable opportunity to give the devolved administrations a full update on the negotiations, as well as discuss the necessary No Deal planning.

We continue to listen very carefully to all of their views.

Mr Speaker, that is the way, with concerted effort on all fronts, that we have put ourselves in the best possible position to make the best of Brexit.

And I commend this statement to the House.

[Press release: Foreign Secretary statement on Hong Kong declining a journalist's visa](#)

Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said:

I remain very concerned by the Hong Kong authorities' unprecedented rejection of a visa for senior British journalist Victor Mallet. In the absence of an explanation from the authorities we can only conclude that this move is politically motivated.

This undermines Hong Kong's freedom of speech and freedom of the press, both guaranteed by the Joint Declaration, and the Basic Law, and increases the pressure on the 'One Country, Two Systems' framework.

I urge the Hong Kong authorities to reconsider this decision. Confidence in Hong Kong's rights and freedoms is an essential component of its future success.

Note to Editors

- Freedom of speech is guaranteed in paragraph 3 of the Joint Declaration, and Article 27 of the Hong Kong Basic Law.

Further information

- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

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Speech: British-Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce celebrate Ukraine Week

Good afternoon First Vice Prime Minister, Ministers, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a pleasure to be here today to address you, and I must thank the British-Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and their partners for the invitation.

I have always believed that trade, and the freedom of nations and individuals to freely access goods and services from overseas, is vital to international security.

Part of the same continuum – one inhabited by political and social stability.

Trade is not an end in itself. Rather, it is the foundation of commercial success and national prosperity. That prosperity, in turn, underpins political stability, and that stability underpins security.

I had said before that trade and security are part of the same continuum. Unbalance one of these factors, and peace, prosperity and freedom are all endangered. It is axiomatic that there can be no military security without economic security.

Few countries understand this better than Ukraine. We are here today not only to deepen the commercial ties between our two nations, but as a show of solidarity and unity in the face of external aggression.

The United Kingdom, of course, has also recently suffered direct action by Russia.

If nations are to successfully meet and combat external aggression, then they must first ensure their own strength, both politically and economically. Part of this is winning internal battles against the forces that stifle economic activity and threaten investment, such as corruption and bureaucracy.

It is no accident that those nations with the strongest defence capabilities also have the strongest economies.

The UK stands ready to help Ukraine in any way we can in these challenges, not only for our mutual prosperity, but as a common defence.

That is why I am here today.

Ukraine's economy has undoubtedly suffered in recent years, not only through the annexation of physical territory and infrastructure, but through the uncertainty of ongoing conflict.

Yet there are encouraging signs that the recovery is underway. Last year the

total trade between Ukraine and the UK topped £1 billion, following two years of strong growth across the board, in goods and services, imports and exports.

Much of this comes from Ukrainian companies, like many here today, who recognise the inherent strengths of the United Kingdom as a place to invest.

Our capital is the world's leading financial centre, and a springboard into global markets. The UK is in the right time zone to trade with Shanghai over breakfast and New York over tea.

We are home to some of the world's leading universities, producing a highly capable workforce.

And crucially, we are an unrivalled repository of commercial expertise, in everything from Fintech to infrastructure. This gives the UK a unique capacity to help Ukrainian businesses expand and thrive.

But it is not just the United Kingdom's strengths that have enabled our bilateral relationship to thrive.

British companies, like many others across the world, are increasingly aware of all that Ukraine has to offer, and the huge commercial opportunities that exist in the country.

GlaxoSmithKline, Astra Zeneca and Vodafone, to name just a few, have substantially increased their operations in Ukraine in recent years.

They see a country not only with a large and well-developed internal market – Ukraine has five cities of over one million people – but also the hard-working and well-educated workforce.

On top of this, Ukraine boasts abundant natural resources, a broad industrial base and a variety of well-developed sectors.

Lviv is undergoing something of an economic boom, driven by its enviable IT industry and service-based economy.

And of course, this historic bread basket of Europe is among the world's leading agri-producers, and my own Department for International Trade is taking steps to improve our bilateral relations in this area, offering British expertise in agricultural machinery, grain storage, and food processing.

I don't need to tell the people in this room that Ukraine is a nation with a vast amount of untapped economic potential.

But as well as external threats there are, as I have mentioned, internal challenges to be resolved if the country is to fully realise its opportunities.

Corruption exists, as it does in many nations around the world.

A key difference here though is awareness, and a strong desire to tackle and resolve the issue.

The Ukrainian people recognise the threat that corruption, inefficient public ownership, and overzealous and stifling bureaucracy pose to foreign investment, economic output, and ultimately prosperity.

The establishment of a Business Ombudsman and the National Anti-Corruption Agency are important steps in the right direction, as is the commendable ambition to bring Ukraine into the top ten nations globally on the ease of doing business rankings. It has already become the most improved country in the world since 2010.

Ukraine has made more progress in the last 4 years than in the previous 20, particularly in reform of the banking sector, good governance institutions and launching the electronic asset and income declaration system.

I am proud to say that the United Kingdom, and my own Department, is taking a leading role in helping Ukraine to achieve these goals.

We are providing assistance to improve the business climate and reforming the tax system, making the country an increasingly attractive place for global investors.

We are helping with the reform of Ukraine's energy sector, aiming to eliminate reliance on Russian gas and streamlining the pricing structure of Ukraine's own production.

This year, we are delivering a £35 million package to support reforms in good governance, anti-corruption and defence.

And we are helping British companies to share their expertise with their Ukrainian counterparts, opening new commercial opportunities across the economy.

This has been instigated, in part, by a wave of joint UK-Ukraine trade events, from the visit of the Deputy Minister Mykolska in June, where she visited women entrepreneurs at DIT's She Trades event, to the Group CEO of Jaguar/Land Rover opening their new sales centre in Kiev.

But perhaps the most important immediate task, and certainly the most important facing my own department, is the post-Brexit transition of the Ukraine-EU Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement into a new bilateral settlement.

We have designated Ukraine as one of the UK's post-Brexit priority markets, and our ambition is to further improve and liberalise the trading relationship between us.

But our first step must be to provide certainty and continuity for those firms currently operating between the UK and Ukraine. Officials in the UK and Ukraine are working together to design a bilateral agreement that will replicate the effects of the DCFTA, to come into effect at the end of our

transition period.

Minimising the disruption to our existing trading relationship is the highest priority for the United Kingdom.

Yet I appreciate that there will also be a degree of uncertainty around Brexit. This is equally true in Ukraine, not only from a commercial standpoint, but from a geopolitical one.

But the Referendum result was not a vote for insularity. We are not turning in on ourselves, abandoning our overseas partners or abdicating our international responsibilities.

The United Kingdom is not isolationist, but global. The British people chose to embrace the opportunities of the wider world.

Let me reiterate that our exit from the EU does not change the UK's commitment to Ukraine's development, growth and prosperity.

Nor does it alter our commitment to sanctions against Russia. Indeed, the Prime Minister has made it clear that we will look to carry over all existing EU sanctions at the time of our departure.

In August, the foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt made the case for additional sanctions against Russia from the United States, building a firm, united front with our allies.

This is not a path that we are about to waver from.

Our action encapsulates the message that I came here today to deliver – that the United Kingdom is standing alongside Ukraine, ready to lend our support to ensuring a safe and prosperous future for both our peoples.

The progress that has been made by Ukraine is hugely significant, and already the dividends are appearing.

Nothing should be taken for granted. But if we work together to meet the challenges of the future, then we can, and will, defend our freedom, our prosperity, and our liberty.

[News story: Department for Work and Pensions Director of Communications appointment](#)

Lisa brings with her extensive experience of delivering communications strategies across both the private and public sectors.

As Director of Communications for the UK's biggest operational government department, she will oversee the communications around the government's welfare reforms to help millions of people hear about how the government is supporting them into work and helping them to save for their retirement.

Peter Schofield, Permanent Secretary at DWP, said:

Lisa will be a great asset to the department and will play an important role in communicating the vital work we do to support people into work and to save for their retirement. We are thrilled that she will bring valuable expertise from a range of sectors to head up the Communications Directorate in the UK's biggest direct delivery government department.

Esther McVey, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, said:

I'm delighted Lisa Hunter is joining DWP as Director of Communications. She brings a wealth of experience from across the public and private sector.

Lisa Hunter said:

The work we do in the Department for Work and Pensions makes a real difference to millions of people and families, right across the country, and often during their most challenging times. The department is currently implementing the largest welfare reform programme in a generation to ensure we continue to provide the best services and support we can. We play an important role in creating a fairer society and it's vital we communicate all we do effectively and accurately.

I am exceptionally excited to be returning to DWP and am passionate about the work we do. I have a huge degree of respect for the department, and what it has achieved in recent years.

More information

Lisa Hunter started the role of Director of Communications at DWP on Monday 8 October 2018.