

# UK and Georgia sign trade continuity and strategic cooperation agreement

The Foreign Secretary today signed an agreement between the UK and Georgia to ensure that our trade and political relationship remains strong after we leave the EU.

The deal – formally known as the UK-Georgia Strategic Partnership and Cooperation Agreement – is the first continuity trade agreement between the UK and an Eastern European country.

- It replicates the comprehensive market access for trade in goods and services the UK is party to under the EU agreement, further strengthening the trading relationship between the UK and Georgia
- Trading under the terms outlined in the agreement, rather than on World Trade Organization terms, will ensure British businesses and consumers benefit from continued preferential access to Georgia after the UK leaves the European Union

The Foreign Secretary signed the agreement with the Georgian Minister of Foreign Affairs David Zalkaliani in London.

The Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

The signing of this agreement gives British exporters and consumers the certainty they need to continue trading freely with Georgia, as the UK prepares to leave the EU. It underlines the significance of our strong ties with Georgia and will ensure that our political and trade relationship continues to flourish.

International Trade Secretary Liz Truss said:

The UK Government is committed to developing both our political and trading relationship with Georgia.

This agreement will ensure minimal disruption for businesses and consumers in both our countries as we prepare to leave the EU and usher in a new phase of cooperation between our two nations.

The Foreign Minister of Georgia David Zalkaliani said:

The signing of the Strategic Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between Georgia and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland will further foster our bilateral cooperation, which has its roots running deep in history and which has been

brought to a particularly high level by the UK-Georgia Wardrop Strategic Dialogue. Partnership between two countries is based upon shared values and common interests, including in promoting rules-based international order, security and stability.

As well as setting out comprehensive free trade arrangements, the new deal frames how our countries will work together in the future. It highlights the UK's support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as both countries' commitment to strengthening fundamental freedoms and human rights and deepening our security relationship.

The agreement pledges that we will continue our cooperation in areas such as financial services, education, transport, industry and environmental protection. It also recognises Georgia's strong commitment to an ambitious reform agenda in key areas such as governance, economic reform, trade and security policy.

- the UK maintains a strategic partnership with Georgia based on our support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders.
- Georgia becomes the 47th country with whom the UK has signed a trade continuity agreement.
- this agreement recognises Georgia's continuing reform of its defence and security sectors, its strong commitment and contribution to international security and the significant progress it has made in realising its Euro-Atlantic aspirations.
- this agreement is designed to take effect when the EU-Georgia agreement ceases to apply to the UK, either following an implementation period or a no-deal Brexit. The agreement will be subject to the domestic parliamentary procedures in both the UK and Georgia before it is brought into force.
- the UK-Georgia Strategic Partnership and Cooperation Agreement replicates the effects of the existing trade and non-trade provisions as far as possible.
- the comprehensive new agreement delivers the same level of liberalisation in trade, services and public procurement currently enjoyed under the original EU-Georgia Association Agreement.
- trade between the UK and Georgia was worth £95 million in 2018 – statistics sourced from ONS 'UK total trade: all countries, non-seasonally adjusted January to March 2019 release'. Figures relate to 2018.
- the UK has now secured agreements with countries that accounted for £100 billion of trade in 2018.

## **Further information**

---

# National Drought Group – EA Chief Executive statement

The National Drought Group (NDG) met on Monday 21 October, chaired by Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, to assess the impacts of low groundwater levels in parts of the south east and east England and agree actions to reduce impacts now and into 2020.

The NDG, convened since 2016, brings together government departments, water companies, environmental groups and others to prepare for and mitigate the impacts of drought by coordinating action to maintain water supplies and protect the environment.

## **Current situation**

2019 has seen periods of prolonged low rainfall in parts of England; a trend we have been experiencing since 2016. A dry spring and the hottest day on record in July gave way to high rainfall totals causing widespread flooding in the north of England, whilst in the south and east groundwater levels remain well below normal for the time of year, similar to the droughts of the 1990s.

Despite recent heavy rainfall over recent weeks, the river flows in the chalk dominant areas of Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Essex, Suffolk and Hertfordshire are likely to remain below normal unless sustained winter rainfall provides recovery to the groundwater below.

## **Environmental drought**

This year environmental drought is having a damaging impact on the ecology in some vulnerable chalk streams, exacerbated by the cumulative effect of patterns of low rainfall since 2016. Dry weather and sustained low river flows have also significantly limited access to water for farmers and growers this year, particularly in East Anglia. Whilst sections of chalk streams regularly stop flowing during drier periods (ephemeral reaches), low groundwater levels are causing longer stretches than normal to dry up, and for longer periods of time. Another dry winter could lead to longer reaches of dry and fragmented river channel, increased weed and algal growth and a greater numbers of incidents on fish and wildlife.

Through the National Drought Group, the Environment Agency is working with the water industry, the NFU and environmental organisations to ensure that action is taken now and into 2020 to sustain water resources and protect the environment. This is a difficult task that requires collaborative working across sectors.

## Water supplies

Although public water supply has remained relatively resilient in 2019, insufficient groundwater could threaten supplies in some areas next year. Two water companies have highlighted a high risk to their supplies if we receive less than 80% of the expected winter rainfall. Should we not see the level of rainfall needed to sustain supplies this winter, drought measures including drought permits could be needed and temporary restrictions on customer use in spring 2020. The water company actions set out at the NDG include:

- continuing to promote and target water efficiency and metering, including widening campaigns to target specific zones or groups of customers
- targeted action to find and reduce leaks
- optimising and investigating options for bulk transfers to provide support in drought sensitive areas
- engagement with neighbouring companies through regional groups
- taking forward a range of other work to increase the resilience of their networks, including bringing unused sources online and testing water standards
- working with farmers locally to identify ways to sustain and share water supplies
- ensuring that all potential sites are application-ready for drought permits.

## Environment Agency

The Environment Agency has committed to:

- continuing its enforcement activity to ensure abstractors comply with their licences to help minimise the impact on the environment
- reviewing local drought interventions with local partners to more actively communicate the environmental situation and responses as part of our preparations for a potential fourth dry winter
- extending flexible abstraction licensing policy into the winter which will include allowing farmers to abstract water in October when there is sufficient environmentally sustainable flow in rivers
- ensuring water companies are following and, where required, updating drought plans in preparation for the managing the impacts of a dry winter
- continuing with our long-term strategic approach to build environmental resilience by reducing pressures at the catchment scale.

## Is this climate change?

We are already seeing the effects of the climate emergency including more extreme weather patterns and extended dry and intense wet periods. Through our sector-wide campaign Love Water, the NDG reaffirmed its core message to the public to use water wisely as we all have a role to play in tackling and adapting to the effects of drought.

## Action plan and next steps

The National Drought Group has agreed a set of specific actions to mitigate the impacts of dry weather. No one can confidently forecast whether all these actions will be needed next year or in future years, or which sector will see the greatest pressure but we know that we must be ready for whatever scenario plays out.

---

## [Advice for Manchester United fans travelling to Serbia](#)

Date: Thursday 24 October 2019

Venue: Stadium Partizan – Belgrade

Kick off time: 18.55 (local time)

As well as this advice, check out our [travel advice for Serbia](#)

### **Passports, visas and insurance**

- You do not need a visa to travel to Serbia; however you should ensure that your passport is valid for the duration of your stay
- Remember to take out travel insurance, even if you are only going for one night – it could save you a lot of money if you get into difficulties. Please note that your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) is not valid in Serbia
- You do not have to carry your passport on your person while in Serbia but you should carry a copy if the authorities ask to see ID
- If you lose your passport, you will need to make an appointment with the Consular Section in Belgrade to apply for an Emergency Travel Document. You will need to fill out the application online, have one passport size photo and pay online (£100). If you are not able to apply online, you need to go to the Embassy Consular Section during working hours and the consular staff will be able to assist you

Read more information on how to [get an emergency travel document](#)

## **Getting to the stadium**

The address for the stadium is

For further information about the stadium, please visit the [Partizan FC website](#)

Please refer to the [Manchester United website](#) for detailed information about ticket booking, travel package meeting point and the transfer to and from the stadium.

## **Advice for when you are at the match**

- Access to the stadium might be slow; there will be ticket checks; body searches may take place at the entrance to the turnstiles
- Glass or plastic bottles, cans, coins, poles, flares and pyrotechnics, video cameras are not permitted inside the stadium
- Alcohol is banned within the stadium and the surrounding area

## **Tips**

As in any other city beware of pickpockets and bag snatchers at airports, railway stations, around the town centre and when using public transport. Only carry what you need and leave spare cash and valuables in hotel safety deposits.

## **British Embassy address**

Consular Section

British Embassy

Resavska 46

11000 Belgrade

Serbia

Telephone +381 11 306 0900 (also for out of hours emergencies)

Office hours: 0800-1630 Monday to Thursday and 0800-1300 Fridays

## **Emergency services numbers**

The police can be contacted on 192, ambulance 194 and the fire brigade on 193.

---

# Canadian FinTech firms set sights on the UK

At the London Stock Exchange today (October 21), 12 Canadian FinTech companies begin an exciting 5-day trade mission across the UK as they look to set-up operations in the UK market. The trade mission marks another successful year so far for the UK FinTech industry, which recorded a record level of investment into the sector in the first half of the year.

The delegation of companies visiting the UK led by the Department for International Trade (DIT), have collectively raised over half a billion dollars in venture capital and are actively looking to expand their operations overseas.

The trade mission will take place from October 21 -25 where businesses will meet industry and government to find support and explore opportunities to invest or set up in the UK.

Ranging from cutting-edge personal finance apps and wealth management solutions powered by AI, to venture financing and digital currency, these companies represent the best of Canada's FinTech industry. The trade mission will give companies the opportunity to find financing, meet partners and potential investors, as well as find out what is required to set up operations in the UK in hubs such as London and Edinburgh.

In London, companies will meet representatives from major banks including Barclays, HSBC and Santander, as well Founders Factory – a startup incubator. In Edinburgh they will have the opportunity to meet with FinTech Scotland, Scottish Investment Bank and the University of Edinburgh's Data Lab, among others.

**Graham Stuart, Minister for Investment at the Department for International Trade said:**

The UK and Canada are natural partners in FinTech, and we are determined to make the UK the easiest and most attractive place for Canadian innovators to open and build their businesses.

Trade missions like this allow us to show the strength and depth of the UK offer and encourage investment, market entry and partnership between UK and Canadian firms.

The UK is a global leader in FinTech, welcomes foreign entrants to its market and, through its dedicated trade department, DIT, will continue to reach out to the world's most exciting entrepreneurs and show them all that the UK has to offer.

Marking the start of the trade mission, FinTech Connect—the UK’s largest FinTech trade show—announce today that they will be launching the first international spin off of their flagship London event in 2020, selecting Toronto as the first international host location.

The UK FinTech sector contributes GBP £6.6 billion annually to the UK economy, with overall investment in the first 6 months of 2019 reaching new heights with £2.3 billion in funding.

This is the second inward Canadian mission DIT has led for FinTech firms. The previous mission saw six Canadian FinTech companies—Sensibill, Kooltra, Zafin, OutsideIQ, RentMoola and Q4—each set up a UK base, creating 200 new jobs.

**Steven Clarke, Founder and Managing Director at FinTech Connect said:**

As a fast growth hotbed for financial innovation, Canada is increasingly the target market of choice for banks and fintechs looking to build a presence in North America.

Traditionally centred around its banking oligopoly, this previously insular market has lacked the global collaborations that would see Canada fulfil its potential on the World fintech stage.

To address this, we’re launching FinTech Connect Toronto in 2020 which will bring the global community of financial institutions, VC firms and fintechs we’ve built through our flagship London event to Canada, promoting international trade, commerce and partnerships.

**Mark Hallan, Director of Global Investment at Scottish Enterprise, said:**

We are delighted to welcome these 12 Canadian companies and showcase Scotland as an innovative, collaborative fintech centre.

Scotland has ambitions to become a top five global fintech centre by 2020. We have an incredibly exciting fintech ecosystem, with more than 100 companies now operating in financial services across our cities and towns.

Attracting overseas fintech firms to Scotland is a priority for Scottish Enterprise and our partners, with ten overseas companies setting up a base here over the past 18 months. These companies have advised us that access to talent, a thriving fintech scene and governmental support have been the reasons for locating in Scotland.

Scotland already has a strong economic partnership with Canada, with around 40 Canadian-owned businesses in Scotland employing more than 3,700 people. We look forward to enhancing that relationship further as part of this fintech delegation.



## **Damir Hot, Co-founder and CEO at Canalyst said:**

Since founding, we've been singularly focused on building a solid, long-standing business centered around the needs of our clients.

As we've grown to serve many of the world's most sophisticated money managers, the UK plays an important role in our overall business development strategy. This trade mission provides us with direct, valuable insights on the local business and capital markets landscape that will shape how we build our UK presence.

## **Companies attending the mission include:**

**Toronto**

**Ottawa**

**Montreal**

**Calgary**

**Vancouver**

---

## **[Landmark bridge moves step closer to completion](#)**

The bridge which weighs 150 tonnes and is 60 metres long will span the A63 and enable pedestrians and cyclists to cross over the busy dual carriageway.

The Highways England project, which is the first phase of the A63 Castle Street scheme road improvement scheme, will shape the future of Hull and connect key sites in the city.

The bridge, which will have a new name when it's complete, will help link the city's marina with the southern end of Princes Dock.

Highways England project manager Tom Peckitt said:

It is fantastic that we've reached this critical milestone for the project as we prepare to position the bridge into place. Once the bridge is installed at its final location the construction team will still have lots of work to do including installing the ramps and steps, and completing the marina platform and landscaping.

To get the fully assembled bridge to site it will be driven on four mobile platforms out of Myton Street car park, along the A63 then manoeuvred in a sequence of turns into its final position.

I am really pleased we are taking this next important step and it has taken a lot of complex work to reach this stage. I want to thank drivers for their patience whilst we move the bridge.

The bridge – which is covered by a curving steel canopy – will also have sheltered viewing balconies at each end which will give members of the public a space to enjoy the views of the city and waterfront.

As part of the bridge construction there will be new landscaped public areas at both the Princes Quay and marina sides.

Time lapse footage of the bridge being constructed on a nearby site:

[Time lapse footage of the bridge being constructed](#)

Laying the foundations for the bridge within the marina:

[Laying the foundations for the bridge within the marina](#)

During the installation, the area will be cordoned off to the public with no access until the work has been completed.

A full overnight closure of the A63 will be in place from Myton Gate Roundabout (eastbound and westbound through to Roger Millward Way (westbound) from the evening of Friday 1 November until the morning of Monday 4 November.

The bridge is due to open to the public next spring. It is being part funded with a £4m contribution from the Humber Local Enterprise Partnership's local growth fund programme, secured through its growth deals with Government and part of the Government's commitment to the Northern Powerhouse.

More details are available on [our website](#) and updates will be provided via Twitter using #a63hullpqbridge.

## **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

## **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.