

Switzerland and UK to negotiate a bilateral financial services agreement

The joint statement signed today by Rishi Sunak and Ueli Maurer the Head of Switzerland's Federal Department of Finance, is the most ambitious commitment made by two countries to develop an international agreement on financial services. It signals the UK's ambition to continue to cement its role as an international financial centre once it has left the EU, with the highest standards of regulation and an openness to the whole world.

The commitment outlines the UK and Switzerland's shared ambition to negotiate an outcomes-based mutual recognition agreement on financial services that will enhance cooperation and trust between the two countries. This will reduce costs and barriers for UK firms accessing the Swiss market, and vice versa, and cover a wide range of sectors.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, said:

The UK's financial sector is integral to the success of the British economy, creating jobs, driving regional growth, and contributing taxes that pay for essential public services.

Leaving the EU means we are now free to chart our own course, driven by our clear values as a financial centre: a safe and transparent place to do business, innovative markets that drive change for the better, and openness to the whole world.

Today's agreement is about our vision of the world economy as open, global and free – a vision shared by Switzerland, with our long history of trade and finance.

Miles Celic, Chief Executive Officer, TheCityUK, said:

The UK and Switzerland are natural partners for financial and related professional services trade. As the first and third largest net exporters of these services globally, both countries are committed to developing high-quality global standards and maintaining open and efficient markets. These discussions present an opportunity to set a new gold standard for global services trade between two sovereign nations.

In a further sign of the two countries' integrated equity markets, the Chancellor also announced that the Treasury has completed its equivalence assessment of Switzerland in relation to Swiss stock markets and found them to be equivalent. This will benefit investors in both countries.

Today's commitment is a concrete demonstration of the Chancellor's strategy to cement London's role as an international financial centre and ensure the UK remains a global example of excellence in financial services regulation. It sits within HMT's broader international strategy for financial services, which includes pursuing ambitious financial services trade policy in the UK's programme of Free Trade Agreements, as well as strengthening ties with fast-growing markets in the East.

Switzerland is the ideal partner for this strategy, due to the strong commitment and enthusiasm they share with the UK for open, stable and competitive financial markets, underpinned by quality regulation. Details of the agreement will be discussed over the coming months ahead of the UK/Switzerland Economic & Financial dialogue in September.

Further information

[Speech by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rushi Sunak, on the future relationship between the UK and Switzerland on financial services](#)

Good afternoon – great to see you all.

For me, today's announcement is about a vision of the global economy built on openness, free trade and cooperation; a vision grounded in the values of the past but also unafraid to innovate, to move forward.

It's a vision that has always defined the UK-Swiss relationship – a relationship that is critical for the economic prospects of both our countries.

Nowhere is our relationship more important than in financial services. Nearly half of all Swiss financial services imports come from the UK; and the UK is one of the main destinations for Swiss foreign direct investment.

And as the two biggest financial centres in Europe, we also share a common governing and regulatory philosophy: I think we've both learned in recent years of the dangers of market fragmentation, and that unilateral approaches to trade in financial services just don't work.

But close as we are, it's not in the spirit of our relationship – or either of our national characters – to be content with how things are. We want to innovate, to try new things. So I'm delighted to be making two announcements today.

First, we're signing a Joint Statement committing us to begin negotiating an ambitious, outcomes-based mutual recognition agreement between the UK and Switzerland.

Our agreement will bring together government, regulators and industry to create a new and better framework for cross-border financial services, across insurance, banking, asset management and capital markets.

The benefits are clear for both countries: it should deliver lower costs, opportunities for new and better revenues, and improved cooperation between regulators.

And this agreement puts our two countries at the forefront of innovation in financial services trade – no-one's ever done anything as ambitious as this, on this kind of scale.

It shows that it is possible to achieve genuinely fluid cross-border trade in financial services, while recognising and respecting that different jurisdictions can achieve the same outcomes in different ways.

Next steps: technical work is immediately beginning in earnest, ahead of the financial dialogue on September 8th.

And I want to say a huge thank you to Councillor Maurer, and to all our partners in industry, for everything you've done to make this happen.

I'm also very pleased to announce today that we have now completed our equivalence assessment of Swiss stock markets and found them to be equivalent.

So as soon as our equivalence powers come into force, we'll lay the necessary legislation so we can start trading on each other's stock exchanges once again.

Let me make one final point to finish. These aren't the circumstances I think any of us would have chosen to be signing today's agreement.

But actually, right now, at a time when the path of least resistance for many governments is to turn inwards, to put up the shutters to global trade, it's more important than ever that countries like the UK and Switzerland, who believe in that vision of an open, trading and cooperative world, continue to demonstrate through actions, not just words, what we can achieve if we continue to work together.

Thank you.

UN Human Rights Council 44: Cross-regional statement on Hong Kong and Xinjiang

Thank you Madam President. I am delivering this cross-regional joint statement on behalf of 27 countries.

A number of the signatories to this statement submitted a letter last year to express concern about arbitrary detention, widespread surveillance and restrictions, particularly targeting Uyghurs and other minorities in Xinjiang. These deep concerns have been reinforced by additional information now in the public domain. We urge China to allow the High Commissioner meaningful access to Xinjiang at the earliest opportunity.

We further wish to raise our deep and growing concerns at the imposition of legislation related to national security on Hong Kong, with clear implications for the human rights of people in Hong Kong.

The Joint Declaration, a legally binding treaty, registered with the United Nations, sets out that Hong Kong is guaranteed a high degree of autonomy and rights and freedoms, including those of the person, of the press, of assembly, and of association and that the ICCPR and ICESCR shall remain in force. These rights are also guaranteed in the basic law for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Making such a law without the direct participation of Hong Kong's people, legislature or judiciary of Hong Kong undermines 'One Country, Two Systems'.

We urge the Chinese and Hong Kong Governments to reconsider the imposition of this legislation and to engage Hong Kong's people, institutions and judiciary to prevent further erosion of the rights and freedoms that the people of Hong Kong have enjoyed for many years.

High Commissioner, we note your calls for legislation to respect human rights obligations relating to Hong Kong, and the serious concerns raised by the mechanisms of this council. We encourage you to provide regular information on the human rights situation in Xinjiang and Hong Kong, in order to safeguard the rights and freedoms which are guaranteed under international law.

Thank you

This statement was supported by Australia, Austria, Belgium, Belize, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Germany, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom

UK pledges support for Syrians facing twin threat of conflict and coronavirus

The UK will provide life-saving support to Syrians affected by their country's ongoing conflict and the potentially devastating impact of coronavirus, International Development Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan announced at the 'Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region' pledging conference in Brussels today (Tuesday 30 June).

With only half of hospitals fully functioning and more than seven million people internally displaced, there remains a critical gap in basic healthcare alongside overcrowded living conditions – increasing the risk of coronavirus spreading.

The UK is pledging at least £300 million to support vulnerable Syrians with education, healthcare, food and economic recovery. The funding will help stop the spread of the virus by supporting health workers with training, medical supplies and sanitation. Preventing coronavirus in countries with weak health systems helps to protect us all – as no one is safe until we are all safe.

Speaking at the virtual conference the International Development Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

The Syria Conflict has now run into its tenth year, and in this time, more than 500,000 people have been killed and more than 11 million Syrians have been uprooted from their homes, families, livelihoods and schools.

We cannot and will not ignore the scale of the coronavirus threat in Syria, which has already been ravaged by almost a decade of conflict. That is why the UK stands with the Syrian people and is providing life-saving support where it is most needed.

The Brussels conference is also raising funds to help countries in the region affected by the crisis, including Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, which host over five million Syrian refugees.

UK funding will continue to help Syrian households recover from the crisis and become more self-reliant in the long-term. Over the past three years the UK has provided tools, training, and start-up funding to help Syrians in need across the country get a regular income. In her remarks, Ms Trevelyan said emergency humanitarian support was crucial, but the international community must also continue to help Syrians regain their livelihoods.

The UK is helping to ensure more than 500,000 of the most marginalised and at risk children receive a quality education in Syria. This work provides a sense of stability, safety and routine for Syrian children, a generation which has grown up in this conflict.

Humanitarian access to millions in need within Syria continues to be obstructed by the Syrian regime, which routinely refuses requests from the UN and aid organisations to deliver aid, prolonging suffering. It is essential that the UN Security Council Resolution on cross-border aid is renewed in July. The humanitarian situation in Northern Syria is dire, and humanitarian organisations must have unfettered access to help those in need.

The UK supports the UN-facilitated political process to reach a lasting settlement to the conflict which protects the rights of all Syrians. The UK will not consider providing any reconstruction assistance unless a credible, substantive and genuine political process is firmly underway.

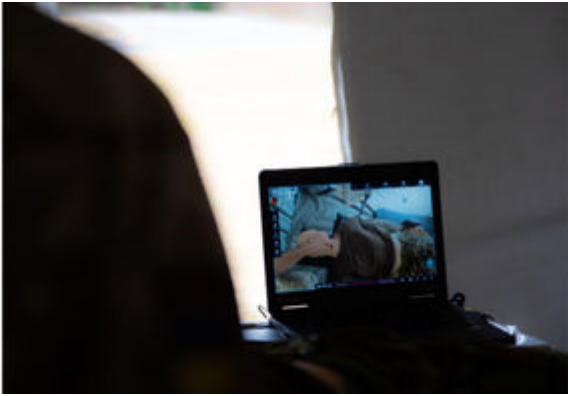
Notes to editors

- In 2020, the UK will provide at least £300 million to the Syria Crisis, bringing our total support to over £3.3 billion since 2012. This funding has provided over 28 million food rations, over 19 million medical consultations, and over 13 million vaccines across the region.
- According to the latest OCHA update, the number of people confirmed by the Ministry of Health to have COVID-19 is: 269 (nine fatalities, 102 recovered). However, testing capacity remains low. There is high risk for the elderly, people with underlying health conditions, vulnerable refugee and IDP populations and healthcare workers.
- The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights estimates 586,100 people have been killed in the crisis since 2011. <https://www.syriahr.com/en/157193/>

[ARTEMIS – jHubMed delivering innovation right where it is needed](#)

News story

jHubMed is working with Proximie to deliver a telemedicine system supporting surgical teams deployed overseas within field hospitals and aboard ships.



The deployed ARTEMIS set-up – with the Proximie software allowing remote advice and annotation onto the surgical field in real-time from a UK based advisor. MOD Crown Copyright.

This is an innovation that will save lives in the field. ARTEMIS is a jHubMed project, funded through UK STRATCOM.

How it works: with the use of a simple, portable, camera and laptop system, ARTEMIS allows a specialist, such as a Neuro surgeon, to provide direct real-time advice to a deployed clinician. It uses Proximie Augmented Reality software allowing the advisor to indicate or mark areas of interest and give visual direction to the Operator as they undertake surgery.

Due to the recording and live streaming functions it will better inform UK surgical teams when preparing for follow-up procedures. Being able to view the operation will provide a unique insight for UK surgeons who will know exactly what techniques were used during the initial damage control surgery. In fact the deployed surgeon can dial into the surgery at RCDM Birmingham and watch/provide detail as the second surgeon works.

Furthermore, through the generation of a unique trauma surgery video library, ARTEMIS will greatly assist Surgical teams in their Clinical pre-deployment training.

What next: ARTEMIS was trialled in Norway with Commando Forward Surgical Group and on Ex SS3 in Oman with 22 Field Hospital. The aim is to have the system available to all the Role 2 and 3 Field Hospitals, RAF Hospital Staging Unit and the RFA ARGUS by Spring next year.

A typical ARTEMIS recording set-up with 2 specialist cameras (one wide angle, one close up/ detail) mounted to the roof of the Role 2 Medical facility. MOD Crown Copyright.

Published 30 June 2020