

Speech: High Commission in Cyprus celebrates the Queen's Birthday in 2017

The British High Commission hosted its annual national day celebration – the Queen's Birthday Party – on 20 June – an occasion to celebrate the breadth of UK-Cyprus bilateral relations.

This year's celebration saw the event take on a Harry Potter theme, celebrating one aspect of UK creativity which has reached worldwide renowned, given that June 2017 marks 20 years since the publication of the first Harry Potter book.

Below is a summary of High Commissioner Matthew Kidd's opening remarks at the event, in the presence of H.E. President of the Republic of Cyprus, Nicos Anastasiades and building on the Harry Potter theme.

"I guess that I don't need to explain the references. The car out front is not there for trade promotion, even though I saw that Phileleftheros the other week reproduced an advertisement for a Ford Anglia from the 1960s – when it cost C£620. Our servers are not all from the same school, nor have they all visited the same optician. Harry's Bar is not a copy of Venice.

But you will have seen through all that. It's twenty years since the first Harry Potter book was published. The first eventually of seven volumes: a huge success, films, translations, merchandise. A generation of children, including my own, stimulated and enthused to read books.

So what? You thought you were coming to a Queen's Birthday Party, not a book promotion. So what's the link?

There are three (there always are). The first is determination. As she wrote that first book, JK Rowling was an unemployed single mother, short of money. She spent her days scribbling in the public library, no space at home. She struggled to find a publisher. But she kept at it, managed the difficulties, didn't give up – and success came.

The second is that the success came through the young: not the older generations, the katestimeno, telling her that it would never sell, who on earth would want to read the adventures of a bunch of apprentice wizards at a boarding school? But the young responded to the imagination, the fantasy, the jokes, even the fake Latin. I take a clear lesson from that: if you have vision or ambition, it is the young who will respond, and help you to deliver it. I hope those here tonight who feel that they fall into the "young" category recognise the responsibility we put on their shoulders; and those who no longer do, recognise the need to educate and help them to deliver, for all of us.

Third is rebirth. Those of you who know the books will know that there is a key role for a phoenix, the bird that is consumed by flames but then miraculously revives from the ashes, glossier and stronger than before. I've often heard Cypriots make parallels to the phoenix story in their own emergence from disasters. I know that Anorthosis supporters do the same.

The UK is in some ways being reborn, following our referendum a year ago. We know it will not be straightforward to build a new place for ourselves in the world, to continue to be secure, prosperous, and influential in helping others to achieve the same. But we have many strengths and assets, including the creativity and determination reflected in the Harry Potter story; and we shall call on all of them. We will still value our old friends, including Cyprus, but learn to collaborate with them in new ways. We will have to show that we recognise their anxieties about how what we are doing may affect their interests too. As far as Cyprus is concerned, Mr President, I promise that we will give that our best shot.

In the specialised vocabulary of Cyprus Settlement, to say that Cyprus too is on the verge of rebirth would be politically controversial. So I shan't; but you see the link. Cyprus and its citizens, from both communities, stand on the edge of being able to emerge from two generations of division, disaster, handicap. It's a tremendous opportunity to achieve a brighter, liberated future. But it will take tremendous imagination and vision to design and grasp its full potential.

It's always easier to say "It'll never work". The more who do, the likelier they are to prove themselves right. In the financial sector, there are rules against creating self-fulfilling prophecies like that. Not in politics, unfortunately. But my hope for this evening is that all those here tonight, from whatever field, who dare, who imagine, who create, who look to the future, will leave this party feeling boosted and backed by the rest of us".

[News story: CMA to consider Heineken/Punch proposals over merger](#)

Earlier this month, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) said that [Heineken's proposed purchase of part of the Punch Taverns estate could reduce competition](#) in 33 local areas across Great Britain. Before the merger was referred for a further in-depth investigation, the companies were given the opportunity to offer proposals to address these concerns.

Heineken has now offered to sell pubs in each of the affected areas to preserve competition and ensure customers in these locations do not lose out.

The CMA has decided that there are reasonable grounds for believing that these proposals, or a modified version of them, might be acceptable to remedy

the competition concerns it has identified.

As part of an [initial investigation](#), the CMA looked in detail at areas where pubs operated by Heineken and Punch currently compete. It has identified 33 local areas where their pubs would not face sufficient competition after the merger, which could lead to price increases or a deterioration in the quality of the service on offer.

The CMA has until 22 August 2017 to consider whether to accept the undertakings, although it may decide to extend this deadline to 17 October 2017 if it decides that there are special reasons for doing so.

As part of its process, the CMA will undertake a public consultation.

If the CMA does not accept the undertakings proposed, the merger will be referred for an in-depth investigation.

The full text of the decisions, including details of the areas affected, will be published shortly on the investigation [case page](#).

[News story: Foreign Secretary joins crucial Cyprus settlement talks in Switzerland offering full UK support](#)

The Conference on Cyprus will reconvene in the Swiss resort of Crans Montana with the participation of the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, and representatives of the Guarantor Powers (Greece, Turkey and UK).

The Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson's attendance demonstrates the UK's ongoing support and commitment to the settlement process. He will be accompanied by the Minister for Europe, Sir Alan Duncan. The UK has an important role as a Guarantor Power, and stands ready to support the UN facilitated process. The UK is contributing to a settlement in a number of ways, including as one of the most significant contributors to the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, through our offer to cede almost half of the land of the UK Sovereign Base Areas to a united Cyprus and through practical assistance to help the two sides prepare for a settlement.

On arrival in Switzerland this evening, the Foreign Secretary is due to hold a series of meetings with the Parties and attend the launch of the Conference. The Foreign Secretary is expected to pay tribute to the commitment and vision shown by Mr Anastasiades and Mr Akıncı in dedicated pursuit of a settlement for the benefit of both Cypriot communities. He is expected to encourage all those present to 'keep the goal in sight' noting

that 'the status quo carries risks, while only change will realise the opportunities of a united Cyprus'. He will point to the 'opportunity to move beyond the past and stake out a new future'.

The Foreign Secretary will acknowledge that reaching an agreement will require difficult political decisions from all parties and that flexibility and compromise will be essential in order to reach a deal.

Ahead of the talks, the Foreign Secretary said:

This Conference builds on months of hard work, commitment and progress shown by both sides. It's an exceptional opportunity for both communities to find a lasting solution for Cyprus, which will bring huge benefits to the whole island and the region. It will not be easy, but with political will, creativity and flexibility, I believe that a deal can be done. The UK is ready and willing to help in any way we can.

Further information

Follow the Foreign Secretary on Twitter: [@BorisJohnson](#) and [Facebook](#).

[Press release: Fuelling the momentum for a North Wales Growth Deal](#)

The time has come for North Wales to become an economic powerhouse, UK Government Minister Guto Bebb will say as he embarks on a two-day visit to fire up discussions on a growth deal for the region.

Mr Bebb will meet with business leaders and representatives of local authorities and higher education to discuss their vision for a North Wales Growth Deal and to underline the UK Government's support for the area's economy.

The UK Government has already delivered the £1.2 billion Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and, earlier this year, the Prime Minister signed the Swansea Bay City Region Deal.

The Government is now turning its attentions to delivering a growth deal for North Wales, working with local partners and the Welsh Government to identify the best way to strengthen the region's economy and make the most of its connections to the Northern Powerhouse.

UK Government in Wales Minister Guto Bebb said:

City and Growth Deals are about revolutionising the way our towns and cities govern themselves, shifting powers down from Whitehall and Cardiff Bay to local leaders who are better placed to take decisions that affect their communities.

This is North Wales' opportunity to benefit from this movement. I want to see what progress is being made on developing the vision for the region's economic future.

We want to work closely with the Welsh Government, local economic ambition board, education institutions and local authorities to agree a new deal that will successfully drive growth across the region.

I have no doubt about the ambition of local leaders in North Wales to get this right, and I am determined that powers and tools are handed down to them to grow their economy.

Mr Bebb will use the meetings to reinforce the message that North Wales has a once-in-a-generation opportunity to capitalise on the benefits the Northern Powerhouse will bring.

He added:

The Northern Powerhouse, coupled with a growth deal represents our best chance to bring transformational change to North Wales. The region is perfectly positioned to benefit from the Northern Powerhouse. Its export base and reputation for big energy projects makes it a perfect partner for closer collaboration to expand the economy of North.

It is these expertise and links that the North Wales Growth Deal visionaries must build on. They are now in the driving seat to deliver.

The Minister's visit to North Wales will also see him visit two companies leading the way in groundbreaking design and research in support of the Wales Festival of Innovation.

He will see a fusion of academia and industry during a visit to the Optic Technology Centre at Wrexham Glyndwr University in St Asaph – a research hub and business incubator that has created dozens of hi-tech companies and hundreds of high quality science-based jobs over the past 12 years.

Professor Maria Hinfelaar, Vice-Chancellor of Wrexham Glyndwr

University, said:

The OpTIC Centre places Wrexham Glyndwr University at the heart of science and technology industry in North Wales.

It's fantastic to be involved with world-leading research and innovation and the centre's role as a hub for incubation is integral to the university's drive to support entrepreneurship. OpTIC Glyndwr is already playing a critical role in the triple helix of academia-industry-government which will help to create jobs and grow the economy of the region.

Mr Bebb will then visit Qioptiq in St Asaph which was recently awarded a £82m Ministry of Defence contract to maintain surveillance and targeting equipment for the UK's Armed Forces.

Managing Director at Qioptiq, Peter White said:

St. Asaph in North Wales is home to one of the UKs largest clusters of high technology optical and optronic innovators and Qioptiq has been the catalyst for many of them. Winning a major contract such as this provides security and allows us to invest in the infrastructure and in our people and this in turn helps the local economy and our supply chain. We are recognised worldwide for our technology, capability and innovation and this reflects on the UK in a very positive manner.

ENDS

Notes to Editors: On 6 September 2016, the six local authorities of North Wales and the region's leading higher and further education institutions published A Growth Vision for the Economy of North Wales.

The vision centres on developing the energy, advanced manufacturing and digital economic clusters in the North Wales region as a means of driving economic growth and raising productivity. The vision focuses on improving transport and digital infrastructure, developing the region's skill base and promoting business growth. You can view the vision [here](#).

[News story: David Davis' opening](#)

statement from the Queen's Speech Debate 'Brexit and Foreign Affairs'

The negotiations over our exit from the European Union are fundamental to our future.

It is no exaggeration to say that they will shape everything we want to achieve as a country over the coming years and decades.

We are doing nothing less than refashioning Britain's place in the world.

Our success or failure will determine and shape all our futures so it's obviously a great responsibility but also a great opportunity.

It falls on all of us in this place – every one of us in this Parliament – to make a success of it.

If we work together, and we succeed, we can ensure a strong and growing economy which spreads prosperity and opportunity around our country, which underpins well-funded public services and gives a better future for us and our children.

I have always been clear that after Brexit, the United Kingdom will continue to be the outward looking and global nation it has always been.

Indeed, we should be more engaged with the world than ever before.

For I firmly believe that last year's vote to leave the EU was not a call for retrenchment, a call to look in on ourselves.

The UK has the means, the ambition and now the freedom to play a more positive role in the world.

That is demonstrated in our commitments on defence and international aid.

The UK is the only country in the world that meets both its NATO pledge to spend 2% of GDP on defence, and the UN target to spend 0.7% of our Gross National Income on development spending.

That ensures that we both defend our values, work to tackle poverty and conflict and help to protect the most vulnerable in our world.

After exiting the European Union, Britain will be a country that still steps up to its role as a world leader.

That means continuing to help to protect and secure our wider European continent.

We want to deepen cooperation with other European states and bring the European Union policy into a wider, global framework.

Seeking a new deep and special partnership with the EU

As we have said, we will seek a deep and special partnership with the European Union. One that reflects our shared values and histories.

One that works for all parts of the United Kingdom, our Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies. And one that delivers for the special circumstances around the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, because no-one wants to see a return to a hard border.

It should be a partnership like no other.

It should be underpinned by ambitious agreements on free trade and customs, covering goods and services and seeking the greatest possible tariff and barrier-free trade.

It should also include a broad security agreement covering all aspects of our current collaboration – including defence and foreign policy, justice and home affairs, law enforcement and counter-terrorism.

And it should be supported by continued cooperation and open access in highly regulated areas like aviation, financial services, data, transport and nuclear.

We recognise that such a wide ranging partnership will require fair and uniform implementation. It must also be long lasting.

That is why we must ensure mechanisms exist to manage the evolution of our regulatory frameworks to maintain a fair and open trading environment and minimise non-tariff barriers.

That is also why we have been clear that this new partnership must be overseen by a new independent, impartial dispute resolution mechanism.

This cannot and will not be the European Court of Justice. No nation outside the European Union submits to direct jurisdiction of the ECJ – neither will the UK.

We will start towards this new partnership by securing the rights of citizens on both sides.

I know everyone in this House will agree with me that European Union citizens make a huge contribution to our society.

You've heard from the Prime Minister about what the approach will entail – but the overarching principle is that European citizens living in the United Kingdom will continue to live their lives in exactly the same way as British citizens, with the same rights and responsibilities.

We intend to reach agreement on this issue as quickly as possible.

But not everything in these negotiations will be easy. They will be complex and, I have no doubt, at times even confrontational.

But I am convinced that both sides want to secure close cooperation and a deep, new partnership.

Leaving the single market and customs union

Last year in the referendum we received a national instruction.

One which we will undertake in a way that serves the national interest.

The instruction from the British people was to take back control of our borders, our money and our laws.

So failing to deliver on this instruction is not an option for those of us that count ourselves as democrats.

Ending the free movement of people means leaving the single market – as the EU has made abundantly clear to those that have cared to listen.

We all accept the need to protect existing UK business in the EU. Leaving the single market does not mean losing access to that market. Which is why we're proposing a new ambitious free trade agreement.

But this is not just about protecting existing markets.

To deliver in the national interest we must seize on our new freedoms in terms of trade to create jobs and lift living standards. Britain must get out into the world, forge its own path, and be a true beacon for free trade.

That means leaving the customs union, so that Britain for the first time in over 40 years will be able to take full advantage of growing markets across the world and determine a trade policy fashioned – not around 28 country's interests – but about one country's interest. So we get a trade policy that suits this country, and this country alone.

The European Commission itself says that 90% of future growth in world trade will come from outside the European Union.

This has already been reflected by the long term decline in the share of British goods that go to the European Union as our global trade has increased dramatically.

That 90% growth outside has meant that our relative share of trade has gone down.

In services for example, we're now 60% outside the EU and 40% inside. Now, all of this is without preferential trade agreements for much of our trade.

Just so the House understands, the best academic data I can find shows that creating a new trade agreement increases the amount of trade by about 28%.

If the House wants an individual parable, NAFTA, in its first seven years of operation, increased trade by 40%. So these are really significant items of policy which we can exercise.

So if this House wants a Brexit deal that drives prosperity and living standards.

If it really wants a Brexit for jobs. Then it must put its faith in free trade and ensure an exit that means we can embrace its opportunities to the full.

Let us move beyond the platitudinous propaganda of “hard and soft Brexit”. Let us discuss how we fashion our new place in the world. And start acting together, truly in the national interest.

Repeal Bill

There is an extensive legislative agenda which is necessary to prepare the UK for its new place in the world.

Working together, in the national interest, will be crucial as we go through the process in this House – and the other place – of putting necessary legislation in position to make sure our laws work effectively on the day we leave the European Union.

For my part, I am willing to work with anyone to this end.

The sheer importance of this issue makes that essential.

The eyes of the country will be on us all. We will all be judged on our willingness to work pragmatically and effectively together to deliver the verdict of the people in last year’s referendum.

Nothing is more central to this than the Repeal Bill.

The principle is straightforward: to repeal the 1972 Act, and to transfer existing European Union law into UK law. And, to answer a question which my opposite number has raised, these rights and freedoms will be brought into UK law without qualification, without limitation and without any sunset clauses. Any material changes will be dealt with by subsequent primary legislation.

I cannot stress enough to the House, and the nation, the importance of this Bill in ensuring that we can have a smooth and orderly exit from the European Union.

Every part of the United Kingdom needs to prepare its statute book and ensure that it functions after we leave the European Union. The Repeal Bill will give the Devolved Administrations the power to do just that and ensure a smooth and orderly exit for all.

As we have also said repeatedly, we expect there will be a significant increase in the decision-making power of each Devolved Administration once we exit the EU.

That is why – given that this Bill affects the powers of the devolved institutions and legislates in devolved areas – we will seek the consent of the devolved legislatures for the Bill. We would like everyone to come

together in support of this legislation, which is crucial to delivering the outcome of the referendum.

When we designed our approach to the Repeal Bill we endeavoured to strike the right balance between getting our statute book in order for the day we exit but also ensuring full parliamentary involvement and scrutiny.

Indeed, it is the only viable plan that has been put forward in this House. While I have heard some concerns raised by those on the opposite benches, I have heard no alternatives put forward nor any detailed proposals for how they would approach this crucial matter.

As I said to my opposite number when I presented our white paper on the Repeal Bill: "If, in the next two years, we find something that we have missed, we will put it right."

That offer still stands, and not just to the opposition but to the entire House.

We must get this right.

We must be able to deliver a functioning UK statute book by the day we exit the European Union.

When the Lords Constitution Committee examined this issue, they found few alternatives. Their recommended approach aligns closely with that which we have set out.

It is vital for businesses, workers and consumers across the United Kingdom that this House undertakes the difficult but eminently achievable task of working together, responsibly in the national interest, to provide certainty and stability.

Other EU exit related legislation

While the Repeal Bill is the centrepiece of our approach, it is far from the only piece of exit related legislation we will be putting through.

The Government is bringing forward a first tranche of Bills on areas affected by our exit from the European Union. These include legislation on trade, customs, immigration, international sanctions, nuclear safeguards, agriculture, and fisheries.

I have told this House a number of times, we are not going to make significant policy changes without first passing primary legislation that will be thoroughly debated and voted on in both Houses. These Bills will deliver on that promise.

This initial tranche of Bills also has a further purpose. As I am sure many across the House would agree, it is the job of a responsible government to prepare for all eventualities.

I have made clear yet again today that we want a close new partnership with

the EU that works for everyone. However, we must also be ensure we have a functioning statute book and functioning national systems no matter what – in other words for all outcomes. These bills will help to provide that. Not doing so would, as the then Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee put it, would be a ‘dereliction of duty’.

We must and will be prepared for any outcome. However, I remain confident that we can get the right deal from these negotiations.

Doing so is fundamentally in the interests of both the UK and the EU.

A strong and prosperous EU, capable of projecting its values and continuing to play a leading role in the world, is in the United Kingdom’s best interests.

Just as a strong and prosperous UK is in the European Union’s interests.

Conclusion

The task ahead will no doubt be challenging.

But it was a task set to us by the British people in last year’s referendum – a national instruction.

So, it is our duty in this House to pull together and deliver on that instruction in the national interest.

For if we do, we can deliver a better and brighter future for the entire United Kingdom.

A future where we step onto the world stage, as a champion for free trade, a firm advocate of the rule of law and a true beacon for democracy.