

[News story: Expat voting rights treaty secured with Spain](#)

The treaty signed by Robin Walker MP and Minister Marco Aguiriano, today (21 January 2019) means that British citizens living in Spain and Spanish citizens in the UK can continue to participate in local elections in the future.

The treaty contains transitional provisions, ensuring that UK nationals who are registered to vote in the upcoming local elections in Spain this May, will continue to be able to do so in any Brexit scenario. Guidance on how to ensure you are registered can be found on the Spanish government website.

In future, UK nationals will need to have resided in Spain for three years to exercise their rights under this treaty. The criteria of Spanish nationals to vote in local elections in the UK will remain the same.

We welcome this significant treaty that reaffirms the importance of the relationship between the UK and Spain, underlines our shared commitment to democracy, and most importantly enables these citizens to continue to determine who represents them in the country they reside in.

We continue to explore similar bilateral treaties to secure these rights for British citizens across the EU and we are approaching all EU Member States on this subject.

To provide certainty while we pursue these agreements, we do not anticipate making any changes to the current primary legislative framework for candidacy and voting rights of EU citizens living in the UK in the immediate future.

It is our intent that all eligible EU citizens living in the UK will be able to vote in local elections in England and Northern Ireland this May. Those who are nominated and elected at or before these local elections will also be permitted to serve their full term in office.

Brexit Minister Robin Walker said: "I'm very pleased to have signed such an important treaty with one of our closest neighbours which maintains people's ability to exercise their democratic rights, by standing and voting in local elections.

This adds a further guarantee to the rights of UK nationals in Spain, and Spanish citizens in the UK, in any scenario.

LINKS TO OTHER USEFUL INFO:

[Living in Spain guide](#)

[Types of election, referendums, and who can vote](#)

[Press release: Full STEAM ahead for new Cumbria education trail](#)

The [STEAM](#) trail (which stands for science, technology, engineering, arts, and maths) is at Westlakes Science Park, near Whitehaven, Cumbria.

It will give Key Stage 2 and 3 pupils (7-13 years) the chance to learn increase their skills in a fun, outdoor environment.

Children from Valley Primary School, Whitehaven, were the first to roadtest the trail at an opening event last week.

Stuart McCourt, Sellafield Ltd's education, community, and development lead, said:

We wanted to help create a unique and inspiring trail for primary school students.

It will complement their school work by learning through real world examples.

Westlakes is the perfect environment; it's home to an inspiring mix of organisations who work with cutting edge technology and are surrounded by a stunning natural environment.

The trail is both physical and digital, with children able to walk around it and use a complementary app. The app was designed by students at Lakes College, in Workington.

Sellafield Ltd has funded tablets which will be used to access the digital experience.

The trail is curriculum focused and features knowledge boards on topics ranging from photography to solar energy,

The aim is to increase children's understanding of how STEAM underpin our daily lives.

It was designed by Design Code working with Rachel Suddart. Uniquely, it inserts arts subjects into the traditional STEM agenda.

Michael Pemberton, chief executive of NEC, the owner of Westlakes, said:

We have fantastic surroundings at Westlakes. We've always been keen to make more of the paths and trails in the grounds with art

installations.

We believe the next generation of scientists and engineers will need creativity and artistic understanding to solve the challenges of tomorrow's world.

Adam Phillips, energy and community officer at BEC said:

The addition of an interactive app has resulted in a user-friendly experience for students to explore and enjoy.

We have linked the content to the age-specific curriculum so lots of it should already be familiar to many young people and the app includes questions that help them engage further.

The trail has been supported by the University of Manchester's Dalton Cumbrian Facility, University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), Jacobs, and the Primary Business Partnership.

[Speech: Secretary of State opens Education World Forum 2019](#)

Dear Ministers, colleagues, your Royal Highness and ladies and gentlemen. It's a great pleasure to welcome you all here to London and to this 16th Education World Forum.

I know a huge amount of work has gone on behind the scenes to prepare for a day like this – and I'd like to start by thanking the very dedicated team who, year after year, make these forums such a success.

As I look around the room today, of course, we hail from all corners of the world, we have different cultures, different languages, different weather. Our experiences, our perspectives will be very different.

But some things are the same the world over – the fundamental importance of education, investing in training and shaping the next generation – this is something that every country represented in this room shares.

This is partly plain economics. As Benjamin Franklin once said: "An investment in knowledge pays the best interest."

But it's also about business economics and about national economics. If you want to build a more productive, effective economy – then you will need a highly skilled workforce.

And today of course, new technologies and industries are reshaping our world at lightning speed. But even in a world of thinking machines, of artificial intelligence, of robots and autonomous vehicles, it's people that are imagining and building this high-tech future.

Any country that wants to prosper in tomorrow's world will need to invest in their future workforce.

Because countries need, the global economy needs, more technicians, more managers, more innovators and more creators. We need engineers, coders, welders.

For the sake of our nations' health we need more doctors, more nurses, more radiologists. And, of course, all of us need teachers.

And is it good enough to train up a few, or even a third or half the population? No – the most successful countries are drawing on all their talent, all their human resources.

But of course people aren't just resources. They are individuals, individuals with a moral right to realise that spark of potential that exists in us all. And we realise that potential, in large part, through what we are here to talk about today, our education.

It's not only that a good education helps you find skilled, rewarding work. It's that everyone should have a chance to discover the joy that comes through learning. When we grow up with a thirst for knowledge, a curiosity about the world, an understanding of our and other cultures – we are happier, more fulfilled. We learn to be ourselves as we should and can be.

And of course we know that access to education is empowering. It empowers girls and women, it empowers the poorest, it empowers the downtrodden.

An education gives people the skills and the knowledge to pull themselves up. It can mean leaving a narrow existence behind to discover a whole world of opportunities.

And your education stays with you. It defines your future path, whatever start you may have got in life. Wherever you go in the world – this is a universal truth.

You can visit a refugee camp or a disaster zone, somewhere people are battling for survival – needing food, water, a roof over their head.

And yet, if you talk to the parents – one of their first priorities is getting their kids back to school, reading textbooks, learning. Because education is always key to a better future.

That's why as a global community, as a world, we made it our shared mission to bring education to all, as set out in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals in 2015.

But this is not just the right thing to do. It's crucial for global

stability, prosperity and peace.

When we co-hosted the Syria conference here in London three years ago, alongside humanitarian relief, we committed to educating Syria's children, preventing a lost generation. A generation that could grow up alienated, despairing, in some cases vulnerable to toxic messages from extremists.

Great education can promote cultural and religious understanding, by teaching tolerance, by encouraging empathy and understanding for different points of view. Education means asking questions, coming out of our own narrow parameters...

Remember what Malala told the UN after being shot in the head for going to school: "The terrorists are afraid of books and pens. The power of education frightens them."

The power of education. All of us here share in that immense privilege, the awesome responsibility, of sharing in the shaping of the next generation by providing them with a good education.

And we come here to this Education World Forum not so much as competing nations, but in the spirit of cooperation...

Civilisation arguably began when we found ways to record knowledge and pass on to next generation. When I spoke here a year ago, I said most of what is good in the world – great inventions, everyday conveniences – most of it exists only because we share knowledge or the fruits of knowledge.

So while our countries may seek to race ahead when it comes to creating more prosperous economies, exploiting new technologies, training more skilled workers – the pursuit of knowledge can, and does, transcend this competition.

Here at this Forum, we share our experiences, we share our expertise, we look at our innovations. We'll be hearing from Education Ministers from Vietnam, Kenya, Albania to name a few, as well as organisations like the World Bank and Microsoft.

I know that Andreas Schleicher of the OECD spoke earlier, discussing their latest report which poses questions about the role education can play in lifting individuals out of poverty, promoting economic growth and creating responsible citizens.

The work of the OECD is also hugely valuable, precisely because it helps countries to work together, to learn from each other, to help each other.

There is also, of course, a commercial marketplace for education innovation. Indeed, there are few better examples of that marketplace than the BETT fair starting immediately after this forum.

As ever, this will be an amazing showcase of educational technology. Edtech that has been created to solve some of our most critical challenges – be it better training for teachers or helping children with disabilities to communicate in the classroom.

And for some countries, we offer direct aid to children who would otherwise miss out on an education.

I mentioned the UN's global goal of education for all. Of course that is an enormous challenge. In the next decade, a billion more young people around the world will enter the jobs market, yet more than half of the world's primary children are on track to leave primary school unable to read or write.

I'm proud of the work the UK is doing here. In the last three years alone supporting more than 11 million children in some of the poorest and most fragile places in the world, to access quality education, starting with the basics of literacy and numeracy.

I believe this is one of the best uses of international development spending. Because of the way education can put individuals on a different path, and, ultimately, put their countries on the path to development and independence. And yes we need more countries, in fact all countries, to honour their commitments to maximise this opportunity.

But beyond development – my country is committed to sharing and learning from you all.

As Education Secretary – and I've been in the job for exactly a year now – I believe our education system has enormous strengths – but that we also have much more work to do.

During my time in this job, one thing I've noticed is how frequently the same things up in conversations. I speak to my counterparts around the world and certain things come up time and again:

- Teacher recruitment and retention;
- Reaching the most marginalised families and communities; and
- Creating parity of esteem between academic learning and technical and vocational training.

Different countries, different systems – but strikingly similar challenges. That's why we have been determined to learn from the world.

For example, to improve maths teaching, we turned to China. Some 12,000 of our teachers have the opportunity to watch demonstration lessons by top Shanghai teachers. Or when we set about creating a more rigorous curriculum for our schools, we drew on Singapore's curriculum and textbooks.

And our efforts to put teachers and school leaders in the driving seat, have – in part – been inspired by our visits to US Charter schools, where they have the freedom to innovate.

It doesn't stop there. One of my top priorities is putting our technical and vocational education on par with the world's best.

And, to this end, I've been on fact-finding missions to Germany and the Netherlands. Visiting top-performing technical colleges, meeting leading employers.

You learn a lot on these visits. But one thing that particularly struck me was the level of business involvement in training up the future workforce, not just co-designing courses, providing placements but sharing the responsibility, the ownership, for human capital formation, alongside the other equivalent investments.

Now as we transform technical and vocational education in this country, we too are seeking to put businesses at the heart of training up the next generation.

Our employers are designing our new, higher quality apprenticeships, which are longer and include more off-the-job training.

They are also designing course content for our new T Level qualifications, a technical equivalent to academic A-levels that will focus on teaching students the practical skills needed to do a specific job.

And at the core of this course is an intensive, three month, industry placement – where students put into practice what they've learnt.

Of course, I'm pleased to say, there are also things we do extremely well here and people come to learn from us.

Every year, my Department receives in the region of 100 visits from overseas governments and organisations. Last year this included teachers from Hungary and Japan interested in our policy reforms to improve initial teacher training and continuing professional development.

Politicians and officials from Ghana, Belgium, Croatia and Singapore interested in how we are scaling up apprenticeships.

Ministers and senior officials from the USA, Denmark, Malaysia and more have come to see what we're doing on school autonomy, how we are putting more power in to the hands of head teachers and school leaders through our academies and free schools.

One area I'm particularly proud to showcase to the world, is our work narrowing the attainment gap between rich and poor students.

This is a global issue: the average gap in performance between disadvantaged and advantaged students internationally is worth three years of schooling.

Here, we've made narrowing that gap and targeting the most disadvantaged a top priority.

We are investing in more and better pre-school education, so more children

can start school really ready to learn. We are currently piloting reforms to the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework which aim to free up teachers to spend more time on helping children develop the vocabulary, skills and behaviours they need to thrive at school and in later life.

As part of this we introduced 15 hours of free early education a week for the most disadvantaged two-year-olds in the country.

On top of the existing 15 hours free childcare offer for all three-and-four-year-olds, which we doubled to 30 hours for working families.

We've given schools the autonomy to work together and make their own improvements.

And we reformed our funding system for schools so that we now direct more funding the poorer, disadvantaged children than richer ones.

In particular, we introduced the Pupil Premium – an additional grant for schools that they can use to help those children who have more barriers to overcome, including children who are looked after by the state and children with disabilities. Two million pupils benefit from this grant every year.

And schools up and down the country have used the Pupil Premium to get better outcomes for pupils from the toughest backgrounds, pupils facing the biggest barriers.

We're also spreading the best ideas on how to prioritise the most disadvantaged. We founded our Education Endowment Foundation to run trials in hundreds of schools to find and promote the most effective ways of working with disadvantaged children.

And last week I announced a new £2.5million fund to give disadvantaged children the chance to go on international exchanges and study trips abroad, to give them the chance to experience different cultures and improve their language skills.

And these reforms are working. We have narrowed the attainment gap between children from disadvantaged backgrounds and their better off peers at every level of education – at pre-school, at primary school, at secondary school and on entry to university.

Perhaps the biggest change we've seen in the last two decades is schools right here in London. Twenty years ago London schools were some of the worst in the country – now they're among our very best.

But there's always more to do.

Now we must replicate the London effect elsewhere and spread opportunity across the country. Through initiatives like Opportunity North East, which I launched last year. My department will be working with the North East's schools, colleges, universities and critically employers to help more young people in this region reach their potential.

While rightly entire regions have needs, we are also more sharply focused now on the particular issues in smaller geographies – communities that have seen significant industrial change for example, sparse rural areas, or coastal towns.

We are rethinking, what I call, the ‘face of disadvantage’.

While ethnic minorities still have labour market outcomes that are not good enough, one of our lowest-performing groups is in fact white working class boys.

Of course, there are areas where no country has all the full answers yet.

Take the Home Learning Environment – the home can feel like the last taboo in public policy. But we can’t afford to ignore it, what happens at home is crucial to what happens at school and a child’s development. So we have struck a partnership with public and private sector groups to see how best we can support parents in a child’s early development in the digital age.

Then there’s adult retraining – so relevant in our fast changing world, with AI, robotics and other technology likely to replace, create and change jobs. We are designing a new National Retraining Scheme.

And, finally, a big one for me is character. When it comes to forging a successful path through life, clearly it’s not just about the qualifications you pick up – it’s also your strength of character and what’s inside, your resilience, your confidence and your ability to bounce back from the knocks that life inevitably brings.

Fundamental issues – these are things I hope we’ll be sharing our experiences and insights on this week, on the conference floor, in bilateral meetings, and in coffee breaks, again and again in the years ahead. Because there is no practical limit to what we can achieve here.

We all share this unique responsibility – the responsibility of shaping the next generation.

What happens in your nurseries, your schools, your colleges, your universities has an enormous and far-reaching impact all on our societies, on our world.

Ultimately, the EWF Forum is not actually an event. It is a group of people. It’s about us, it is about you and me and the person sitting next to you. It is about us coming together to share and learn, to work together to deliver a world-class education for all our children.

[Press release: EU imposes sanctions against Salisbury suspects](#)

The Foreign Secretary has agreed, alongside his European counterparts, to impose sanctions on the leadership of the GRU and Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov, the two GRU officers who have been charged with carrying out the nerve agent attack in Salisbury last year.

The Head and Deputy Head of the GRU, Igor Olegovich Kostyukov and Vladimir Stepanovich Alexseyev, have been listed, underlining the responsibility of the GRU in this reckless use of a chemical weapon in Salisbury.

The EU has also sanctioned The Scientific Studies and Research Centre, Tariq Yasmina, Khaled Nasri, Walid Zughuib, Firas Ahmed and Said Said, who have played a central role in the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime against their own people.

[EU imposes sanctions against Salisbury suspects](#)

The sanctions listings are the first under the new EU sanctions regime focussed on combatting the use of chemical weapons. The UK has been central to efforts to implement this new sanctions regime.

With this step, which was agreed today at the Foreign Affairs Council, the UK and EU have taken decisive action to deter the use of chemical weapons, wherever they may be used.

The Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said:

Today's new sanctions deliver on our vow to take tough action against the reckless and irresponsible activities of the Russian military intelligence organisation, the GRU, which put innocent British citizens in serious danger in Salisbury last year.

We have also imposed sanctions on individuals and an organisation responsible for the Syrian regime's abhorrent use of chemical weapons over many years, including in Douma in April 2018.

The UK has been at the vanguard of this EU action. We will continue to show our willingness to stand up for the international rules that keep us safe, and which the Kremlin and the Asad regime seek to undermine.

Notes to Editors, on background only:

*GRU is also known as the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, the GU, and the Main Directorate.

- Following the European Council in March 2018, the UK supported the idea of a chemical weapons sanctions regime with European partners.
- The European Council conclusions in June 2018 agreed on the need to implement a chemical weapons sanctions regime 'as soon as possible'.
- On 5 September 2018, charges were brought in the UK against two Russian nationals (Ruslan BOSHROV and Alexander PETROV) for conspiracy to murder Sergei Skripal; the attempted murder of Sergei, Yulia Skripal and Nick Bailey, a UK police officer; use and possession of Novichok contrary to the Chemical Weapons Act; and causing grievous bodily harm with intent to Yulia Skripal and Nick Bailey.
- On 5 September 2018, the Prime Minister reconfirmed the UK's commitment to an EU chemical weapons sanctions regime.
- On 14 October 2018, the Foreign Secretary issued a [statement urging the EU to press ahead with listings under the new chemical weapons sanctions regime](#)
- The chemical weapons sanctions regime was adopted at the Foreign Affairs Council in October 2018. The Foreign Secretary [thanked eight of his European counterparts for their support and collaboration](#) in equipping the EU with a new chemical weapons sanctions regime
- The European Council conclusions in October 2018 looked forward to early progress on listings.
- On 6 November 2018, the Foreign Secretary tweeted that 'Russia and Syria must take responsibility and make chemical weapons a grim footnote of history. [#NoToChemicalWeapons](#)'.

Further information

[News story: Hundreds of secure stations keeping passengers safe](#)

- more than 170 stations accredited to Secure Stations Scheme in year since its major refresh, helping tackle crime and ensure safer journeys
- over a quarter of all Britain's stations now accredited by the British Transport Police
- refreshed scheme now assesses approaches taken to safeguarding and suicide prevention

Hundreds of Britain's railway stations are setting the standard in reducing crime, safeguarding vulnerable people and ensuring safer journeys for passengers, Rail Minister Andrew Jones announced today (21 January 2018).

On a visit to East Croydon Station, recently accredited as a secure station by the British Transport Police (BTP), the Rail Minister met with Southern station staff who are helping to make every passenger's journey safer.

More than 673 stations across Britain are now accredited by the BTP, with 172 stations either newly-accredited or re-accredited since the launch of the refreshed Secure Stations Scheme in 2017.

The minister also met with BTP officers and charities including Samaritans and the Railway Children, who all engage with passengers to ensure they feel supported and safe on Britain's railways.

Rail Minister, Andrew Jones said:

The Secure Stations Scheme forms part of the exceptional work British Transport Police, station staff and charities do every single day to give passengers the safe journeys they deserve.

More than 170 stations are now newly or re-accredited under the refreshed scheme, demonstrating an outstanding commitment to tackling crime and safeguarding passengers.

It is particularly poignant and important today to commend the incredible work being done on suicide prevention, ensuring we protect vulnerable people on our railways.

British Transport Police Chief Constable, Paul Crowther said:

Tackling crime and safeguarding the most vulnerable on the railway is one of our key priorities and we're pleased to see that more than 170 stations have now been accredited under the refreshed Secure Stations Scheme – helping passengers and staff feel safer across the rail the rail network.

The chance of becoming a victim of crime whilst travelling or working on the network remains comparatively low – on average there are only 19 recorded crimes for every million passenger journeys. Secure stations is an important initiative, acting as a national benchmark that police, rail industry and government can work towards making stations an even safer and low crime environment.

Patrick Verwer, Chief Executive of Govia Thameslink Railway which operates Southern, Thameslink and Gatwick Express services through the station, said:

Achieving this accolade here at East Croydon once again is an important achievement. The scheme forms an important part of the excellent work our staff deliver with our industry partners to keep passengers safe and secure.

Samaritans Chief Executive Officer, Ruth Sutherland said:

Samaritans has been working with the railway industry since 2010 to prevent suicide and provide advice, training and access to our service. Samaritans has now trained more than 17,000 railway staff to spot vulnerable people on the network and intervene to help them.

We see partnerships as playing a vital part in achieving our vision of reducing suicide. They allow us to reach vulnerable groups that may not otherwise contact Samaritans.

We join up with organisations from a variety of sectors, including health, education/young people, transport, construction and the services. We look forward to continuing to do this and save more lives in the future.

Pete Kent, Programme Director at Railway Children said:

Railway Children is committed to supporting vulnerable children across the country who are using the rail network to run from violence, abuse and neglect.

Last year, BTP generated more than 8,000 referral reports in connection with vulnerable children they encountered at railway stations. Our partnership with them has enabled us to offer follow-up support to 350 of these children as well as intensive work with 40 of the most vulnerable ones. With ongoing support from the rail industry we will make stations safer places for many more children.

We are delighted that the Secure Stations Scheme includes safeguarding as a key indicator and we congratulate East Croydon on their achievement in being given this award, and in making their contribution to ensure all children are safe on our railway.

Originally launched in 1998, the Secure Stations Scheme provides station operators with the chance to demonstrate how they are working with partners to make journeys as safe as possible.

The national scheme covers all rail networks which are policed by the British Transport Police. A range of factors are assessed before a station can be granted accreditation, including visibility, lighting, CCTV, safeguarding of vulnerable people and crime data at the station in question.