

Environment is yet another casualty of Russia's war: UK statement to the OSCE

Thank you Mr Chair. Good morning from London. I would like to thank the Secretary General and the three panellists for their interventions. It is right that the OSCE continues to focus on this topic. Climate change remains an existential threat to our shared environment.

Mr Chair, as Mr Fedorenko, the Ukrainian Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources has so eloquently set out, the environment is yet another casualty of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. We have seen appalling environmental damage to Ukraine, such as degradation and pollution of land and water, which will take decades to remedy. Russia's reckless attacks on nuclear facilities risk a catastrophe that could cause continent-wide contamination.

Russia is weaponising energy to support its illegal war and we cannot let it succeed. Energy should never be used as a tool of political coercion. Many countries have now recognised Russia as an unreliable supplier and are limiting their consumption of Russian hydrocarbons which are helping to fund Putin's war machine. This is why the UK plans to phase out imports of Russian oil by the end of this year. Reducing our collective dependence on Putin's oil and gas has a practical as well as moral imperative.

Russian forces have destroyed city after city in Ukraine. Helping to rebuild the country and its natural environment will be one of the great tasks for our generation. The UK and our allies will continue to make substantial financial and economic support available to Ukraine to strengthen the resilience of its economy. The UK calls upon the international community to put the principles of environmental protection and sustainable, low carbon development at the heart of this reconstruction effort.

Mr Chair, the brutal attacks in Ukraine have shown the environmental damage that militaries can do. But even militaries at peace can have significant environmental impact. In the UK for example, defence accounts for 50% of central government emissions. In future, our armed forces will embrace the green energy transition, trialling new types of vehicles, fuels standards, and energy storage. Our defence ministry's [Climate Change and Sustainability Strategic Approach report](#) sets out how we will do this.

Mr. Chair, I wish to conclude by highlighting again the importance of this topic. As we have seen in our own region, including recently in Central Asia, climate-related disruptions risk straining existing international security arrangements, creating new geostrategic flashpoints, and raising the potential for further inter-state military competition and conflict.

Finally, we once again call on Russia to cease all hostilities and immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its troops and military equipment from all of Ukraine. Wars not only damage the environment

but they also divert attention and resources away from addressing existential climate challenges and break down the cooperation needed to address them.

Proposals to increase fishing licence prices

The Environment Agency has today announced proposals to increase fishing licence prices from 1 April 2023 to provide vital funds to improve England's fisheries.

The increase, set to come into force incrementally over three years, has received support from the Angling Trust, Angling Trades Association, Canal and River Trust and key fisheries stakeholders within the England Fisheries Group. It follows feedback from anglers all over England and is the first fishing licence price increase in six years.

An annual two rod coarse and non-migratory trout licence will rise from £30 to £33 from 1 April 2023. This will increase to £35.80 from the next year, with a final increase to £36.60 from 1 April 2025.

The additional income generated will be invested directly into England's fisheries, improving the experience for anglers. This includes:

- Maintaining a good quality environment to ensure healthy fish stocks and habitats;
- Conducting enforcement activity to deter illegal fishing and protect fish stocks;
- Investing in partnership working, including attracting match funding to maximise rod licence income;
- Encouraging more people to get involved in angling;
- Modernising systems such as our continuous payment system and digital licencing.

Heidi Stone, Environment and Business, Partnerships Manager from the Environment Agency said:

“Securing income to fund our fisheries service is one of our highest priorities and we reinvest 100% of fishing licence income to improve fisheries for people, the environment and angling.

“This small increase will be the first for six years and ensures we can continue to undertake our statutory duties to maintain, develop and improve freshwater and migratory fisheries to the level that the fisheries community and our customers expect.”

Jamie Cook, Angling Trust CEO, said:

“Nobody likes to see prices rise, especially in these tough times, but it is important that our rod licence income is protected for vital fisheries work.

These modest increases – the first for six years – are necessary to ensure that angling continues to receive professional support from the Environment Agency.”

The full list of proposed prices and details of how to support or object the change in prices has been published by [The Gazette](#) and Angling Times.

Fishing licences are a legal requirement for anyone who wants to fish with a rod and line in freshwater. It is now possible to receive a digital licence via email or text message, making it easier to have your licence to hand.

The digital buying journey makes it easier and quicker to obtain a licence, while also saving administration costs to ensure maximum investment in our fisheries from fishing licence income.

Get a fishing licence on [GOV.UK](#) and help us invest more into fishing and improving the environment.

[£1 million available for innovations to help the Commando Force safely get from ship to shore](#)

- DASA has launched a new Themed Competition: Novel Amphibious Craft
- Funded by the Defence Innovation Unit
- Up to £1 million available for innovations to help develop capabilities that can deliver Commando Force Strike Teams and equipment to coastal access points, safely and rapidly

The [Defence and Security Accelerator](#) (DASA) is pleased to launch a new Themed Competition, [Novel Amphibious Craft](#). Run on behalf of the Defence Innovation Unit, this competition seeks innovative technologies which can feed into the development of a Novel Amphibious Craft concept to enable Commando Force to safely and rapidly insert themselves into high-threat environments. The future craft needs to:

1. travel at sustained high speed over a long range
2. provide the ability to deliver personnel and light vehicles to a coastal access point with limited or no impact on operational speed/capability
3. relaunch from the coastal access point
4. operate with low signature across all spectrums (thermal, radar, visual,

acoustic, etc.) to reduce the probability of detection

Key dates and funding

£1 million (Exc. VAT) funding is available for this Themed Competition. DASA expects to fund several proposals between £100K – 350K.

The deadline to submit a proposal is midday 10 January 2023 (GMT).

New capability requirements for amphibious assault

The Commando Force needs the ability to insert troops and equipment that are fit to fight into high-threat environments safely. However, advances in coastal defences mean that an amphibious assault relying on outdated technology and concepts can be deterred, disrupted, and defeated.

A bold new approach is required to overcome these modern threats. Innovative technologies will enable the Commando Force to reach further, move faster, and strike decisively without being detected.

This competition aims to investigate and accelerate innovative solutions that will help meet operational requirements and achieve mission success, including feeding into the development of a Novel Amphibious Craft. DASA is seeking to address the following challenges:

- how to reduce the signature across multiple spectrums (thermal, radar, visual, acoustic, etc.)
- how to deliver the Commando Force (Troops and Vehicles) across the water gap and minimise the requirement for wading
- how to routinely land onto/retract from an unprepared coastal access point
- how to sustain speeds of at least 25kts in the fully loaded condition, in Sea State 2

For a more detailed breakdown of the platform specifications and requirements, [read the full competition document](#).

Novel Amphibious Craft: Themes

This competition has two themes. Innovators can apply for funding in either theme.

Theme 1: Priority Challenges

Theme 1 aims to address the following technical challenges faced by the

capability:

- Theme 1a: How to reduce the signature across multiple spectrums (thermal, radar, visual, acoustic etc.)
- Theme 1b: How to deliver the Commando Force (troops and vehicles) across the water gap and minimise the requirement for wading
- Theme 1c: How to land onto/retract from an unprepared coastal access point

Theme 2: Capability Design

Theme 2 aims to design a craft capable of delivering the complete capability defined above. This is a lower Technology Readiness Level (TRL) theme up to [TRL 4](#).

To learn more about the themes of the competition, [read the full competition document](#).

Webinars

This competition will feature a series of 20 minute one-to-one teleconference sessions, providing innovators the opportunity to ask competition organisers specific questions. Register below.

[3 November 2022](#)

[8 November 2022](#)

Submit a proposal

Do you have an innovation that will help contribute to the development of a novel amphibious craft, capable of delivering Commando Force Strike Teams and equipment to coastal access points?

[Submit your idea](#) and help enable the Commando Force to safely and rapidly insert themselves into high-threat environments.

[Learn more and submit a proposal](#).

[London medicines wholesaler sentenced for illegally importing and distributing over £2.9m of medicines](#)

The owner of a medicines wholesale business was sentenced yesterday at Southwark Crown Court to 20 weeks imprisonment, suspended for 12 months and

community service after pleading guilty on 20 June 2022 to importing and distributing medicines worth over £2.9m sale value without holding the correct licences

Between July 2017 and June 2018, Amr Mosa (36), director of Wimpole Pharmacie Ltd in London's West End, imported medicines such as Herceptin, Avastin and Enbrel [1] from Egypt to the UK and then distributed them from the UK to a company based in Germany [2].

These medicines are prescription-only medicines to treat conditions as diverse as cancers and Crohn's disease, that require storing at low temperatures. These are known as cold chain products.

Although Mosa's company was granted a licence to distribute medicines within the European Economic Area (EEA) [3], the licence did not authorise the distribution of cold chain products, nor did it allow these to be imported into the UK from outside of the EEA.

In August 2018, the European Medicine's Agency's Rapid Alert Notification system flagged that a batch of medicines supplied to Germany by Wimpole Pharmacie Ltd had originally been stolen from Italian hospitals.

In response, the MHRA investigated the business and proved that the drugs were imported and exported without the correct licences, allowing unauthorised medicines to enter the European market.

The defendant was sentenced to a total of 20 weeks imprisonment, suspended for 12 months as well as 100 hours of unpaid work [4].

Andy Morling, Deputy Director of Criminal Enforcement at the MHRA, said:

It's a serious criminal offence to import and distribute medicines without the right licences. We work closely with regulatory and law enforcement partners to identify and bring to justice those who fall short of legal compliance.

It's important that all suppliers understand and follow the regulatory requirements around importing and distributing medicines and medical devices. If not, they could fail to meet our safety standards, endangering patient health.

While there is no evidence that these medicines posed a risk to patients, they had been stolen from hospitals in Italy before being imported from Egypt. This case illustrates that failing to comply with the regulations and conditions of the relevant licences can have serious consequences.

We will investigate any report of suspected illegal activity involving medicines and medical devices so that patients can be confident their medication and medical devices are acceptably safe.

[1] The medications the defendant did not have the correct licences for importing or distributing were: Avastin, Enbrel, Eylea, Faslodex, Herceptin, Humira, Kadcyła, Lucentis Neulasta, Nexavar, Opdivo, Perjeta, Soliris, Stelara, Sutent, Velcade and Xgeva. These are prescription-only medicines that are used to treat cancers, arthritis, and Crohn's disease among others.

[2] Between 12 July 2017 and 9 June 2018, Wimpole Pharmacie Limited imported 4484 packs of various medicines, the total purchase price of which was £2,744,184 and sold them for £2,968,069, for a profit of £223,885.

[3] The European Economic Area includes EU countries as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. It allows them to be part of the EU's single market. For more information, see [the gov.uk page](#)

[4] On the first count of importing medicinal products contrary to regulations, he was sentenced to 20 weeks imprisonment suspended for twelve months and 100 hours of unpaid work. On the second count of distributing medicinal products contrary to regulations, he was sentenced to 20 weeks imprisonment suspended for twelve months and 100 hours of unpaid work, to be served concurrently. Therefore, he was sentenced to 20 weeks in total and 100 hours of unpaid work in total.

[Inspection Report Published: An inspection of the use of hotels for housing unaccompanied asylum-seeking children March – May 2022](#)

News story

This inspection examined the use of hotels to accommodate unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, with particular reference to the Home Office's duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are in the United Kingdom.



This inspection examined the use of hotels to accommodate unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, with particular reference to the Home Office's duty under Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are in the United Kingdom.

Publishing the report, David Neal, the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI), said:

It is clear that the housing of these extremely vulnerable children in hotels represents a significant challenge to the Home Office, in both ethical and operational terms. This is not an area in which the Home Office should be operating. A clear cross-Government approach is required.

The young people who spoke to inspectors all stated that they were happy and felt safe in the hotels, although the majority were keen to move on and resume their education. Inspectors found Home Office and contractor staff were, in the main, committed and engaged in their work and keen to provide the best possible environment for the young people in their care. However, this inspection did find areas of significant concern including two cases of staff who had not been Disclosure and Barring Service checked residing at hotels.

More broadly, while the initial crisis response had transitioned to a business-as-usual operation, the practices and procedures developed by the Home Office did not represent a child-centred approach that fully acknowledged and provided for the safeguarding and wellbeing needs of the young people in the department's care. Similarly absent was consistent and effective oversight by the Home Office of contractor activity. Guidance, processes and policies were slowly being developed but this gap in clarity led to clear shortcomings in the provision of key services for these children.

Although staff referred to the need to end the use of hotels, there was little in the way of concrete planning for this to be achieved and no timelines provided by the Home Office.

As we found in [the inspection into the processing of migrants at Tug Haven and Western Jet Foil](#), a disjointed response at day one or even week one could be excused but at month 10 this is not

acceptable. Senior leadership action is needed to unlock the sub-optimal ownership of this issue in order that these children and those who will keep on arriving over the next days and weeks receive a more effective service. In essence, a recognition of the enduring nature of the requirement is needed.

I am particularly grateful for the expertise and assistance provided by Ofsted inspectors who accompanied my inspectors during the onsite phase of the inspection.

This inspection made four time-bound recommendations. The Home Office has accepted one recommendation and partially accepted three. I welcome the news that the Home Office has moved to a sole occupancy model which means members of hotel staff, including those without DBS checks, are no longer able to sleep or reside onsite. However, it is disappointing to note that the time-bound nature of the recommendations appears to be a barrier to full acceptance, that overall the pace of implementation appears slow and that processes necessary to ensure the safeguarding of children remain 'in development'. This approach continues to ignore the vulnerability of these children.

This inspection report was sent to the Home Secretary for publication on 9 June 2022.

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