

[News story: Travel advice for the European Games in Belarus, 21-30 June 2019](#)

- Date: 21-30 June 2019
- Venue: 12 sporting venues in Minsk In addition to the following information, please check out our [travel advice for Belarus](#).

Passports and Visas

- From 10 June 2019 until 10 July 2019, provided you have a ticket for at least one European Games sporting event or an Opening/Closing ceremony, all British national passport holders can enter Belarus through any border checkpoint of Belarus. In addition to the ticket, [medical insurance](#) and funds equivalent to 25 euros per day are required, as per usual entry requirements.
- Your passport should be valid for a minimum period of 3 months from the date of entry into Belarus.
- Please remember that if you visit Belarus from 10 June 2019 until 10 July 2019 for any other purpose than the European Games, usual entry requirements apply. To know more about these regimes please check out our [travel advice for Belarus](#).
- Anyone staying for more than 5 days in Belarus must register online (www.portal.gov.by) or with the local police office (OVIR) in the district in which they are staying. Registration will normally be arranged by your hotel. If you're not staying in a hotel registration must be organised by your host. There are fines for not registering in time.

Getting to/from the airport

Minsk airport is located 40 km from Minsk.

- It takes 35 to 40 minutes to get from the airport to Minsk city centre by taxi; taxis are the most convenient way to get to central Minsk; for a journey to Minsk city centre expect to pay between 30 to 40 BYN (Belarusian roubles). 1 GBP ~ 2.80 BYN.

REMEMBER ALWAYS TO ASK ABOUT PRICE BEFORE YOU START YOUR JOURNEY.

- Buses run a 24/7 (every 20 to 30 minutes during the day) service from the airport to the central bus/railway station. The price is 5 BYN. Details on departure times and route can be found on the [Minsk International Airport website](#).

Sport events

To check the schedule of sport events, sights where these events will take

place as well updates and all necessary information related to the Games, please visit the official [European Games webpage](#).

Local information

Climate and Time

The average temperature in June is around 16°C. You can find information at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/625144> Minsk is plus 2 hours BST

Language

The main languages are Belarusian and Russian.

Crime

- crime levels in Minsk are generally low, but muggings do occur from time to time
- take sensible precautions: be vigilant, avoid carrying large sums of money and try to avoid walking alone at night

Personal Security

- look after your personal belongings, in particular your passport and your money
- carry a photocopy of the personal details pages of your passport and keep it in a safe place separate from your passport

Disabled Travellers

- the Belarusian authorities have advised that there will be a designated area at the stadium (fan sector) for supporters with disabilities
- generally, while things are steadily improving, Minsk has limited facilities for the disabled traveller – the pavements, even on the main roads can be difficult to negotiate for those with disabilities

Road Safety

- pedestrians should be vigilant at all times when crossing roads; red traffic lights and zebra crossings don't necessarily mean a car will stop; use the underpasses where available
- when using a taxi make sure it has working seatbelts; some cars are poorly maintained
- accidents happen, mainly due to poor or reckless driving and inconsistent enforcement of traffic rules
- do not 'jay walk' – cross the road only when the green man alights. You're liable to be fined if you do jay walk.

Religion

- most of the population of Belarus is Christian (mostly Orthodox); Belarus is a largely secular society and religion is usually considered a private matter

- respect local traditions, customs, laws and religions at all times and be aware of your actions to ensure they don't offend other cultures or religious beliefs

Telephones

- the international dialling code for Belarus is +375; before travelling check with your mobile phone provider that it will work in Minsk
- local sim cards are available with Velcom, MTS and Life being the leading mobile operators; you can buy local sim cards only in the mobile operator's shops showing your passport

Currency

- all goods and services are paid in local currency (Belarusian Rouble – BYN); sterling, US dollars and Euros are easily exchanged; major hotels and international supermarkets and restaurants accept credit and debit cards
- ATMs in Minsk will almost always accept UK credit and debit cards; before leaving the UK, let your bank know you're travelling to Belarus

Consular Assistance

If there's a genuine emergency during your visit to Minsk (e.g. one involving accident, injury or loss/theft of your passport) call +375 17 2298200 and follow the instructions to be put through to a consular officer.

Lost or stolen passports

If your passport is lost or stolen report the loss to the local police as soon as possible and get a copy of the police report. You can't travel back to the UK without a valid travel document. You'll need to apply to the Consular Section of the British Embassy Minsk for an Emergency Travel Document (ETD). Please see our [ETD web page](#) for more information.

Lost or stolen credit/debit cards

If you lose your wallet or purse try to cancel your credit/debit cards as soon as possible. British consular officials can't give you money to help you return home. You can transfer money from the UK using many of the commercial money transfer agencies in Minsk, including Western Union. You can also use most major credit and debit cards to obtain money from ATMs. For more information visit the [British Embassy, Minsk web page] (<https://www.gov.uk/world/organisations/british-embassy-minsk>).

Our address is: 37 Karl Marx Street Minsk Belarus Tel: +375 17 2298200 (24 hrs) Email: consular.enquiriesminsk@fco.gov.uk The consular section of the British Embassy in Minsk is open to visitors from Monday to Thursday from 09:00hrs to 17:30hrs and on Friday from 09:00hrs to 15:00hrs, excluding public holidays. You can also check our [Travel Advice for Belarus](#).

Emergency services numbers

• Fire – 101 • Police – 102 • Ambulance – 103

Enjoy the Games and your visit to Belarus!

[News story: Penny Mordaunt welcomes China move on international development](#)

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt has welcomed moves by China to look at the way it spends aid in developing countries.

Speaking at the World Bank Meetings in Washington on April 12, she said the UK was building a “positive, constructive relationship with China” on International Development.

It came after China signed a Memorandum of Understanding with eight multilateral banks, including the World Bank, in March this year to set up a Multilateral Cooperation Centre for Development Finance.

The idea is to look at how China is operating in the developing world, and to bring benefits to the countries it is investing in.

Ms Mordaunt, the UK governor to the World Bank, said:

We are trying to build a positive, constructive relationship with China on international development. One of the draws for China is the UK’s technical expertise in this field. They value that. We recognise there are opportunities for China to deliver more tangible benefits in the developing countries they are investing in.

China’s proposal to set up a ‘Multilateral Cooperation Centre for Development Finance’ has real potential to ensure its huge investments in developing countries meet the key international standards that matter to all of us – on debt, transparency, environment and social safeguards.

It’s a positive step that the World Bank and a number of other multilateral banks have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with China to develop this initiative.

The UK looks forward to hearing more plans from China about how

this initiative can help achieve sustainable, inclusive development outcomes, which benefit the countries concerned and meet the highest international standards.

[News story: Modular versus linear GCSEs: does the structure of exams matter?](#)

Ofqual and [Oxford University's Centre for Educational Assessment](#) are today (Monday 29 April) publishing the findings of a 3-year joint research project on the impact of modular and linear exam structures at GCSE.

Academics and researchers from both organisations collaborated on the project, Examination Reform: The Impact of Linear and Modular Examinations at GCSE. The research considers whether change in the structure of GCSE exams has affected standards, fairness, teaching and learning practices, cost, and students themselves. The project included a systematic review of existing literature on the advantages and disadvantages of modular and linear structures; extensive analysis of GCSE outcomes between 2007 and 2014, focusing on English, maths and science; and research into teachers' views.

The research is part of Ofqual's ongoing work to ensure that exam reforms are operating well for the young people who take them. In summary, we conclude from the range of evidence gathered, that in the current educational context, linear exams are more suitable at GCSE than modular exams. In particular:

- Overall, the literature review points to claims that linear exams favour longer-term retention of information and deep learning, whereas modular exams allow regular feedback on performance which can be motivating for some students. However, reflecting a number of caveats, the quantitative evidence suggests that modular and linear GCSEs lead to similar outcomes overall.
- The research did not support claims that modular or linear exams tend to favour male or female students, or affect the outcomes of low and high socio-economic status students differently.
- During interviews conducted between April and November 2015, and again in May 2017 following the introduction of the first reformed GCSEs, many teachers reflected positively that student performance could be assessed with greater fairness and validity through linear GCSEs.
- Teachers had mixed views on the subject of stress. Some expressed concerns about the potential impact of linearity on the wellbeing of those students who require additional support, others noted that the elimination of the continual testing associated with modular GCSEs may reduce stress for some students.

Teachers and education leaders will discuss the findings at an event in London today that will further understanding of the effect of assessment structure and policy on students in England. The research will be published shortly after today's event has concluded.

Dr Michelle Meadows, Executive Director for Strategy, Research and Risk, Ofqual, said:

Teachers were concerned about the change to linear GCSEs when we spoke to them before the recent reforms. How they adapted during the period of this research has been impressive. We have been able to look at the effects of the changes on teachers' practices and many can see benefits to the introduction of linear examinations. They also report that they would now like a period of stability.

Professor Jo-Anne Baird, Professor of Educational Assessment, University of Oxford, said:

Our findings have been really surprising in a number of ways. We might have expected to see that modular examinations were easier, or at least easier for some of the groups we investigated, but we found no such differences. The comparable outcomes approach to setting standards has played a key role in this.

[Speech: Queen's Birthday celebration in Ashgabat](#)

Madam Chairwoman, Lady Nicholson, ladies and gentlemen,

A warm welcome to what is, for us, always a very special event!

Queen's Birthday celebration in Ashgabat

Some of you will have noticed that we have a number of visitors here tonight. I am delighted to welcome not only our friends and colleagues in Ashgabat, but also the British delegation to the Turkmenistan-United Kingdom Trade and Industry Council, and especially Baroness Nicholson as Head of Delegation and the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Turkmenistan, and Ronald Nash, Co-Chairman of TUKTIC. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our sponsors – BP, Buried Hill, De La Rue, JCB and Rolls Royce – who have made TUKTIC possible.

Queen's Birthday celebration in Ashgabat

But the purpose of this evening is to celebrate our Queen's 93rd birthday. It is an honour to represent the person who has for nearly 70 years served as a living embodiment of British values in an uncertain and turbulent world, someone whose unswerving integrity and loyalty to our country and our people is unparalleled.

Ladies and gentleman, I give you The Queen.

Queen's Birthday celebration in Ashgabat

Tonight it is fitting that we also celebrate the ties which bind Britain and Turkmenistan. Baroness Nicholson's presence here, as well as that of her predecessor, Charles Hendry, attest to the enduring strength of the bilateral relationship, and to the desire on both sides to strengthen the business links between us, to the benefit of our two countries.

President Berdimammedov has dubbed 2019 the Turkmenistan's Year of Prosperity. We could wish for nothing more for the Turkmen people. We would like to partner them as they move to a prosperous future. But above all, we wish them health and happiness in this beautiful country.

Ladies and gentlemen, I give to a toast – to the President and the people of Turkmenistan.

[Speech: Queen's Birthday Party celebration in Mombasa, Kenya](#)

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Ni furaha yangu kuwakaribisha nyote katika hii sherehe ya siku ya kuzaliwa kwa malkia Elizabeth (I am delighted to welcome you all to this celebration of the Queen's Birthday).

Nimefurahi sana kurudi Pwani tena. Hapa ninajihisi kuwa nyumbani, na vile vile maelfu ya wenzangu ambao husafiri, huishi na kuwekeza katika maeneo ya pwani (I'm delighted to be back on the coast. I feel at home here. So do thousands of my compatriots who travel, live and invest on the coast).

The Coast is where my country's story in Kenya began, and with it the thousands of connections between individuals, communities, businesses and cultures which today make up the partnership between the UK and Kenya.

The Kenyan Coast feels like home, because this is a place where many cultures and many peoples meet. It is a gateway to Kenya and the whole of East Africa, and open to the world. Just like you, the United Kingdom draws strength from our diversity, from our openness to the world, from our global connections.

And we celebrate those connections here this evening.

I want to thank every one of you here tonight for the part you play in weaving the rich fabric that binds our countries together.

Thanks to you, the UK is supporting the development of the Kenyan coast; helping its institutions to succeed and deliver vital services; enriching people's lives and offering opportunities to the youth.

Thanks to you, British investment on the Coast is supporting thousands of jobs.

Thanks to you, the Coast, Kenya, and the United Kingdom are more secure, better able to deal with terrorism, extremism, and organised crime.

Let me illustrate all that by telling you about my week.

On Tuesday, I launched a new programme on sustainable urban development for Malindi town, which won a competition to be one of ten towns and cities across the country to be selected for this new support.

I opened a UK-funded vehicle checkpoint on the Galana river that will keep the Coast safer.

I discussed with the Governor the UK's investment in a new 52Mw power plant outside Malindi, and am pleased to confirm tonight that he has now granted the Development Permit which will allow this project to move forward.

Here in Mombasa over the last couple of days, I visited Kenya's new Coastguard service, to which the UK is providing training and support.

I saw my team from the National Crime Agency working with Kenya Revenue Authority at the Port to track down and seize containers loaded with stolen cars from the UK. They will now work together to go after the criminal gangs responsible.

I visited the Port Reitz road, funded by UK Aid through TradeMark East Africa, and saw the difference it has made both to transit from the port itself, and to congestion overall in Mombasa.

With the DPP and the DCI, I broke ground on a new UK-funded headquarters for the Anti-Terrorism Police Unit here in Mombasa.

With them and Lady Justice Njoki, I launched the first-ever women's Social Justice Centre in Kenya. It will help ensure women from the most disadvantaged communities can get their voices heard and their issues taken up by the authorities, including on allegations of extra-judicial killings and on gender-based violence.

And I met Governors and their teams from the Jumia ya Kaunti za Pwani to discuss our support to the region's economic bloc.

Meanwhile, we are constantly reminded here on the Coast of the importance of

the Blue Economy, and of protecting our marine environment.

The UK and Kenya are leading the way internationally in that effort.

When Prime Minister May visited Kenya last August, she announced UK support for a new Scout badge recognising work on plastic waste and pollution. I'm proud that we will be awarding the first of those new badges to the Scouts here this evening.

Friends,

Throughout my time in Kenya, I have striven to deepen the UK's connections to the Kenyan coast. We have opened a new Coastal chapter of the British Chamber of Commerce here. And a new visa centre in Mombasa so people can apply here to visit the UK rather than travelling to Nairobi.

And tonight I can announce that the British Council will this year be opening a new Exams Centre here in Mombasa. English language exams, including those necessary for UK university admission, and a range of professional qualifications also administered by the Council, will soon be available here in Mombasa rather than requiring a costly trip to Nairobi.

I have learnt a lot too this week about the big issues on the Coast.

On my return to Nairobi I will be talking to the national Government about how we can support a stronger strategy on Mombasa Port. We must ensure the gains of recent years in the speed and efficiency of transit through the port are not eroded. If they are, Kenyans will suffer through higher prices and less manufacturing investment. I have also heard from British investors here about some of their difficulties starting new projects, and have encouraged the counties of this region to make an honest assessment of the ease of doing business in each of their jurisdictions, aiming to outdo each other in creating good conditions for investment.

Everywhere I have been asked about corruption. It is stifling business investment, and taking from wananchi what is legitimately theirs.

Nothing will do more for Kenya's future than the success of the President's anti-corruption campaign. I pledge again tonight that the UK will support him, and the good people he has appointed, to lead this campaign. That includes through the swift repatriation of any proceeds held in the UK once people here in Kenya are convicted of corruption.

Mabibi na mabwana (ladies and gentlemen),

Kwa wakati ambao nimekuwa hapa nchini Kenya, nimejitahidi kuimarisha uhusiano na uekezaji wa Uingereza katika eneo hii ya pwani. (During my time in Kenya I have worked to deepen the UK's connections and investments in region).

Uingereza imewekeza zaida ya shilingi billioni saba katika bandari la Mombasa na miundombinu yake, na imefadhili mipangilio ya bandari la jiji la Lamu. (The UK has invested over 7 billion shillings in Mombasa port and its infrastructure, and funded the planning of Lamu port city).

Mipangilio yetu ya ajira kwa vijana na mipango za mafunzo, zimeweza kuleta ajira kwa maelfu hapa eneo la pwani (Our youth employment and training programs have created thousands of jobs here).

Tumefungua pia afisi la British Chamber of Commerce tawi la pwani, na kituo cha kuomba cheti cha kusafiri (visa office) hapa Mombasa (We have opened a coastal UK chamber of commerce, and a visa application centre in Mombasa).

Wiki hii nilifungua kituo cha ukaguzi wa magari huko Malindi, na tukaanzisha makao makuu mapya ya ATPU hapa mjini Mombasa (This week I opened the Malindi vehicle checkpoint and broke ground on the new Anti Terror Police Unit, ATPU, headquarters here).

Pamoja na washirika wengi humu nchini Kenya, Uingereza umeimarisha maisha ya watu wanaoishi maeneo ya pwani ya Kenya. Leo ninasisitiza tena kujitolea kwa Uingereza na ushirikiano wetu kwa miaka zaidi ijayo (Together with many Kenyan partners, the UK is making a difference to the lives of people along the Kenyan coast. Today I recommit the UK to our partnership for the years ahead).

Mungu awabariki nyote, na Mungu aibariki Kenya (God Bless you all, God Bless Kenya).