

Press release: Gibraltar and UK Government agree measures to ensure strong relationship continues

This was agreed during today's constructive Joint Ministerial Council (Gibraltar, European Negotiations) by Minister at the Department for Exiting the EU, Robin Walker and the Chief Minister for Gibraltar Fabian Picardo.

The package sets out how we will continue to collaborate closely in a range of important areas, such as on the environment, online gaming, financial services market access, transport and the level of university tuition fees during our Brexit negotiations and beyond.

The measures include a commitment to continued market access for financial services, assurance that British Citizens resident in Gibraltar will continue to be eligible for higher education home fee status at English Institutions, enhanced liaison on environmental issues, and that Gibraltar can continue to refer an unlimited number of their patients to the UK for free elective treatment. The full details of the deal are available in the UK Government statement here [link].

Following the meeting, Minister Robin Walker said:

I'm delighted that the sixth meeting with Chief Minister Fabian Picardo and his team saw us agree this set of measures to ensure UK-Gibraltar ties will endure and strengthen.

Today we have agreed a positive package deal on issues surrounding our exit from the EU, once again demonstrating that we stand shoulder to shoulder with Gibraltarians in our unwavering commitment to the UK-Gibraltar relationship.

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury, John Glen said:

We know the people and businesses of Gibraltar have been asking for certainty, and we have heard them. We are ensuring that Gibraltar's access to UK markets will continue unchanged until 2020, even in the unlikely event of no deal being reached. This will give us the time we need to work with the Government of Gibraltar to design a new, modernised agreement, based on similar, high standards of regulation and enforcement.

Chief Minister of Gibraltar, Fabian Picardo said:

Today our bilateral relationship grows stronger and the terms for it to endure are further cemented as we realise the commitment to maintain and enhance market access for Gibraltar service providers into the UK post-Brexit.

There is a lot to celebrate in this and a lot of hard work to recognise on the part also of the team in Gibraltar, in particular the Deputy Chief Minister and the Attorney General, and in the UK FCO, DExEU, Treasury, DCMS, Cabinet Office and Downing Street. I extend the gratitude of Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar and the people of Gibraltar to all involved.

Press release: A303 consultation events rearranged due to poor weather

The scheme to improve the A303 between Amesbury and Berwick Down includes plans for a 1.9-mile long tunnel past Stonehenge, a free-flowing dual carriageway and a much-needed bypass north of Winterbourne Stoke.

Consultation on the plans launched on 8 February but severe weather which swept across the region at the end of last week affected two public information events, at Mere and Salisbury.

They are due to rescheduled for later this month.

The news comes at the conclusion of a three-day fact-finding mission to Stonehenge of a delegation from the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation).

The aim of the mission was to explain how the designs of the proposed 1.9-mile long road tunnel will bring together the World Heritage Site landscape currently split by the A303.

Derek Parody, Project Director for Highways England, said:

We are grateful to the representatives from ICOMOS who have taken the time to be with us on a 3 day visit to understand the scheme we are proposing. It is been an excellent opportunity for us to explain how we have responded to their previous recommendations and how the scheme is developing.

We look forward to the panel's report in due course, which will help us further refine the scheme, as well as to all the feedback from all interested parties during the current public consultation.

The consultation events continue today at the Society of Antiquaries at London's Burlington House (12 noon-8pm).

Since the last ICOMOS visit early last year and the announcement of the tunnel route plan in September, Highways England has continued to work with heritage groups including the National Trust, Historic England, English Heritage, and experts in the field, including the Stonehenge Scientific Committee – a body of leading independent archaeologists – to ensure a new route is built sensitively to the World Heritage Site.

The route was carefully chosen to avoid monuments and barrow groups, and Highways England's modified plans also included moving the position of one of the entrances to the tunnel to avoid conflicting with the Winter Solstice alignment.

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.

[News story: International co-operation on the fight against illegal wildlife crime](#)

The UK and China recently held a joint-workshop in South Africa to pass on best practice in the fight against illegal wildlife crime across national borders.

The workshop featured in the [Daily Mail](#) and on South African radio station, [702](#) and in other international media including: [Namibian Sun](#), and [AP](#).

Seminars on UK and China law enforcement structure, investigation practice, cybercrime and forensics were led by Border Force officials from the UK and the Chinese State Forestry.

Grant Miller, Head of National CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) Enforcement Team in the UK said:

We are committed to tackling wildlife crime globally and when one

country develops best practice in tackling a problem, we share that quickly across nations so that we can all benefit. This means that ultimately people are confident that the government is taking action which is both transparent and robust against these criminals.

The positivity of all those turning up at the conference leaves me with great hope that we may be the generation who can turn the tide, and start to protect our environment and wildlife in the manner that it deserves.

[News story: Defence Secretary praises contribution female military personnel make to keeping Britain safe](#)

On a visit to RAF Brize Norton, the Defence Secretary met with women on the front line of the RAF's transport operations, including a Voyager air to air refuelling and troop transport pilot, logisticians and engineers. Mr Williamson also recognised the hard work that has gone into making the armed forces more diverse.

Over 10% of the military is now made up of women, with the RAF leading the way with 14% female representation. Increasing numbers of women are also joining the armed forces, with over 12% of new recruits this year being female, up from 11.2% last year. The MOD is committed to reaching its target of 15% of the military being female by 2020. 42% of MOD civil servants are also female.

Defence Secretary meets with female RAF personnel on International Women's Day

Speaking at the event, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Women play a crucial role across our Armed Forces and it is important we reflect on the amazing contribution they make every single day keeping the British people safe.

It is vital that we have the very best people our society has to offer and that they also represent the society that they defend. Today has been a great opportunity to meet some of those inspiring women who make our Armed Forces the best in the world.

Women are an essential and valued part of Defence and play a key role in keeping Britain safe. Over the last year, female members of the armed forces have contributed to defeating Daesh in Iraq and Syria, delivered essential humanitarian aid to British Overseas Territories affected by Hurricane Irma and most recently helped with the military's support to snow relief in the UK. In December 2017, six Army officers also become the first all-female group to cross Antarctica.

(Left to right) Flight Lieutenant Kerry Bennett, Sergeant Sim Rezazadeh-Wilson and Squadron Leader Eleanor Taylor pictured in front of an A400M transport aircraft at RAF Brize Norton.

The military is currently in the process of opening its ground close combat roles to women, a historic move first announced in June 2016. The Royal Tank Regiment has already opened its close combat roles to women and last year the RAF became the first service to open all of its trades and branches to women, with the RAF Regiment starting to take female applications in September 2017.

By the end of this year, all infantry regiments in the Army and the Royal Marines will have opened their close combat roles to women. While visiting Brize Norton, the Defence Secretary met with a number of women who are working across a number of trades in the RAF, including Voyager Pilot Flight Lieutenant Kerry Bennett, Squadron Leader Eleanor Taylor, an engineer and Logistic Mover Sergeant Sim Rezazadeh-Wilson.

[Speech: Foreign Secretary remarks on the visit of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman](#)

Good afternoon,

It's a pleasure to welcome my friend, His Excellency Adel Al-Jubeir, and I'm delighted that His Royal Highness, the Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, has chosen to come to Britain during his first official visit overseas.

This is a moment of huge significance in Saudi Arabia when ambitious reforms designed to achieve economic and social renewal are taking place.

In the nine months since His Royal Highness became Crown Prince, we have witnessed changes that would have been hard to imagine just a few years ago, and as a longstanding partner of Saudi Arabia, Britain will do everything in our power to support those reforms and help advance the ambitions contained in the Kingdom's Vision 2030.

Adel and I have just come from Downing Street and an afternoon of excellent meetings that we had with the Prime Minister and His Royal Highness and I believe this occasion marks the beginning of a new era in our friendship because the very breadth and ambition of Vision 2030 allows our relationship to move forwards to include cooperation in education, health, culture, sport and technology, with it creating new opportunities for British companies and delivering jobs and growth here in Britain.

And I'm delighted that we've reached an agreement that should lead to new Saudi investment in and through Britain, and procurement in companies worth up to £65bn, virtually \$100bn, over the next 10 years. Providing a vote of confidence in London as the leading financial centre in the world.

Today, our talks have focused on how the UK can use its world-beating expertise to support Saudi Arabia's reforms and how we can work together to end the tragic conflict in Yemen.

It is vital that we bring this appalling conflict which has inflicted so much humanitarian suffering to an end. Britain supports Saudi Arabia's right to defend its national security against missile attacks from Yemen, many of which have targeted the Kingdom's cities, including Riyadh.

Any solution to the conflict must ensure that Saudi Arabia no longer faces this cross-border security threat. Today we have agreed to strengthen the UN inspection of shipping in order to ensure that all Yemeni ports remain open to the humanitarian and commercial supplies that Yemen's people so desperately need.

We also call on the Houthis to do what they must and allow unimpeded humanitarian access in the areas that they control.

We will redouble, we in the UK will redouble, our efforts to support the UN political process and we hope to convene our counterparts from the US and the United Arab Emirates before Easter in order – that's to say, Adel and I will do that, in order to make more progress towards a political solution which we believe to be absolutely vital.

I'm delighted that Saudi Arabia will also develop a plan for the reconstruction of Yemen after any settlement of the conflict.

Saudi Arabia is changing and so is Britain's partnership with the Kingdom in order to benefit the security and the prosperity of both our Kingdoms for many years to come.

Thank you.