

## **Press release: Joint statement by Prime Minister Theresa May and President Jean-Claude Juncker**

The following joint statement was issued by Prime Minister Theresa May and President Jean-Claude Juncker following their working dinner in Brussels on 16 October 2017:

The Prime Minister and the President of the European Commission had a broad, constructive exchange on current European and global challenges.

They discussed their common interest in preserving the Iran nuclear deal and their work on strengthening the security of citizens in Europe, notably on the fight against terrorism. They also prepared for the European Council that will take place later this week.

As regards the Article 50 negotiations, both sides agreed that these issues are being discussed in the framework agreed between the EU27 and the United Kingdom, as set out in Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union. The Prime Minister and the President of the European Commission reviewed the progress made in the Article 50 negotiations so far and agreed that these efforts should accelerate over the months to come. The working dinner took place in a constructive and friendly atmosphere.

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## **Press release: UK secures new EU sanctions against North Korea**

The Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson will join his 27 EU counterparts in Luxembourg today to sign off measures taking aim at income streams supporting North Korea's illegal nuclear and ballistic missile programmes.

The sanctions also include expanding the ban on EU investment to all sectors in North Korea, ending the EU export of oil to the country, and adding more names to the list of regime officials and companies that are subject to asset freezes and travel bans.

The measures will also review the current list of banned luxury goods, and lower the amount of personal payments that can be sent to North Korea from €15,000 to €5,000.

EU foreign ministers will also place tighter restrictions on North Korean workers in the EU, with a view to stopping money being sent back that could be used by the regime to fund its nuclear and ballistic missile programme.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

North Korea continues to pose an unacceptable threat to the international community, which is why the UK, working closely with our European allies, has secured a set of stringent new sanctions upon the regime.

As I have said before, the North Korean regime must bear full responsibility for the measures that the international community is enacting against it, including these sanctions.

Maximising diplomatic and economic pressure on North Korea is the most effective way to pressure Pyongyang to halt its illegal and aggressive actions.

## **Background**

To add further impact to the UK's bilateral efforts, we have contributed to a European Union External Action (EEAS) proposal that it and EU member states should carry out parallel demarches in countries at risk of sanctions evasion by North Korean entities.

Additionally, the UK has instructed its diplomatic missions to lobby for urgent and comprehensive enforcement of UN sanctions against North Korea by those countries where the North Korean regime is most likely to try to evade sanctions.

There are no North Korean workers present in the UK.

## **Further information**

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## **[News story: Anne Milton supports Team UK at WorldSkills 2017](#)**

Skills and Apprenticeships Minister Anne Milton is currently attending WorldSkills 2017 in Abu Dhabi. The competition, which runs from 15 – 18

October, brings together apprentices and young people from across the world to compete in their specialist skill.

As part of her visit Minister Milton is delivering two speeches on skills development in cities and the government's apprenticeship reforms. She is also meeting the UK's competitors, their families and experts across a range of industries.

The 34 members of Team UK are competing against more than 65 countries in 30 skills categories, including painting, hairdressing, mechatronics, engineering and cooking.

Apprenticeships and Skills Minister Anne Milton said:

It's a great pleasure to wish every member of Team UK the best of luck in competing at WorldSkills Abu Dhabi 2017. There is no higher honour than representing your country on the world stage. The pride team members feel in this achievement is equalled by my admiration for the incredible dedication and hard work demonstrated by each and every competitor.

In the heat of competition in Abu Dhabi, the challenges faced will be tough. This is the most prestigious and high-profile event of its kind in the world. I know that each individual member of the team will give their all to reach their potential. In doing so they are acting as national ambassadors for apprenticeships and technical skills and demonstrating how getting the right skills can change lives.

The young people in this team have exciting futures ahead of them. WorldSkills Abu Dhabi 2017 is their biggest test yet. Another opportunity to grow and develop. A chance to show what they can do. I know they will seize the moment and inspire the next generation to succeed through skills. Irrespective of what they achieve in Abu Dhabi they have the respect of everyone in the UK having got this far.

WorldSkills UK Chief Executive Neil Bentley, formerly Deputy Director General of the CBI, said:

This is a critical moment for the future of these inspirational young people – and our economy.

The WorldSkills Finals presents the UK with a unique platform to not only showcase the best of this country's apprentices and inspire others to follow in their footsteps, but also to help build and reinforce global trade and investment partnerships.

Having the confidence to demonstrate the high skill level in the UK will enhance our status as a top investment destination, boosting

trade relations and creating jobs in the post-Brexit economy.

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## **Press release: PM call with French President Macron: 16 Oct 2017**

The Prime Minister spoke to President Macron of France this afternoon.

On Iran, they both expressed their firm commitment to the nuclear deal, and discussed President Trump's decision last week not to recertify it.

They agreed to continue to work closely together to ensure the deal is properly enforced, and to push back on Iran's destabilising activity in the region, including its ballistic missile programme.

They said they would discuss next steps in the margins of the European Council in Brussels later this week.

On Brexit, they discussed progress in the negotiations and looked ahead to this week's Council.

They also spoke about the strong UK-France relationship, and agreed to continue building on our bilateral partnership in a range of areas.

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## **News story: UK scientists part of astronomical landmark result**

Scientists from the University of Leicester and the Mullard Space Science Laboratory at University College London, have been working on the research, thanks to funding from the UK Space Agency.

The outburst took place in a nearby galaxy called NGC 4993, located about 130 million light-years away in the direction of constellation Hydra.

Today, dozens of UK scientists and their international collaborators representing 70 observatories worldwide announced the detection of this event and the significant "scientific firsts" it has revealed about our Universe.

The ripples in space finally reached Earth at 1.41pm UK time, on Thursday 17 August 2017, and were recorded by the twin detectors of the US-based Laser

Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory (LIGO) and its European counterpart Virgo.

Just 1.7 seconds after the gravitational waves rushed past Earth, NASA's Fermi Gamma-ray Space Telescope caught high-energy light from an explosion associated with the event. Swift, Hubble and Chandra missions, along with ground-based observatories including the Blanco telescope in Chile used by DES, later captured the fading glow of the blast's expanding debris.

Once pin-pointed, the Swift satellite quickly maneuvered to look at the object with its X-ray and Ultraviolet and Optical telescopes. Swift is a NASA/UK/Italian mission launched in 2004 to study gamma-ray bursts (GRB). The UK involvement in the mission is as Co-Investigators for the X-ray Telescope through the University of Leicester and the Ultraviolet and Optical Telescope through MSSL.

Prof Julian Osborne said:

The discovery of early blue emission by Swift from this neutron star collision discovered by its gravitational radiation is a landmark result, a first scientific result from the widely anticipated joint signal conveyed by both light and by gravitational waves.

The results combine to tell us about the neutron stars, their destruction and its aftermath in which some of the heaviest elements (like gold and platinum) are created. This work was made possible by the UK contributions to the NASA Swift satellite project, including the building its X-ray camera and its ultraviolet/optical telescope, as well as the development of new observing strategies to enable the rapid search of the large sky regions to which the gravitational wave signal has been constrained.

Dr Paul Kuin, from UCL Mullard Space Science Laboratory, who works on Swift, said:

As the collision occurred relatively close to Earth, scientists were able to point telescopes in the direction of the event and get a clear picture of the light. We successfully tracked the UV light using the Ultraviolet and Optical Telescope on-board NASA's Swift satellite which is a UCL built, operated and maintained instrument that has been active since its launch in 2004.

Neutron stars are the dead remnants of massive stars, they contain the mass of our Sun in an object the size of a city. When they collide, some of the neutrons are ripped off and start to interact with each other, forming some

of the heaviest elements in the universe. Radioactive decay of these elements then produces light in what is often called a 'kilonova'.

The Swift data gave unprecedented insight into how new elements are formed after a neutron star merger.