

UK statement in response to the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan

We welcome and thank Ambassador John MacGregor and his colleagues for his report to the Permanent Council and the good work they have clearly done in Uzbekistan over the last year.

The excellent relationship his Office has built with the host government is warmly welcomed by the UK. This relationship allows the OSCE to strengthen co-operation between Uzbekistan and the full range of OSCE institutions and executive structures. We commend bringing the collective and tailored strengths of different parts of the OSCE to the country. This includes the Special Representative for trafficking; ODIHR; the High Commissioner on National Minorities; and the Representative on Freedom of the Media.

The UK government continues to support the Uzbek government's reforms – including in the areas of law, commerce, foreign exchange, national security, and anti-corruption. We are also pleased to witness Uzbekistan's continued cooperation with its neighbours, mirrored by the work of the Office.

I want to focus attention today – and highlight – three specific areas of commendable work of the Project Coordinator.

First on transnational threats. And in particular assistance in developing the draft National Strategy on Countering Terrorism in Uzbekistan and its related Action Plan for 2021 to 2025. We welcome the training of law enforcement officers on counter-terrorism policing and improving their skills on countering illicit drug circulation. The UK also looks forward to continuing collaboration with the Uzbek Government on regional security and the prevention and detection of serious organised crime.

Second, the work on the third dimension. This includes supporting adoption of a National Human Rights Strategy. This is occurring via a national consultation conference and by raising awareness of the tangible benefits of a National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) against torture. We welcome the Uzbek Government's efforts to improve engagement with the UN, OSCE and international NGOs and in addressing longstanding human rights concerns. At the heart of the OSCE is the principle of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, which we support all efforts to advance.

And third – training to enhance women's empowerment and advance female participation following the December 2019 elections, as well as promoting the importance of women in policing. Promotion of gender inclusivity is a key UK priority. We welcome the progress made on gender issues, and encourage implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

In addition – we welcome the Office's Project Agreement Process. We are glad to see that this has been both useful and successful over the years in

guiding the work of the field mission. It is of the utmost importance that OSCE-funded projects are effective and relevant and as such we welcome this useful tool. We also commend the renewed effort at sharing project ideas, successes and best practice in programme activity.

As this is likely to be the last Permanent Council meeting for Ambassador MacGregor in his role as Head of Mission in Tashkent I would like to greatly thank him for his hard work, his unbounded energy and his efforts in Uzbekistan and in ensuring the OSCE has a strong presence there. I wish the Office continued success and wish him all the very best in whatever comes next.

Business Secretary confirms 9 new appointments to the CMA panel

Business Secretary Alok Sharma has today (14 May) confirmed 9 appointments to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) panel.

Panel members are tasked with running merger and market inquiries that have been referred for a thorough (phase 2) investigation. Panel members also make decisions on regulatory appeals on price controls or terms of licences.

Jo Armstrong

Jo Armstrong is a business economist and corporate financier having worked in financial services, oil and gas and government, and has also worked extensively with regulatory bodies including Ofgem and the Scottish Housing Regulator. Her appointment as a panel member commenced in May 2020.

Margot Daly

Margot Daly is an executive director of the Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes (NAAFI), a trustee of GamCare and an independent business consultant. Previously she was a panel member of the Competition Appeal Tribunal. Her appointment as a panel member commenced in May 2020.

Ashleye Gunn

Ashleye Gunn is an independent consumer policy consultant. She is a panel member for Ofgem's RII0 Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability incentive and for UK Power Networks London Customer Engagement Group for RII0-2. She was previously Policy Programme Director at Which? Her appointment as a panel member commenced in April 2020.

Jennie Holloway

Jennie Holloway is co-founder of The Growth Stage and co-founder and Director of Ekta Partners Limited. Prior to launching these businesses, Jennie worked in investment banking for 15 years, latterly as a Managing Director at Goldman Sachs, where she ran Alternative Equity Capital Markets. Her appointment as a panel member commenced in May 2020.

Frances McLeman

Frances McLeman is an experienced corporate and regulatory lawyer. A former Corporate Partner at City law firm Berwin Leighton Paisner LLP (now Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner LLP), she was recently Head of Ring Fencing Legal at Lloyds Banking Group (LBG) delivering a major regulatory reform programme, and before that LBG's Head of Corporate and M&A Legal. Her appointment as a panel member commenced in May 2020.

Cyrus Mehta

Cyrus Mehta was a Partner and Head of the EU and Competition team at law firm CMS Cameron McKenna Nabarro Olswang LLP. He has over 30 years' experience in the field of UK and EU competition law, state aid, trade law and regulation. His appointment as a panel member commenced in April 2020.

Sir Kenneth Parker

Sir Kenneth Parker was formerly a QC, joint head of Monckton Chambers, a Law Commissioner and Judge of the High Court. He is currently a Judicial Commissioner in the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office, and a legal chair for the Financial Reporting Council. His appointment as a panel member commenced in May 2020.

Stephen Rose

Stephen Rose was a consultant to international law firm, Eversheds-Sutherland (International) LLP, having formally been a senior partner in the firm's Competition, EU and Trade group for over 20 years. His appointment as a panel member commenced in April 2020.

Crispin Wright

Crispin Wright was Director General of the Takeover Panel from 2015-2018. Prior to that he was an investment banker for over 30 years specialising in mergers and acquisitions at Rothschild and Co, Deutsche Bank and Morgan Grenfell. His appointment as a panel member commenced in April 2020.

The CMA

The CMA is a non-ministerial department and the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It has responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries, and enforcing competition and consumer law.

UK Statement in response to the Director of ODIHR

Mr Chair – I would like to thank the Director of ODIHR for her presentation to the Permanent Council. The United Kingdom remains a strong supporter of ODIHR in its work to support participating States in implementing their OSCE human dimension commitments.

Let me thank you Director and your team for your hard work throughout 2019. This is clearly documented in the Annual Report, and you have highlighted it here today.

With such a comprehensive mandate, which is demonstrated by a wide range of activities in many states, I will not attempt to address the full extent of ODIHR's work here.

However, let me mention briefly your work to monitor the right to freedom of peaceful assembly. We were delighted that ODIHR chose the UK as a State for assembly monitoring and that representatives of ODIHR visited London in December 2019 to observe demonstrations there. The right to freedom of peaceful assembly is essential for so many other aspects of democratic life. It is linked to both freedom of expression and freedom of association, and is a core part of electoral processes and of holding governments to account. We welcome the opportunity to share our experience of enabling the right to peaceful assembly and encourage other States to work with ODIHR in this field in the future.

We welcome ODIHR's continuing work on gender equality, and that the pursuit of this is taken forward throughout all departments and all elements of their work, not as a standalone piece of work, or an after-thought. This can be seen throughout the Annual Report, and in the assistance from ODIHR to parliaments in adopting and enacting gender-sensitive legislation.

Looking ahead, this is clearly going to be a challenging year for States and for the OSCE's institutions. In line with the recommendations being made by the World Health Organisation, States are rightly taking exceptional measures as they seek to halt the spread of COVID-19. However, some of these measures have potentially profound effects on individuals and societies, and impact on people's enjoyment of their human rights.

ODIHR, together with the other OSCE institutions, has a clear role to play in supporting participating States uphold their OSCE commitments. You have identified some of the risks: hastily adopted legislation, a lack of parliamentary oversight and scrutiny, a risk of increased intolerance, discrimination and hate crimes; and as we discussed here two weeks ago, an increase in domestic violence and abuse.

We can also see that the elections calendar for 2020 has already been disrupted, with delays to planned elections already in place, and a pause in election observation plans. Let me take this opportunity to restate my and my country's support for ODIHR's independent election observation. This includes ODIHR's election observation methodology.

Finally, a word on the role of civil society. During these unprecedented times, civil society is playing an essential role both in supporting communities and contributing to States' responses. Civil society also provides a challenge function, identifying risks and shortfalls in States' plans, as well as contributing to policy and decision making. It is crucial that space for civil society is respected, both in participating States and in OSCE fora.

To conclude – ODIHR is a vital organisation within the OSCE area – it is essential in upholding and helping to implement participating States commitments on human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. ODIHR is as essential as ever in 2020 and in the current circumstances we face. We wish all the very best to the Director and her able team and assure her of the UK's full support.

[Charity regulator continues to address concerns at connected Birmingham charities](#)

The Charity Commission has opened a new statutory inquiry and appointed an interim manager at the Al-Hijrah Trust ([charity 1154046](#)), due to serious concerns that charity properties are at risk. This will support the work of an existing inquiry into connected charity, Al-Hijrah Trust ([charity 1018850](#)). It will also examine concerns around governance and safeguarding.

The regulator opened a [statutory inquiry](#) into the Al-Hijrah Trust (1018850) in 2015 over concerns about the charity's finances and particularly how income derived from the Al-Hijrah School's occupation of one of the charity's properties, was held and expended.

In February 2014, soon after the new Al-Hijrah Trust (1154046) was registered, an agreement was drawn up to transfer property and assets of the older charity (1018850), to the new charity, with the intention that the older charity would then dissolve. However, two assets have still not been transferred.

The regulator's inquiries are seeking to address this, including issues surrounding an outstanding charge on one property caused by a loan obtained by former trustees to finance an unsecured investment in a Dubai-based

company. The property remains at significant risk due to this arrangement.

In addition, the regulator is concerned by an apparent breakdown in governance at the charity (1154046) and whether individuals listed as trustees of it on the Register of Charities were and are properly appointed as trustees. There are also concerns around private benefit and allegations of safeguarding issues at the charity (1154046).

Due to its serious concerns, the regulator opened an inquiry into the charity (1154046) on 18 March 2020. This will examine:

- the governance and administration of the charity, and whether individuals recorded as trustees were properly appointed;
- the remuneration of an individual whilst a trustee of the charity and whether this was authorised;
- safeguarding at the charity and complaints made by a former employee;
- the protection of property held by or coming to the charity.

Given the complexity of the issues it has appointed Ms Edwina Turner of Anthony Collins LLP as Interim Manager of the new charity to help address the concerns. Ms Turner will act as receiver and manager in respect of the charity's property and affairs. She also takes on day-to-day management and administration of the charity to the exclusion of the trustees. Ms Turner has existing knowledge and experience of the issues as she is already acting as interim manager of Al Hijrah Trust (1018850) where her role is to secure the removal of the charge on the property.

The inquiry into Al Hijrah Trust (charity 1018850) continues. It is the Commission's policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were. Reports of previous inquiries are available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Ends.

Notes to editors:

1. The Al-Hijrah School was an exempt charity regulated by the Department for Education as principal regulator. Neither charity is responsible for the running of the school or the funding it received, nor have the school and its operation been the subject of the Commission's inquiries. The Al-Hijrah School ceased to occupy the Al-Hijrah Trust's property (1018850) in August 2019 and ceased to exist on 31 August 2019.
 2. Section 76 of the Charities Act gives the Commission the power to appoint an interim manager to a charity. It is a temporary and protective measure that continues until the Commission makes a further order for its variation or discharge.
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Lord-Lieutenant of Derbyshire

Press release

The Queen has been pleased to appoint Mrs Elizabeth Fothergill CBE DL as Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of the County of Derbyshire.



The Queen has been pleased to appoint Mrs Elizabeth Fothergill CBE DL as Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of the County of Derbyshire in succession to Mr William Tucker CVO.

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