

# Defence Secretary welcomes Ukraine receiving NATO Enhanced Opportunity Partner status

News story

Ukraine has been granted increased access to opportunities that will help maintain and deepen cooperation between Allies and partners



UK troops deployed on Op Orbital

Ukraine has been granted Enhanced Operating Partner (EOP) status by NATO Allies on Friday 12 June 2020, a decision supported by the UK and welcomed by Defence Secretary Ben Wallace.

The status is part of NATO's Partnership Interoperability Initiative, which aims to maintain and deepen cooperation between Allies and partners that have made significant contributions to NATO-led operations and missions.

The decision means that Ukraine will benefit from increased opportunities to help sustain such contributions, such as enhanced access to interoperability programmes and exercises, and more sharing of information, including lessons learned.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

It is excellent news that Ukraine has been granted NATO Enhanced Opportunity Partner status.

The UK already has a close relationship with Ukraine, where our soldiers have trained over 18,000 personnel, but we now look forward to deepening that cooperation on NATO exercises and operations. We will all benefit from closer association and

increased interoperability – NATO is fortunate to have such a partner.

The UK currently has personnel deployed on Operation Orbital, which is the UK's training mission to Ukraine, established in 2015 following the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia a year earlier. It is a demonstration of the UK's unwavering commitment to Ukraine's independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty. Since 2015, UK personnel have trained over 18,000 members of the Ukraine Armed Forces, making a real difference and saving lives. It was extended by three years to March 2023 by Defence Secretary Ben Wallace in November 2019.

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## [Seminar with the OECD on regulation and Covid-19 \(26th May\)](#)

News story

RPC Secretariat staff presented on “The use of regulatory management tools in times of crisis” at an OECD seminar



We represented RegWatchEurope, the best-practice sharing group of which the RPC is a core member, detailing the experiences of regulatory scrutiny in the last two months across Europe. The session was held online via videoconference at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Discussions included the difficulty of engaging key stakeholders, such as business representatives, at this time, and the different ways countries were preparing to undertake analysis of the actual effects of regulation that may not have been fully scrutinised when implemented as emergency measures.

Participants suggested that Covid-19's effects will be most pronounced not in the "fast-tracking" of regulation but in potentially undermining better regulation processes in the near-future. There will need to be concerted efforts to ensure that rules are followed when regulatory processes return to normal.

The discussions will be used to inform a paper that the OECD is preparing on governments' use of regulatory management tools in response to Covid-19.

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## [RegWatchEurope \(RWE\) Board meeting \(3rd June\)](#)

News story

This summary covers the latest regular Board meeting of the RWE network



RegWatchEurope is a network of independent regulatory scrutiny bodies that works together to exchange best practice, innovative ideas and emerging methodological approaches. A mixture of European Union and non-European members, it is a core component of the RPC's international engagement work and meets regularly at both board and technical/secretariat levels.

This June board meeting was originally to be a larger engagement in Berlin, including a technical workshop to exchange best practice in several areas of regulatory scrutiny. It was scaled down given the complications and disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, Board members including our interim chair Stephen Gibson came together on WebEx and a very fruitful planning discussion was had.

RWE members, with Germany in the chair, heard a presentation from colleagues of the Danish Business Regulation Forum as part of their arrangements for

joining the network. This included their work on “neighbour check”, which assesses how Denmark’s neighbours implement EU legislation. Digital solutions to questions of regulatory burden were also discussed, such as businesses inputting their issues directly to government.

RWE members further discussed the conclusions of various workshops on areas including ex-post evaluations held in recent months, and agreed to hold a further workshop in September on the issues of proportionality in evidence and analysis and stakeholder engagement. The different ways in which Covid-19 has affected scrutiny across Europe were also compared and contrasted.

The meeting also included a session with representatives from the European Commission’s Regulatory Scrutiny Board, who updated participants on their work expanding scrutiny of impact assessments in the UK style, and the lessons learned from this process.

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## [Second meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee](#)

News story

The Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee met for the second time on 12 June by video conference.



The Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee met for the second time on 12 June by video conference.

The meeting was co-chaired by the UK Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, and EU Commission Vice President, Maroš Šefčovič, and attended by delegations which included Member State representatives and the First Minister and deputy First Minister of the Northern Ireland

Executive.

The Committee undertook a stocktake of Specialised Committee meetings which have taken place since the first Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee meeting, and was updated on implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement more generally, on which both sides have made good progress. The UK reiterated our commitment to protecting the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in all respects, and to upholding our obligations under the Northern Ireland Protocol. The UK emphasised our commitment to EU citizens in the UK and ensuring that they and UK nationals in the EU have their rights under the Withdrawal Agreement protected.

The Committee took one Decision – to amend ten minor errors and omissions in the Withdrawal Agreement, related to citizens’ rights and financial provisions, required for legal certainty.

The UK took the opportunity provided by this second meeting to emphasise the UK’s decision not to extend the transition period. There will be no further opportunities to extend the transition period. The UK will regain its economic and political independence on 1 January 2021 at the end of the transition period and uphold a key demand of the British people.

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## **Government accelerates border planning for the end of the Transition Period**

- New GB border arrangements confirmed for next year as the UK formally notifies the EU that it will neither accept nor seek any extension to the Transition Period.
- Border controls for EU goods imported into Great Britain (GB) will be introduced at the end of Transition Period in stages to give businesses affected by coronavirus more time to prepare.
- New GB border infrastructure to carry out checks and £50million of grants to accelerate growth of the UK’s current customs intermediaries’ sector.

New border controls and procedures confirmed for 2021 as the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Michael Gove, formally notifies the EU that the UK will neither accept nor seek any extension to the Transition Period.

From 1 January 2021 the UK will have the autonomy to introduce its own approach to goods imported to GB from the EU.

Recognising the impact of coronavirus on businesses’ ability to prepare, and

following the announcement in February that the UK would implement full border controls on imports coming into GB from the EU, the UK has taken the decision to introduce the new border controls in three stages up until 1 July 2021. This flexible and pragmatic approach will give industry extra time to make necessary arrangements. The stages are:

- From January 2021: Traders importing standard goods, covering everything from clothes to electronics, will need to prepare for basic customs requirements, such as keeping sufficient records of imported goods, and will have up to six months to complete customs declarations. While tariffs will need to be paid on all imports, payments can be deferred until the customs declaration has been made. There will be checks on controlled goods like alcohol and tobacco. Businesses will also need to consider how they account for VAT on imported goods. There will also be physical checks at the point of destination or other approved premises on all high risk live animals and plants.
- From April 2021: All products of animal origin (POAO) – for example meat, pet food, honey, milk or egg products – and all regulated plants and plant products will also require pre-notification and the relevant health documentation.
- From July 2021: Traders moving all goods will have to make declarations at the point of importation and pay relevant tariffs. Full Safety and Security declarations will be required, while for SPS commodities there will be an increase in physical checks and the taking of samples: checks for animals, plants and their products will now take place at GB Border Control Posts.

The announcement follows this morning's meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee – the last formal moment to agree an extension to the Transition Period – at which the Government confirmed the long-standing position that no such extension would be sought.

A new £50million support package will boost the capacity of the customs intermediary sector – including customs brokers, freight forwarders and express parcel operators – providing businesses with further support ahead of the new processes taking effect in July 2021. This funding will support intermediaries with recruitment, training and supplying IT equipment to help handle customs declarations. Rules will also be changed to remove barriers for intermediaries taking on new clients.

In total, the Government has now provided £84m to grow the customs intermediary sector to encompass EU trade after 2020.

Additionally, the Government has committed today to building new border facilities in GB for carrying out required checks, such as customs compliance, transit, and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) checks, as well as providing targeted support to ports to build new infrastructure. Where there is no space at ports for new infrastructure, the Government will build new inland sites where these checks and other activities will take place. The Government is consulting with ports across the UK to agree what infrastructure is required.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove said:

We have informed the EU today that we will not extend the Transition Period. The moment for extension has now passed. At the end of this year we will control our own laws and borders which is why we are able to take the sovereign decision to introduce arrangements in a way that gives businesses impacted by coronavirus time to adjust.

Today's announcement is an important step towards getting the country ready for the end of the Transition Period, but there is still more work to be done by both government and industry to ensure we are ready to seize the opportunities of being a fully independent United Kingdom.

Elizabeth de Jong, Policy Director at the Freight Transport Association, said:

The logistics industry is extremely grateful for the measures announced by the UK government to stage the introduction of new trading arrangements between the EU and UK in the first six months after the Transition Period. They have listened to our concerns and made allowances to enable our sector to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and plan effectively so that we can continue to trade effectively with Europe.

Richard Burnett, Chief Executive of the Road Haulage Association commented:

This is very welcome news and we are pleased the Government has taken a sensible and pragmatic approach to the problem after listening to stakeholders such as the RHA.

The Government will continue to work closely with the border industry on these new procedures as well as other sector priorities. A border operating model will be published in July 2020.

This approach is for GB/EU trade. This approach does not apply to the flow of trade between Northern Ireland and Ireland, or between Northern Ireland and GB which is covered by the Withdrawal Agreement.

## **More detail on the stages:**

### **From January 2021**

Traders importing standard goods will need to prepare for basic customs requirements and will have up to six months to submit customs declarations to HMRC.

While tariffs will need to be paid on all imports from Day One, payments can be deferred until the customs declaration has been made, giving traders time to adjust to the new requirements. Safety and Security declarations will not be required for six months for all goods. Traders will, however, need to consider some other processes, such as how they will account for import VAT.

Traders moving controlled goods such as tobacco and toxic chemicals into GB will be required to complete a full customs declaration when the goods enter GB, in line with the requirements for goods moving into GB from the Rest of the World.

All traders importing live animals and high-risk plants and plant products will be required to have pre-notification and health documentation from the outset. Imports of high-risk animal by-products (ABP) will also need pre-notification. Documentary checks will be carried out remotely, and physical checks of high-risk goods will take place at destination or other authorised premises.

### **From April 2021**

All products of animal origin (POAO) – for example meat, pet food, honey, milk or egg products – and all regulated plants and plant products will also require pre-notification and the relevant health documentation.

### **From July 2021**

Traders moving all goods will have to make full declarations and pay tariffs at the point of importation. Full Safety and Security declarations will be introduced, while for SPS commodities there will be an increase in physical checks and the taking of samples: checks for animals, plants and their products will now take place at GB Border Control Posts.

[Read more about the measures](#)

## **Background**

- Today's meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee (WAJC) was the last meeting before the deadline to extend the Transition Period (before 1 July 2020), and therefore the last formal opportunity to discuss and agree such an extension. Only the WAJC can agree to extend to the Transition Period and it cannot do this via written procedure.
- In order to coordinate implementation of these new border controls, Border and Protocol Delivery Group has transferred from HMRC to the Cabinet Office. This move will help to ensure the readiness of the border for the end of the Transition Period and lay the foundations for the development of the best border in the world by 2025.
- The UK Global Tariff will apply to all goods imported into the UK from 1 January 2021, unless an exception applies. The measures announced today will not apply to third countries outside of the EU. Full import controls will continue to apply on trade between the UK and third countries outside of the EU and EEA.
- This is aimed at GB/EU trade. This approach does not apply to the flow



of trade between Northern Ireland and Ireland, or between Northern Ireland and GB.

- Further details of the Government's new package for customs intermediaries can be found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).