

Minister for Europe welcomes steps towards peace in eastern Ukraine

The United Kingdom welcomes the statements of the governments of Ukraine and Russia underlining their commitment to achieving peace in eastern Ukraine, and welcomes a further disengagement between Ukrainian and Russian-backed separatist military forces.

The “Steinmeier Formula” sets out a process for granting special self-governing status to eastern Ukraine, following local elections, which must be held in accordance with Ukrainian electoral law and be deemed to be free and fair by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

FCO Minister of State for Europe and the Americas Christopher Pincher said:

I welcome this encouraging step forwards in bringing peace to eastern Ukraine and commend President Zelenskyy’s clear commitment to finding a diplomatic solution.

The United Kingdom shares the view of the Ukrainian Government that local elections in eastern Ukraine can only take place under proper conditions. These include a comprehensive ceasefire, withdrawal of foreign troops and unhindered access for international election observers and media.

Russia must now play its part to end the conflict by immediately ending its support for the separatists and upholding the commitments it signed up to in the Minsk Agreements.

PM’s intention to request the current session of Parliament be prorogued

The Prime Minister has been consistently clear that he wants to set out a fresh legislative programme in a Queen’s Speech. He therefore intends to request that the current session of Parliament be prorogued from the evening of Tuesday 8 October, with a Queen’s Speech on Monday 14 October.

The Government will seek to strengthen public services, improve infrastructure and connectivity across the country, tackle crime and enhance the integrity of the criminal justice system, while protecting our natural environment for the long-term.

The Prime Minister has today set out a fair and reasonable compromise for replacing the backstop and securing the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union with a deal. If a deal can be agreed at European Council, a central feature of the legislative programme will be to introduce a Withdrawal Agreement Bill and move at pace to secure its passage before 31 October.

These timings would mean Parliament is prorogued for the shortest time possible to enable all the necessary logistical preparations for a State Opening to be undertaken, including those done by the House Authorities.

The Prime Minister, Boris Johnson said:

I want to deliver on the people's priorities.

Through a Queen's Speech, the Government will set out its plans for the NHS, schools, tackling crime, investing in infrastructure and building a strong economy. We will get Brexit done on 31 October and continue delivering on these vital issues.

[£5 million given to AMR research partnerships between UK and Argentina](#)

The funding will go to 5 research partnerships between the UK and Argentina.

It has been awarded through the Global AMR Innovation Fund (GAMRIF) and will be matched in staff and lab resources by the National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET) in Argentina.

British and Argentinian researchers are launching the 'Tools to tackle AMR in the environment' programme in Buenos Aires this week.

The partnerships receiving the award are:

The research will benefit low- and middle-income countries, which are disproportionately impacted by AMR.

The programme will be delivered on behalf of GAMRIF by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) and the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) in the UK and by CONICET in Argentina.

The use of antimicrobial drugs in livestock production is a primary contributor to the development and spread of AMR. Drug-resistant microbes can be transmitted from animals to humans via direct contact or through the food chain and the environment, which poses a potential significant threat to

human health.

Mark Kent, the UK Ambassador to the Argentine Republic, said:

Today's announcement is further evidence that the UK is committed to working with Argentina to help tackle global issues. Antimicrobial resistance is a threat which is killing hundreds of thousands of people across the world each year.

The research programme represents the best of British and Argentinian technical abilities, and will have an international impact. Tackling antimicrobial resistance is a global priority, and investigating AMR in agriculture and the environment is crucial.

This partnership is exciting, not only because it is good for UK and Argentinian science, but because the benefits could be shared with developing and emerging economies around the world.

Dr Jorge Tezon, Director of Scientific Development at CONICET, said:

High-quality research is needed to increase our ability to effectively treat bacterial infections in humans and animals. That's why CONICET has decided to partner with DHSC, BBSRC and NERC and promote joint research projects.

At the national level, Argentina promotes interdisciplinary work with different actors focused on the concept of 'one health'. This research programme is particularly important as it involves interaction between national stakeholders on AMR.

We also expect that this could benefit other countries and regions around the world which are disproportionately affected by AMR and help them improve food security and the associated economics.

[Three convicted of running an illegal school](#)

Three people pleaded guilty at Lincoln Magistrates' Court last week (26 September) to conducting an unregistered independent school under section 96 of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The prosecution, only the third of its kind, was brought following an investigation by Ofsted's unregistered schools taskforce.

Patricia Hodgkinson, Dr Albert Okoye and Clement Earle received a conditional discharge and were ordered to pay £1,000 costs and £20 victim surcharge.

Six local authorities were misled into paying hundreds of thousands of pounds of public money for children to be educated at Freiston Hall, Lincolnshire. Local authorities were being charged £1,200 a week for each child's education. Freiston Hall clearly sought to identify itself as a school in its name, on its website and in other documents. Some local authorities told Ofsted that they were assured by the school that it was registered.

Freiston Hall was an unregistered school for looked after children with highly complex physical and mental health needs. Children lived on site at the registered children's home while receiving all their education at the on-site unregistered school.

When one looked after child or a child with an education, health and care (EHC) plan is attending an educational setting full time, that setting must be registered as a school or it is operating illegally. At Freiston Hall, inspectors found 9 looked after children attending full time. Several of these children had an EHC plan.

The Department for Education referred Freiston Hall School to Ofsted's unregistered schools taskforce in September 2017 after it was suspected to be operating without registration. Despite a warning issued by Ofsted, the school continued to operate illegally.

Ofsted carried out 2 further pre-registration inspections, which found that Freiston Hall was unlikely to meet the government standards. It had failed to carry out necessary staff suitability checks, to give first aid training to staff, and to supervise pupils adequately.

At a final unannounced inspection carried out by our unregistered schools taskforce, inspectors found unsupervised children wandering around the premises. Staff were struggling to keep reasonable order and calm, while children became agitated and upset.

Freiston Hall only closed because Ofsted issued the associated children's home with a suspension notice. The children were removed and placed elsewhere. The proprietors had no choice other than to close the school.

Amanda Spielman, Ofsted's Chief Inspector, said:

The people running Freiston Hall were receiving large amounts of public money from local authorities, which were paying for exceptionally vulnerable children to be educated in an unregistered, unsafe school.

Registration is so important. Schools operating beneath the radar are not subject to regular inspection, so we cannot be assured that they are safe or providing good quality education. We want to send a clear message to those who continue to run unregistered schools, despite being warned not to. You will face justice.

This case should also serve as a warning to local authorities. Decisions about placements must be made with due diligence. All local authorities should be carrying out the necessary checks to make certain that schools are registered with the Department for Education.

Under section 96 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 (the 2008 Act), in England, a person must not conduct an independent educational institution unless it is registered. A person who conducts an unregistered independent school is guilty of a criminal offence.

Under section 97 of the Act, if Ofsted has reasonable cause to believe that an offence under section 96 is being committed on any premises, inspectors may enter the premises and take copies of any records or other documents that may be required for the purposes of proceedings in relation to such an offence.

Under section 463 of the Education Act 1996, an 'independent school' is defined as a school that is not maintained by a local authority or is not a non-maintained special school and at which full-time education is provided (a) for 5 or more pupils of compulsory school age or (b) for at least 1 pupil who is looked after by a local authority (within the meaning of section 22 of the Children Act 1989) or has a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.

The offence is a summary offence and currently carries a maximum penalty of 6 months' imprisonment, an unlimited fine or both.

Between 1 January 2016 and 31 December 2018, Ofsted identified 521 possible settings that may be unregistered schools: 259 settings have been inspected and 71 have been issued with warning notices. From these, 15 settings have since closed, while 39 have changed the way they operate in order to comply with the law, and 9 have registered as independent schools. The remaining cases are still under active investigation, while more settings continue to be identified.

[Climate emergency debated on the Tyne](#)

On Wednesday 2 October, more than 60 representatives from leading organisations across the North East of England met to discuss how the region is preparing for the fall out of the climate emergency.

There were representatives from local authorities, development corporations, universities, water companies, statutory bodies and the business community. Amongst the visitors was James Bevan, the Environment Agency's chief executive, who addressed the gathered audience about the issues.

The other organisations who also spoke during the event were Durham University, NewcastleGateshead Initiative, North East England Nature Partnership and Thames Estuary Partnership.

The representatives were taken on a guided boat tour of the Tyne Estuary Partnership project, led by the Environment Agency and Ground Work NE & Cumbria, and shown first-hand how the River Tyne is preparing for the effects of Climate Change. They ventured from Newcastle Quayside to Jarrow before turning around and returning to moor up in sight of the beautiful array of iconic bridges.

Climate Change is the biggest threat we face – and it is happening now. We are already seeing the effects of the Climate Emergency in the UK through hotter, drier summers and wetter winters. The impact on people, communities and wildlife – and the habitat on which they depend – is huge.

The Environment Agency is doing everything possible to respond to the challenges of Climate Change, build resilience, and protect communities now and through the next century in a new flood and coastal strategy. We will work across government, business, and with communities up and down the country to manage the impacts of climate change and understand how we can adapt to a different future.

Groundwork NE & Cumbria are working in partnership with the Environment Agency – to build the Tyne Estuary Partnership and develop priority projects for enhancement and improvement. The River Tyne is one of the most iconic and well-known rivers in the UK and provides a focal point for economic activity supporting thriving businesses and communities. It responds to the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan; to create connections between existing initiatives and real practical actions.

The partnership project looks to:

- Develop a strong, strategic, influential partnership invested in long term environmental and economic enhancement of the iconic estuary
- Working together to achieve improvements in biodiversity and the ecological environment to reduce silting and pollution, improving water quality
- Realising wider benefits that joined up action can achieve; natural capital gains, health and wellbeing improvements, education, social, cultural and heritage benefits

It could include the introduction of nature based solutions such as creating a saltmarsh to help with carbon absorption and implement other crucial interventions that can reduce the risk of flooding, clean up air quality and make the area more attractive to residents and visitors to the area.

Rob Carr, Tyne Catchment Coordinator, at the Environment Agency, said:

It's hard to hear but climate change is impacting us all, right here in the north east, and we individually have the choice to reduce our personal contribution to the Climate Emergency in our

day to day lives. The food we eat, the journey we take, the home we live in, the places we work and play. It's not just something that happens to others, it is happening to us – right here, right now.

The Tyne Estuary Project is looking to improve and increase the nature that runs through Tyneside along our Tyne estuary. Nature can help us manage flooding, improve air quality, capture carbon, help address social and health issues as well as attracting investment in our local economy.

The Environment Agency along with a growing Tyne Estuary Partnership have a vision for a more natural, healthy and vibrant riverside. We have identified over 70 locations where we hope to work with land owners, business, developers, Local Authorities and communities to realise our vision and help manage, through nature, the climate emergency we all face.

Chris Watson, Director of Land & Communities, Groundwork NE & Cumbria, said:

Groundwork NE & Cumbria welcomes the opportunity to work in partnership with the Environment Agency and other organisations to develop a sustainable approach to the environmental and economic enhancement of the iconic Tyne Estuary. As an organisation, we strongly believe that such a local approach to sustainable development can contribute towards the fight against the much wider and significant climate emergency, which we all face.

The tour of the Tyne Estuary Project was also an opportunity for people and organisations to sign up to the [Tyne Estuary Partnership Pledge](#) to help realise the vision, hopes and plans for the Tyne and to secure its future for generations to come.