

News story: Statement by Secretary of State for Northern Ireland James Brokenshire ahead of the 29 June deadline to restore devolved government in NI

The coming hours will be critical to form a functioning executive in Northern Ireland.

Discussions between the parties took place last night. Further intensive discussions are taking place today and I expect they will continue into this evening.

Northern Ireland needs strong devolved government to provide leadership, direction and a voice for Northern Ireland. This is vital during the critical period ahead as the UK prepares to leave the EU.

This is also a moment of outstanding opportunity for Northern Ireland. The package of UK Government financial support announced yesterday will make a tangible difference to the lives of everyone living here.

Discussions today are focused on Irish language and equality issues because they are the most critical areas to resolve to enable an Executive to be formed on Thursday.

I have urged the parties to find a way to overcome their outstanding differences in the hours ahead.

With political will – and some courage – effective government in Northern Ireland can be restored by the end of the week. If the parties focus on this common sense of purpose, for the benefit of all communities, this can be achieved.

I know that is what the vast majority of people here voted for and what they are hoping their political representatives can deliver.

News story: David Davis' speech from The Times CEO Summit

Introduction

Politicians love to take credit for a national success, particularly national economic success.

The truth is over the last seven years, Britain's business leadership have knuckled down to turn the economy around.

Thanks to that hard work, I can stand here and talk about an economy that was the second fastest growing major advanced economy last year.

That has created over 3 million private sector jobs since 2010.

And that has a deficit that is now two-thirds less than it was seven years ago.

So it's an economy that is fighting fit.

Which is not to say that our society does not face the same challenges as every major Western economy.

Globalisation and competition from the Far East.

Technology and automation.

Demography and an aging population.

Pressure on public services and public spending.

And, uniquely for us, Brexit.

For all that, I know that our country stands on the verge of a very prosperous future.

As a fully sovereign United Kingdom, we will be stepping out into the world and seizing new opportunities.

As part of that we want to forge the closest possible relationship with our neighbours and friends in the European Union.

A deep and special partnership, to use the Prime Minister's phrase, that reflects our shared values and joint histories.

An open dialogue with business

But I am also clear that Britain will only be able to deliver that if Government and business work hand in hand.

Your expertise will be crucial over the next two years, if we are to get the right deal for the United Kingdom as we exit the European Union.

We will be introducing a significant amount of important legislation that will help us build a country that is ready for the future.

From customs to immigration we will need your input to ensure that we not only get the right deal with the European Union – but also lay the groundwork for a country that can compete around the world.

To do that we need a regular and open dialogue with businesses, up and down the country.

As the negotiations intensify, there is a clear need to equally intensify the dialogue with business.

That's why the Prime Minister, the Chancellor, the Business Secretary and I will shortly outline new proposals to ensure we have the right mechanisms in place across Government to do just that.

We will provide a clear forum for Government to engage across the board with all relevant sectors.

Certainty for business

Which brings me to my next point.

One of the key issues that businesses raise with me and my cabinet colleagues is the need to give them as much certainty and clarity as possible.

The more certainty we can give you, the more confident you will be to go out and invest.

That in turn will drive job creation and help boost living standards.

We have already done this work to provide you with that clarity.

Plan for Brexit

Firstly, you asked for more information over our approach to the negotiations ahead.

Six months ago the Prime Minister outlined a clear plan with business at its heart.

And that plan remains in place.

We are seeking a new deep and special partnership with the European Union, underpinned by an ambitious and comprehensive agreement on free trade and customs.

These will cover goods and services, and we want them to ensure the greatest possible tariff and barrier-free access to each other's markets. Tariff and barrier free, both those things.

To make sure such an agreement is properly enforced, we will seek a new dispute resolution mechanism. It won't be the European Court of Justice, it will be international.

We will also need to manage the evolution of our regulatory frameworks – to

maintain a fair and open trading environment and minimise non-tariff barriers.

We also recognise the need for an implementation phase to allow businesses on all sides to adjust and provide a smooth and orderly glide path to our new arrangements.

As the letter invoking Article 50 said, it will “help both sides to minimise unnecessary disruption if we agree this principle early in the process.”

And, let us not forget, that such an approach is mutually beneficial for the UK and the EU. The EU itself has recognised the need for transition periods, signalling its desire to avoid any cliff-edge or unnecessary disruption.

That is exactly the point that the Chancellor is making at a conference in Berlin today.

We are entirely aligned on this point. It is an approach the Chancellor and I have designed over some months at the meetings we have every week to develop our strategy in this area.

I firmly believe our approach puts jobs and prosperity first. So much so I didn't have to say it at first.

We are undertaking this process in the national interest.

And the national interest obviously includes the economic interest and the business interest.

We have undertaken a widespread assessment of every sector of our economy; 60, all told.

This will inform the type of deal we are aiming for.

Putting jobs and prosperity first means not only securing the markets which we currently have.

It also means opening up to new, growing markets across the globe.

There is no doubt that the world's economic mass has been moving eastwards for some time. This is only likely to continue.

In 1980 the EU accounted for 30% of World GDP. According to the IMF this is forecast to have halved to 15% by 2022.

The European Commission itself admits that 90% of future global growth will happen outside Europe's borders.

As I said, there are challenges, opportunities and threats from both globalisation and technology.

Disruptive change is becoming the norm in many markets.

The premium for agility in policy making has never been higher. Over the

coming years and decades we, as a country, need to be flexible and nimble to take advantages of the changing landscape of the global economy.

The European Union has many virtues, but agility is not one of them.

We, however, start from an incredibly strong position.

We are already a world leader in engineering, life sciences, medicine, media, commerce, law.

From our skilled workforce to our world-class universities or the simple fact that English is the language of business across the world, we are well placed to take advantage of the new opportunities that are around.

Our approach to exiting the European Union is the first step to ensuring that remains the case.

Our actions will mean new trade deals around the world, and significantly enhance our ability to make the most of global growth outside the European Union.

Citizens' rights

You also asked for clarity over your workforces.

I know that the firms represented in this room together employ tens of thousands of EU citizens.

These workers are vital to your firms and are an integral part of our economy and our society.

Yesterday, we unveiled our proposal to secure their rights together with the rights of UK citizens living in the European Union.

We want them to continue to live their lives as they do now.

So we are going to create a status that is almost equivalent to that of British citizens, in everything except for the right to vote. If they want the right to vote, they can become British citizens.

In every other aspect it will give them the same employment rights, the same health rights, the same welfare rights, and the same pension rights.

It also means ensuring they can work here or run their own businesses here unimpeded. So we will continue to recognise the qualifications they've gained across the EU, and request that EU member states will do the same for our citizens in their countries.

But most importantly for you I want to be crystal clear that under our proposal there will be practically no burden on business at all.

You will be able to keep on employing the EU citizens who are already here.

We also want this clarity to extend to immigration more broadly.

My job is to bring back control of migration to Westminster.

It is not to slam the door on immigration.

We will bring immigration down, but in a way and at a pace that does not cause labour shortages, or worse, undermine the nation's need for new talent.

Repeal Bill

Finally we said that we'd provide you with as much clarity over regulations and laws as we could.

So, we will convert all current EU law into UK law on the day we exit.

Across the board, the regulations you face today will be essentially the same you face on the day we leave.

Conclusion

So I have outlined some of the work the government is doing to provide you with the certainty you need.

Why I think the future for this country looks very bright.

John Williams was quoting that point from Winston Churchill, saying 'I'm an optimist', well I'm a determined optimist in this matter.

As we deliver on this national instruction from the referendum last year, business will always be the front of our mind.

We take seriously our duty to protect existing markets.

But I also firmly believe that there are significant upsides and significant opportunities for business in this country as we open up to the rest of the world.

I'm going to go off piste slightly and leave my speech for a moment, because I'm old enough to remember the great changes in British society that were brought about during the early years of the Thatcher government, in 1979 and the early eighties.

And I remember the controversy and the risk and the fear, and the uncertainty around those changes.

But one of the things that happened which I didn't expect, which nobody in that great change expected, was a revolution of expectation that took place in Britain.

We went from being something like 20th in the world and going down, to climbing back up to being fourth in the world in economic terms.

That occurred because of a series of things that people didn't predict, as I said, a revolution in expectations where people suddenly said: "We can do this. We can make something of this. We can be the best of what we're doing

again.”

And we weren't just about managing at the time.

Well I think there's a very very good chance that as we open up the rest of the world, as opportunities form, our businesses and our citizens here will see the same sort of revolution in expectations that we saw back in the eighties.

And if we do, the job of being a determined optimist will be worthwhile.

Thank you.

News story: New opportunity for employers to play major role in setting new apprenticeships standards

Employers and experts from across different industries are being given the opportunity to take an active role in shaping apprenticeships across England.

The Institute for Apprenticeships, the new governmental body covering apprenticeship standards, has for the first time issued an open call for leaders from across industry to apply to become route panel members. Successful applicants will play an important role in shaping the requirements of apprenticeships in their sector.

Route panels are employer-led groups formed of experts from within a particular industry sector. The Institute for Apprenticeships oversees 15 route panels in total, each covering different sectors such as agriculture, social care or legal and finance. Their aim is to review the quality of standards for apprenticeships and make sure they provide the right basis for future employment.

Peter Lauener, Chief Executive of the Institute for Apprenticeships, said:

We are taking important steps to ensure the quality of apprenticeships. They are crucial routes in helping young people reach their potential, and they provide excellent career development, as well as retraining opportunities later in life.

Apprenticeships are playing an increasingly important role in British industry, and it is important that the right structures are in place to ensure they equip people with the right skills. This is a fantastic opportunity for employers and experts to bring their knowledge to the table and make their voices heard.

For [more information and to apply](#), the advert is open until 12pm on Friday, 4 August 2017 via Public Appointments on GOV.UK.

Notes to Editor

The Institute for Apprenticeships launched on 1 April 2017 as an employer-led body ensuring high-quality apprenticeship standards and assessment plans in England. It is expected that from April 2018, this remit will expand to include responsibility for technical education.

[Speech: Matt Hancock's speech on technology at the Margaret Thatcher Conference on Security](#)

It is commonplace to say that technology is changing almost every aspect of our lives.

Some say the change is greater than ever before, and they may be right.

I wonder, if the child born in 1820, when the fastest anyone could travel was by horse, and any information could travel was by pigeon, would have experienced more change over a lifetime than a child born in, say, 1970, or 1980 will experience over their lifetime.

But there is no doubt that the changes we have lived through, and are living through, are huge.

And they are ultimately underpinned by one thing. The cost of storing and transmitting information has collapsed over a generation, in a way unprecedented since the invention of the printing press in 1454. And now, communication, around the globe, is almost costless – so long, that is, as you can get a signal.

This change has created huge advantages, many beyond measure.

It has allowed ideas to spread, collaboration to happen, people to learn. It has entertained us; saved us time, brought people together.

It has replaced jobs, changed jobs and created new jobs.

And yet we are only at the cusp of the impact of this free flow of data: of artificial intelligence, machine learning, automation of the means of production, distribution and exchange, not just by hand, but increasingly by brain.

As someone who comes from a tech background, I find this change both exciting

and daunting.

It offers great promise for humanity, and has the potential to bring dark new threats.

The question we face as a society, is to harness the power of new technology for good, to improve the condition of mankind, and to mitigate those threats.

Rising to the challenge posed by new technology is one of the great challenges of our age.

To get our response right, first we've got to get our thinking right.

Let's just take two areas of impact: the impact on jobs, and the impact on society. Each is itself a huge canvas.

First, the impact on jobs.

Throughout history, new technologies have disrupted the world of work. Today, people worry, in seemingly equal measure, of how we will fill the countless jobs being created by new technology, and what we will do with those made unemployed by new technology.

This argument has been run repeatedly through the ages.

Harold Wilson feared the machines would take all the jobs.

John Maynard Keynes lamented a future of "technological unemployment".

The Luddites smashed looms because they were replacing the hand weaving technologies of the time. And I should know, because they were led by the Hancocks of Nottinghamshire, and I'm descended from them.

Yes, jobs are being destroyed, and jobs are being changed, but so too are jobs being created. Some say the new blue collar job is coding.

The vital task is to ensure we see redeployment, not unemployment. That we automate work and humanise jobs. And that we harness new technology to save money, improve safety, and build the UK as the best place in the world to develop and deploy new technology.

As Margaret Thatcher herself said:

"Technology is the true friend of full employment, the indispensable ally of progress, and the surest guarantee of prosperity."

We need to make that true today not by burying our heads in the sand but by equipping people with the skills they need to thrive with the new technology.

The second area where we've got to get our thinking right is the impact of technology on society.

While the internet brings incalculable benefits, so too it brings harms, and to harness its benefits we must mitigate these harms.

Parents worry that their children may be vulnerable online in ways they don't understand. Customers worry what tech companies are doing with their data. Citizens worry that terrorists can use the internet to plan with impunity.

The basic problem is that technology is developing faster than the speed at which society has built new rules to deal with the challenges it creates. As a result, we do not yet have a shared understanding of what is and isn't acceptable online.

It is the role of Government to lead the way in closing this gap and ensure the right balance between freedom and security in the new digital age.

The internet grew up on a libertarian dream that a lack of rules would bring out the best in everyone. It does bring out the best in most people. But just like offline, not everyone. That's human nature. So we need to ensure both that people are free, and are kept safe, online as well as off.

This is the underlying thinking behind the Digital Charter that we will introduce.

It will set out a rules-based framework for how businesses, individuals and wider society should act in the digital world.

Our starting point is that the delicate and careful limits that we have honed over generations for life off-line should apply online too. For example, we cherish the long-held principle of free speech. Yet that freedom has established boundaries, which stop people inciting terrorism or violence. And these boundaries must apply equally whether someone is using pen or paper or are writing it on social media.

And if we are successful, the reward is significant. Our aim is to create a world-leading framework that provides the basis for an understanding of the best way to bring this balance throughout the free world.

The stakes are huge. On both counts, the impact of getting things right will be enormous. No country yet has managed it and if we can do so we will have a big advantage, strengthen our digital economy, and make our country more secure.

Ultimately, the prize is significant.

Business, done right, is a force for good in the world. Technology, harnessed right, solves human problems and makes life better. Using data well, and according to sound ethical principles, is fundamental to ensuring we maximise the benefits, and limit possible harms, from all of this innovation.

This is our goal. And our goal is not just practical, but deeply moral too: to improve the human condition by harnessing technology for good. That surely is a prize worth working for.

News story: Charity Commission online forms maintenance

Essential maintenance is being carried out on the forms you use to contact us.

This evening (Tuesday 27 June) we are updating the online forms you use to get in touch with us.

The updates include changes to the layouts so they are easier to use.

If you can't access our online forms, it could be that they are still in maintenance mode. Just try again at a later time.

We will let you know when the maintenance is complete.