

News story: David Davis visits Baltic leaders to discuss future relations

A global Britain is determined to maintain its historic relations with Europe after leaving the European Union, the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, David Davis, said during meetings this week with Baltic leaders.

During the two day visit, from 20-21 February 2017, the Secretary of State met heads of government and other leading representatives from Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia to discuss joint opportunities and priorities ahead of the exit negotiations.

The Secretary of State underlined in all three countries the government's desire to see the European Union succeed politically and economically after the UK's exit.

He also made clear its determination to secure the rights, both of UK citizens currently living in Baltic countries, and their citizens living in the UK as quickly as possible.

He also emphasised the UK's ongoing commitment to its bilateral relationship with the Baltic states and towards mutual interests such as trade, justice, defence and security.

The Secretary of State confirmed that Britain will continue to play a leading role in European security and that the government wants Britain's future relationship with the European Union to include practical arrangements on matters of law enforcement, the sharing of intelligence material with the country's European Union allies and defence cooperation.

The UK currently has the second biggest defence budget in NATO at £178 billion and is one of five countries, including Estonia, meeting the NATO 2% spending target. It is providing one of four battalions to NATO's enhanced Forward Presence in the Baltic States and Poland, with 800 troops being sent to Estonia this year.

Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, David Davis, said:

The UK is leaving the European Union, not Europe. We are looking to maintain our close ties with the Baltic states and all our European allies, and will continue to commit to mutual interests such as trade, justice, defence and security.

The UK has led European action on keeping our continent safe – whether implementing sanctions against Russia following its aggressive action in Ukraine or securing Europe's external border. Such partnership continues to be of vital importance, particularly in the face of growing concern about the threat to security across

the continent.

Speech: Funding for smart parking and traffic management schemes

Good morning everyone.

I'd like to start by thanking Councillor David Harvey for the introduction and opportunity for me to speak today.

I am particularly pleased to have the opportunity to see for myself, the potential benefit for motorists – and to the wider economy – of this excellent smart parking project, which has attracted £200,000 government grant funding, and which the Department for Transport is taking forward in partnership with Westminster City Council and other key stakeholders.

This work further demonstrates this government's commitment to working alongside industry to promote technology and innovation, and to maintain the UK's position at the forefront of the digital revolution.

And on that, I am also pleased to announce today that we are funding [19 smart traffic management schemes](#) including smart parking demonstrator schemes in Coventry, Luton, Milton Keynes and Oxfordshire – as well as a partnership project between Hounslow, Hammersmith and Fulham, and Westminster, which looks to improve electric vehicle parking by combining parking sensors with electric vehicle charging points to give drivers real-time information on available spaces where they can recharge.

The way we travel continues to change, and technology has a valuable role to play through co-operative intelligent transport systems.

By enabling communication between vehicles, traffic signals, roadside sensors – as well as with other vehicles – the resulting information can bring increasing benefits, both to road operators, in terms of improved network management, and to road users, through the information they need, in real-time, to make the most of their journey.

Cities face a common challenge of accommodating significant rising demand for transport over the next 20 years, boosted by continued population growth, while meeting challenging carbon reduction targets and delivering customer expectations of transport that is safer, cleaner and greener, less congested and more reliable.

Technology and information have huge potential to generate innovative solutions in these urban areas, and deliver more joined up and seamless

multi-modal solutions which make better use of customer time.

Effective use of technology is crucial to delivering this, but this is not an end in itself – and it needs to be used to address specific policy challenges. This project is an excellent example of just that.

While there is no definitive evidence on the percentage, at any one time, of traffic circling while looking for a parking space, the knock on effects on congestion and emissions are obvious, not to mention the added stress this can cause. We've all been there.

Improving the parking experience can help to improve public acceptance of, and compliance with, parking restrictions that are so necessary to keep traffic flowing.

Having real-time mapping to direct us to an available parking space within a mobile app, that allows 'one-click' electronic payment, that activates when we arrive, and stops when we leave, could not have been imagined not so long ago.

And I am pleased to have seen the project go further by extending this case to taxi drivers, who face the similar problem of finding available taxi ranks. It follows that a smarter distribution of available taxis can only benefit pedestrians looking for a taxi.

Although 'big data' is the lifeblood of digital traffic management solutions, data gathering is, in itself, of little use. What matters is how this data is interpreted and used to gain a better understanding of travel patterns and behaviours.

I am therefore delighted to be able to present a prize this morning to the winners of Westminster's Parking Hackathon which took place last week. This event has already yielded valuable lessons to enable a better understanding of parking use which will further inform policy on parking.

With the high level of parking demand on their road network, I commend Westminster City Council for rising to the challenge and placing itself at the forefront of parking technology in the UK.

I wish you a successful session this afternoon, sharing this good work with local authorities from around the country, and I wish you continued success with this project.

I've seen today that technology really does have the potential to 'make parking better'.

Thank you.

Speech: Building a strong new partnership with Lithuania

In the coming weeks and months, Britain will embark upon the negotiations to build a strong new partnership with the European Union.

For the UK and Lithuania, that new partnership will extend beyond our individual relationships with the European Union as a whole; you as members, and us as strong external partners.

Because our two countries share many principles: on defence and security, on trade and the economy – we are working together. In the past year alone we have collaborated closely on issues from mutual development of our financial technology sectors to the training of our military.

Last year, the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death was commemorated across Lithuania, from schools in Klaipeda to the national parliament, as part of our shared European culture. All of these joint endeavours have been based on our strong mutual values and vision for the future.

So as I travel to Lithuania today, on my first visit to the country as the UK Secretary of State for Exiting the EU, I want to stress our determination to enter an even closer and more fruitful period in our relations.

We are firmly committed to strengthening the ties between our two countries because, while we are leaving the EU, we are emphatically not turning our backs on our friends and allies across Europe.

As part of that we will continue to be a keen partner to Lithuania. We will go on co-operating extensively on defence, security and foreign policy. We will collaborate on culture and education. We will work with Lithuania on economic issues and we will pursue an ambitious future trade agreement that is in the interest of the UK, Lithuania and the whole of the European Union.

For the UK wants the EU and each of its member states to prosper politically, economically and socially. The new partnership we will seek as we leave can, I believe, help to that end.

On security, Lithuania and the UK share a particularly close and important relationship.

The UK has led European action on keeping our continent safe – whether implementing sanctions against Russia following its aggressive action in Ukraine or securing Europe's external border.

Such partnership continues to be of vital importance, particularly in the face of growing concern about the threat to security across the continent. And that is why we will continue to work closely with your armed forces on land, sea and air, with hundreds of UK troops training and exercising in Lithuania.

As key members of NATO, we both know the importance of collaboration on defence and security. For the UK, our commitment to defend the interests of the western world remains absolute. For you, having the full force of NATO right behind you is of huge value. Solidarity is crucial and the UK will continue to stand by all its allies – including Lithuania.

As Britain leaves the EU, we will seek to enhance the trading links that we currently have with member states and the British Prime Minister has been clear that the UK will be pursuing a comprehensive trade agreement with the EU.

For Lithuania, the UK is its fifth largest trading partner in goods and its eighth in services. So it's in no one's interest to see new barriers to trade. Instead, we see opportunities in building on our existing trading ties with Lithuania.

But we are not just allies and friends because of our cultural connections, military commitments and trading links. Our relationship goes far beyond that, with the firm friendship that exists between our people.

Hundreds of thousands of Lithuanians have made Britain their home. Your people are our healthcare workers, our financiers and even the conductor of our world class Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

I understand that the thousands of Lithuanians currently living in the UK want certainty about their rights once the UK leaves the EU. And, while Lithuanians' existing rights are not affected, the British government wants to get a deal done to secure long term rights quickly that protects the rights of all EU citizens living in the UK, and British citizens living in the EU.

Indeed, we would have liked to have come to such an agreement already and have been clear it will be an absolute priority once formal negotiations begin.

It is only fair that those who have built lives for themselves abroad, who are contributing to foreign economies and giving back to overseas communities, have their rights and status guaranteed rapidly.

And the approach that we take on this issue – one of reasoned goodwill to secure mutual benefits – is the one that we will adopt throughout the negotiation process.

Because the UK is not stepping back from its role in the world – it is stepping up.

News story: Launch UK brings together UK commercial space sector

Universities and Science Minister Jo Johnson and Minister for Aviation Lord Ahmad spoke alongside the UK Space Agency CEO Katherine Courtney at the Launch UK conference at the Royal Aeronautical Society on 21 February.

A key strand of the government's Industrial Strategy is for the UK to hold a greater share of the commercial spaceflight market, worth an estimated £25 billion over the next 20 years, by developing competitive, commercial and safe spaceflight proposals for UK-based satellite launch services and sub-orbital flights.

The conference brought together potential UK spaceports and spaceflight vehicle operators – the component parts of the consortia that are working to provide commercial launch services from the UK.

The UK Space Agency has made grants worth £10 million available to help develop the capability for spaceflight. The consortia are being invited to provide their business cases for funding to develop key technologies or infrastructure in the UK.

The conference took place as new legislation – the Spaceflight Bill – was delivered to the House of Commons and the House of Lords today to facilitate and regulate commercial spaceflight.

Universities and Science Minister Jo Johnson said:

“We really do stand at the dawn of a very exciting era. This is a big and incredibly exhilarating moment for this country.

“The traditional space sector is changing and the way we access space is changing too, which is why this is a truly important moment for us. It's vital that we don't miss the exciting opportunities that are now ahead of us.”

Minister for Aviation Lord Ahmad said:

“We are boldly legislating where no British government has legislated before.

“It's clear we are galvanised and ready to grasp this huge opportunity for our country. We want to move quickly but we also want to get it right too.

“It's our ambition as a government, as a collective industry, as a country that the UK is the best place in Europe for space flight operations.”

Seven potential regional spaceports gave presentations and a panel of industry experts discussed innovations in commercial spaceflight, looking ahead to 2025, while there was also an opportunity for networking.

Katherine Courtney, CEO UK Space Agency, said:

“With our partners across government we continue to create a supportive environment for commercial innovation and cutting edge science.

“Together, we are working to embrace the emerging small satellite launch market to capture a share of the £25bn global opportunity. I’m confident that 2020 will see the first launches from British soil, and we’re working hard to make that a reality.”

[Press release: Shoreham flood scheme enters next phase](#)

A major flood defence scheme that will significantly reduce flood risk to over 2,300 properties in Shoreham and East Lancing has taken a step towards completion this week, with piling works at 2 of the project’s 10 phases now finished.

The huge jack-up barge, that has been working to install one of the new tidal flood defence piled walls in the town centre since November, will leave the site next week having completed its phase of the work.

Of the planned 10 construction phases, 3 have been worked on since the project started in October 2016, and work so far has been progressing well. The scheme will significantly improve the current ageing flood defences, and when the whole project is complete, in 2018, it will reduce the tidal flood risk to thousands of homes and a significant number of commercial properties in the area. It will also protect important local infrastructure such as the road network, railway line and Shoreham Airport.

Russell Long, Flood Team Leader at the Environment Agency, said:

Work on the scheme is progressing well, and further phases of work are set to begin later in the year. We are aware of the impact that the development of these schemes can have on local communities, and we thank the residents of Shoreham for their understanding during the works.

The Adur Ferry Bridge will need to be closed for a few hours when the jack-up barge leaves Shoreham next week (week commencing 27 February), and shuttle buses will be provided during this time. Exact timings of this operation will depend on weather and site conditions, and we will do all we can to keep the community informed of our plans. I’d encourage residents to monitor [@EnvAgencySE](#) on Twitter, go to www.shorehamadurtidalwalls.co.uk, or

visit the project's visitor centre to find out more.

The Shoreham scheme's dedicated project visitor centre is located at Beach Green Car Park, Shoreham-by-Sea, and is open between midday and 5pm on weekdays.

For further information, you can view the webpage [Shoreham Adur Tidal Walls Scheme](#) or you can call 03708 506506. You can also request information by email at shorehamwestbank@ea.gov.uk or by writing to

SSD Enquiries
Environment Agency
Guildbourne House
Chatsworth Road
Worthing
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Notes:

The visitor centre may be closed during scheduled visits from schools and interest groups.

For all media enquiries please call 0800 141 2743.