

COVID 19's impact on connectivity and trade: UK statement

Mr Chair,

more trade is essential if the global economy is to overcome the unprecedented economic challenge posed by coronavirus. In a globalised world, trade will play an essential role in resolving the effects of this crisis, as well as returning people and business to normal.

Free trade is the foundation of global prosperity. It lowers prices, widens choice and encourages innovation. As a result of the coronavirus outbreak, countries across the world are either closing their borders or implementing restrictive measures. These barriers to trade endanger the movement of life-saving goods to those who need them most.

As my American colleague mentioned, there is a risk that, when facing such a testing time, there is a temptation for nations to revert to protectionist policies. History shows us the effects of such measures, including higher import prices, higher consumer prices, less competition in the economy, and a negative impact on innovation and research. In times of economic difficulty, it is more important than ever for countries to remain open to trade. In 2008 we avoided the protectionist mistakes made in the 1930s, and we must avoid them again.

Trade gives us security at home and opportunities abroad – opening new markets for business, bringing investment, better jobs, higher wages and lower prices just as we need them most. That is why the UK will use our voice as a newly independent trading nation to champion free trade, fight protectionism and remove barriers at every opportunity.

It is critical that, in balance with legitimate measures to minimise infection, we keep supply chains open as far as possible throughout this crisis. Global supply chains are already under pressure, with over 50 countries imposing bans or restrictions on the export of medicines and medical devices in response to the coronavirus pandemic. The UK is working with national governments to ensure supply chains remain open and businesses have access to the information they need to keep goods moving. Strong, concerted action will enable supply chains to continue to function. Abrupt changes to trading practices and centres of production will cost the world time that it currently does not have.

Mr Chair,

the UK Government believes new Free Trade Agreements will be an important factor in facing this economic challenge, providing new opportunities for businesses and entrepreneurs who have faced significant challenges during this difficult period. For example, a UK/US Free Trade Agreement will help galvanize trade and investment, can help create opportunities for businesses,

provide better jobs, and boost the economy in every part of our country. Meetings on this so far have been positive and constructive, reflecting the mutual commitment to secure an ambitious agreement that significantly boosts trade and investment between the first and fifth largest economies in the world.

In the UK, we will do whatever it takes to support businesses to continue trading; through advice, finance and advocating to remove tariffs and barriers. Overseas, we are working to support vulnerable countries in navigating the changing trade landscape.

Mr Chair,

To conclude, our charge is clear: we must keep transport routes and transit hubs open, to support the flow of freight, aid, and medical supplies. But there is an urgent need for a coordinated fiscal, monetary and regulatory response among nations to reduce the global economic damage already being inflicted by the Covid-19 pandemic. By working with governments and international partners we can ensure that trade continues to flow, to keep global supply chains intact, and ensure that people have access to the critical goods – medical equipment, medicines, foodstuffs – that we all truly need.

Thank you.

[Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Liberia: July 2020](#)

Press release

Mr Neil Bradley has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Liberia in succession to Mr David Belgrove OBE.



Mr Neil Bradley has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic

of Liberia in succession to Mr David Belgrove OBE who will be transferring to another Diplomatic Service appointment. Mr Bradley will take up his appointment in July 2020.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Full name: Neil Bradley

2017 to 2020 FCO, Head of Human Rights Policy Unit, Multilateral Policy Directorate
2015 to 2016 Brussels, Head of UK-EU Funding Unit, UK Permanent Representation to the EU
2011 to 2015 Pretoria, Political Counsellor, Secondment to the European External Action Service, EU Delegation South Africa
2008 to 2011 Pretoria, Counsellor – Political
2006 to 2008 FCO, Deputy Head, Migration Group
2000 to 2006 Brussels, First Secretary, Justice and Home Affairs Section , UK Permanent Representation to the EU
2000 Full-time Language Training – French
1998 to 2000 Joint Home Office/Cabinet Office Unit, Head of the Voluntary Sector Relations and Infrastructure Section
1993 – 1998 Home Office, Fast Stream Entrant

Further information

Published 10 June 2020

[Commission for Countering Extremism launches a legal review to examine effectiveness of existing legislation relevant to hateful extremism](#)

Lead Commissioner Sara Khan has appointed former Assistant Commissioner for Specialist Operations of the Metropolitan Police Service, Sir Mark Rowley, to lead the review.

The Commission's flagship report '[Challenging Hateful Extremism](#)' identified and evidenced a new category of extremist activity in our country, described as behaviours:

- that can incite and amplify hate, or engage in persistent hatred, or equivocate about and make the moral case for violence

- that draw on hateful, hostile or supremacist beliefs directed at an out-group who are perceived as a threat to the wellbeing, survival or success of an in-group
- that cause, or are likely to cause, harm to individuals, communities or wider society

The Commission gathered extensive evidence from across England and Wales, commissioned 19 academic papers and launched the first ever public consultation on extremism. Sara Khan visited 20 towns and cities and spoke to experts, activists and critics alike. Victims repeatedly told the CCE that they felt let down by the authorities and are concerned that existing powers are not being used effectively or consistently. For this reason, the report included a commitment by the Commission to undertake a review of law relevant to hateful extremism.

Sir Mark Rowley will conduct the operational review and engage with law enforcement experts to:

1. Identify whether there are gaps in existing legislation or inconsistencies in enforcing the law in relation to hateful extremism and
2. Make practical recommendations that are compatible with existing legal and human rights obligations.

Lead Commissioner, Sara Khan says:

As evidenced in my report, hateful extremism threatens our ability to live well together. From inspiring acts of violence and terrorism, to the incitement of hatred and hostility often aimed at those with a protected characteristic, extremists are having a devastating impact on victims, on cohesion in our towns and cities and in undermining the social fabric and democratic norms of our country. Hateful extremism demands a response.

Yet despite this, our ability to counter repeat and persistent offenders is inconsistent and often ineffective. When extremists engage in terrorist activity, they are often caught by robust counter-terrorism legislation. But when they incite hatred, engage in persistent hatred or justify violence against others, extremists know they will not cross over into the threshold of terrorism. As a result, many extremist actors and organisations, whether Far Right, Islamist or other, continue to operate with impunity in our country both online and offline.

Extremists seek to restrict the rights and fundamental freedoms of others. They attempt to normalise and mainstream their extremist worldview which degrades our democracy and the values we hold dear. It is the state's responsibility to defend those rights and values and to do so in line with the rule of law.

This is why I am launching a review to examine the effectiveness of

existing legislation. This is even more pertinent during the current pandemic as we see extremists propagate horrific material which seeks to blame and incite hatred and violence against other people in our society.

I look forward to working with Sir Mark Rowley and identifying what more we as a society can do to challenge hateful extremism.

Sir Mark Rowley says:

Extremism, hate crime and terrorism have all been increasing challenges for our communities and society as a whole. While I was in post as Head of Counter-Terrorism Policing for four years, I knew that we had strong counter-terrorism system, resources and laws in place. However, I increasingly realised that nationally we are less experienced and ready to address the growing threats from hateful extremists who encourage community tensions, the rise in hate crime and some to even become terrorists.

When Sara asked me to look from an operational perspective at whether the existing legal framework has gaps that allow extremist to flourish, I was initially cautious – not least because successive governments have tried to tackle this very problem, by proposing new legislation, and failed.

However, after some initial scoping I am convinced that the Commission's clarity of focus on 'hateful extremism' can help identify the gaps that exist at the boundaries of current laws, such as hate crime and terrorism, which are being exploited daily by extremists.

The Commission will engage with stakeholder groups, operational and law enforcement bodies in the coming months, and put proposals forward to the Home Secretary later this year.

[2,500 new places on artificial intelligence and data science conversion courses now open to applicants](#)

- Up to £24 million of funding from government, universities and industry

partners will help bolster the introduction of new and diverse talent into digital and tech roles

- 2,500 places will be available, with 1,000 scholarships offered to students from underrepresented backgrounds
- Funding has been awarded to 18 universities who are working with partner providers to deliver courses in 28 universities and colleges across England

Graduates will have the opportunity to [apply](#) for a place on new artificial intelligence (AI) and data science masters courses starting in autumn 2020, Digital Secretary Oliver Dowden announced today (Wednesday 10 June).

The move will enable 2,500 people to develop new digital skills or retrain to help find new employment in the UK's cutting-edge AI and data science sectors.

The government has joined forces with the Office for Students, universities and industry partners to create a fund of up to £24 million to increase the number of highly-skilled workers in AI and data science roles. The cash will provide places for graduates from a range of backgrounds – both those that have a degree in science, technology, engineering, maths or social sciences and those that have studied other subjects to date. Scholarships will be made available to support applications from diverse backgrounds.

Applicants could include people returning to work after a career break and looking to retrain in a new profession, under-represented groups in the AI and digital workforce. 1000 scholarships will specifically target the female, black and disabled demographics.

Statistics from a Tech Nation and Royal Society report reveal women make up only 19 per cent of the tech workforce and people from a black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) background represent just 4 per cent of the UK tech industry.

Successful students will have flexible access to study and course content so they can fit their studies around their daily lives. Students will undertake paid work placements to help maximise their employment opportunities at the end of their course which could see them land roles as machine learning engineers, data scientists, research scientists or AI architects.

The announcement is part of the government's commitment to increase R&D investment to 2.4% of GDP by 2027.

Digital Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

It is vital we increase diversity across our tech sector and give everyone with the aptitude and talent the opportunity to build a

successful career.

This will help make sure artificial intelligence developed in the UK reflects the needs and make-up of society as a whole which will also help mitigate the risk of biased technologies being developed.

Through these new AI and data science conversion courses we are working with industry and academia to develop and maintain the best AI workforce in the world.

Science Minister Amanda Solloway said:

From disease diagnosis to driverless vehicles, demand for a diverse new pipeline of talent in the AI and digital workforce has never been greater.

By working with our leading universities and industry partners, I am delighted that we are providing students from all backgrounds the chance to upskill and help tackle some of the most complex challenges of our time.

Creating a more diverse future workforce will help with the design of new technology that has the potential to help tackle some of the greatest social challenges of our time – from protecting our environment to transforming the way we live and work and also saving lives by detecting signs of diseases earlier.

Chris Millward, director for fair access and participation at the Office for Students, said:

In recent years we have seen significant and increasing demand for digital skills in a range of fields. From healthcare and biosciences, to industry and transport – harnessing artificial intelligence and data science will be crucial in tackling significant global challenges for years to come.

It is also critical that graduates from all backgrounds have equal opportunities to gain the skills that employers need. With new AI and data science conversion courses across the country, and scholarships available to students from underrepresented backgrounds, this programme will both help tackle skills gaps and increase choice and opportunities for all students.

AI Skills Champion Dame Wendy Hall quote:

It is imperative that we continue to grow the pathways that supply good AI and Data Science jobs. Introducing new and diverse talent will continue to maintain the UK's position as a global leader in

AI and Innovation. These conversion courses and the scholarships attached demonstrate the importance we place on diversity and talent.

Mark Martin MBE, co-founder of UK BlackTech said:

The new AI and data science courses and scholarships will help boost uptake of these technologies across the country and prepare the next generation to tackle some of the world's biggest challenges such as the Covid-19 pandemic and social injustices.

It's important we encourage more homegrown talent from different backgrounds to access these opportunities so we can develop better tech tools, services and organisations that truly reflects our nation.

In addition to these new conversion courses, the Government is also supporting industry-funded AI Masters, prestigious Alan Turing Institute AI research fellowships and 16 dedicated Centres at universities across the country to train 1000 extra AI PhDs.

To boost the use of AI in the public sector the World Economic Forum has published new guidelines to help the public sector embrace the technology to help drive efficiencies and prepare for future risks.

The guidance will also help established companies, start-ups and new entrants to the AI sector compete on a level playing field for government contracts and drive adoption of ethical practices by tech companies.

[Change of British High Commissioner to The Gambia: July 2020](#)

Press release

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Mr David Belgrove OBE has been appointed British High Commissioner to the Republic of The Gambia in succession to Ms Sharon Wardle who will be transferring to another Diplomatic Service appointment. Mr Belgrove will take up his appointment during July 2020.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Full name: David Belgrove

Married to: Mette Ofstad

Children: Two

2015 to present Monrovia, Her Majesty's Ambassador
2012 to 2015 Khartoum, Deputy Head of Mission
2010 to 2012 Monrovia, Chargé d'Affaires
2009 to 2010 FCO, Deputy Head of Afghan Interdepartmental Drugs Unit
2007 to 2009 Kabul, Head of Counter Narcotics Team
2004 to 2007 FCO, Team Leader Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding Section, Conflict Issues Group
2002 to 2004 FCO, Head of Section and Security Sector Reform Manager, Caribbean Team
2000 to 2002 Ottawa, First Secretary, Head of Media and Public Affairs

Further information

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