

[News story: David Davis' opening remarks at the start of the third round of EU exit negotiations](#)

Good afternoon,

I'm pleased to be back in Brussels, for the third round of negotiations.

We've had a busy few weeks. Since the last round of talks, the UK Government has published a large number of papers covering important issues related to our withdrawal, and our vision for the deep and special partnership we want with the European Union in the future.

They are products of the hard work and detailed thinking that has been going on behind the scenes, not just in last few weeks but in the last twelve months, and should form the basis of what I hope will be a constructive week of talks between the European Commission and the United Kingdom.

For the United Kingdom, the week ahead is about driving forward the technical discussions across all the issues.

We want to lock in the points where we agree, unpick the areas where we disagree, and make further progress on the whole range of issues.

But in order to do that, we'll require flexibility and imagination from both sides – something I think the Council has asked for on some subjects.

Our goal remains the same. We want to agree a deal that works in the best interests of both the European Union and the United Kingdom, and people and businesses right across Europe.

And we're ready to roll up our sleeves and get down to work again once more.

Thank you.

[News story: Defence Secretary strengthens ties between UK and Oman](#)

During the two day visit, the Defence Secretary met with the Minister Responsible for Defence Affairs, His Excellency Sayyid Badar bin Saud bin Harub Al Busaidi, signing a Memorandum of Understanding and Services Agreement in Muscat. The agreement secures UK use of facilities at Duqm, ahead of the completion of the UK Joint Logistics Support Base at the port,

giving Britain a strategically important and permanent maritime base east of Suez, but outside of the Gulf.

The booming Duqm Port complex provides significant opportunity to the defence, security and prosperity agendas for both the UK and Oman. It has dry dock capability able to accommodate submarines and the UK's flagship, HMS Queen Elizabeth, which is the largest and most powerful warship ever built for the Royal Navy.

From Duqm, HMS Queen Elizabeth will be able to project influence across an important region. She will fulfil multiple roles from providing air power anywhere at any time, to supporting allies or delivering humanitarian aid and the port itself provides Britain with a hub from which to tackle issues such as the fight against Daesh.

Defence Secretary, Sir Michael Fallon, said:

This agreement ensures British engineering expertise will be involved in developing Duqm as a strategic port for the Middle East, benefiting the Royal Navy and others.

Oman is a longstanding British ally and we work closely across diplomatic, economic and security matters. Our commitment to the Duqm port project highlights the strength of our relationship.

Through ensuring a permanent UK presence at Duqm, the UK will be able to shape the development of the Naval facility to support its carrier capability and wider British security needs in the region. Alongside at Duqm was HMS Monmouth, who has recently completed a five month deployment to the Gulf where as part of an international coalition she was involved in drugs busts worth £400m. The Defence Secretary praised the work of the sailors whose actions removed a key funding stream for terrorists in the region.

Sir Michael Fallon with His Excellency Sayyid Badr bin Saud bin Harib Al Busaidi, Minister Responsible for Defence Affairs

Once completed, the UK Joint Logistics Support Base, a multi-million pound joint venture between British defence company Babcock International and the Oman Drydock Company, will provide the UK a permanent training facility in addition to a key military logistics centre in the Gulf. It will also be connected to other Gulf countries by the Gulf Rail Project.

The UK and Oman are established allies in the Gulf, with a wide range of shared interests. With a particularly strong defence relationship, the infrastructure built at Duqm port will support Exercise SAIF SAREEA 3 in 2018, the largest UK-Oman joint exercise for 15 years.

[Press release: UK concerned at detention of Mehman Aliyev in Azerbaijan](#)

UK calls for the Azerbaijan government to support freedom of expression, and the right to a fair trial.

On 10 August, an investigation into alleged tax evasion was launched against the independent Turan news agency in Azerbaijan. The director of the agency, Mehman Aliyev, was detained on 24 August in connection with the investigation. On 25 August, Turan announced that it was suspending operations indefinitely from 1 September, shortly before Mehman Aliyev's pre-trial detention was confirmed.

A Foreign and Commonwealth Office spokesman said:

The UK is concerned by the criminal case against the Turan news agency in Azerbaijan and the pre-trial detention of its director Mehman Aliyev. This represents the latest development in a worrying trend of apparently politically motivated actions to curtail freedom of expression and restrict independent media. The UK will continue to monitor developments in this case and urges the Azerbaijan government to uphold its commitments to fundamental freedoms, human rights and the rule of law, including Mehman Aliyev's right to a fair trial.

Further information

[News story: Planes fuelled by waste could take off from British airports](#)

As part of plans to promote clean alternative fuels, the government is offering funding for projects in the UK to develop low carbon waste-based fuels for planes and lorries, with matching funding from industry.

The government is already planning to revolutionise the motor industry with ultra-low emission electric cars, and now we are going further and investing in a new generation of fuels which will power our aircraft and lorries.

Trials of sustainable jet fuel, made from waste materials, have taken place in Europe and North America, and now the launch of a UK competition will see British experts conduct pioneering research in this sector.

The department has already had interest from more than 70 groups in bidding for the funding.

The new fuels are chemically very similar to conventional fuels, so can be used in existing aircraft without the need for any engine modifications.

The low carbon transport fuels made from waste materials could be worth £600 million a year to the British economy by 2030, and could also support up to 9,800 new jobs.

Transport Minister Jesse Norman said:

We are committed to cutting carbon emissions and promoting new environmentally-friendly fuels that will help us meet that goal.

We are making funding available to innovative businesses which will lead the way in developing alternative fuels that are efficient, sustainable and clean.

We want every new car and van in the UK to be zero emission by 2040, but we know lorries and aeroplanes will rely on more traditional fuels for years to come so we must promote environmentally friendly alternatives.

The £22 million fund could help us deliver up to 5 new low carbon fuel plants by 2021. The money is available to projects that will produce low carbon waste-based fuels, to be used in planes and lorries where it is not viable today to switch to electric power, because of the large weight of the vehicles.

Planes and lorries powered by waste fuels could use up to 90% less carbon than traditional fossil fuels.

The [Future fuels for flight and freight](#) competition is part of the government's 'Modern industrial strategy', which sets out to support evolving industries with the potential to boost the economy.

The government is committed to cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050, and transport emissions must be slashed if we are to meet that target.

Biofuels made from waste products could be even more sustainable than current crop-based biofuels, already used in some road-based vehicles.

[News story: Cleaner journeys as government commits £11 million to greener buses](#)

Local authorities and bus companies in Bristol, York, Brighton, Surrey, Denbighshire and Wiltshire have been [awarded the funding](#) under the government's 'Low emission bus scheme' to help them buy 153 cleaner buses.

The successful bidders will use the funding to buy new electric and gas buses, and to install stations to fuel or charge them.

The government is determined to clean up air in towns and cities across the country, and today's (28 August 2017) investment in green buses comes after our [air quality plan](#) was published last month.

Transport Minister Paul Maynard said:

Low emission buses are an important part of our plans to make motoring cleaner and improve air quality across the country.

New greener buses will be more comfortable for passengers, they are cost efficient and are good for the environment.

I am pleased to announce this latest group of successful bidders, which should make a real difference to air quality in towns and cities across the country.

The successful bidders are:

- Denbighshire County Council, Wales – £500,000 for 4 electric buses to be used on services in mid-Denbighshire
- City of York Council – £3.3 million for 24 electric buses to be used on park and ride services in York
- South Gloucestershire Council – £4.8 million for 110 gas buses for services around Bristol
- Surrey County Council, Guildford – £1.5 million for 9 electric buses to be used on park and ride services in Guildford
- The Big Lemon, £500,000 for 3 electric buses to be used in the Brighton area
- Go South Coast / Wiltshire County Council – £500,000 for 3 electric buses to be used on park and ride services around Salisbury

The government's support for low emission buses is one part of a £600 million package of measures from the Office for Low Emission Vehicles by 2020, plus £270 million announced in the 2016 [Autumn Statement](#) to support the roll out of low emission cars, taxis and buses and supporting infrastructure.

This follows an initial £30 million awarded to bus companies and local councils in July 2016 under the 'Low emission bus scheme' to help put over 300 more low emission buses on the country's roads.

Later this year, the government will also publish plans for a second round of the 'Low emission bus scheme' with a view to putting even more of the cleanest buses on our streets.