

Head of OSCE Mission to Skopje: UK response, 7 April 2022

Thank you Chair. Welcome Ambassador Koja, and thank you to you and your team for the detailed report on the Mission's activities over the last year.

We recognise the difficult operating environment including those relating to the pandemic, in which the Mission carried out its work, and your achievements during this period. We note the challenges mentioned in the future outlook, and the as yet unclear implications for the region of Russia's barbaric invasion of Ukraine.

We appreciate the comparative advantage of the Mission in monitoring security-related developments across the country. This and your ability to take early action to address identified issues shows real value added.

We appreciate the Mission's achievements detailed in your report and would like to focus on three specific areas – social cohesion, professionalisation of law enforcement and gender.

Firstly on social cohesion – we welcome your assistance with the Government's National Strategy for one Society and Inter-culturalism, as well as your support to local Commissions for Inter-Community Relations, on which the Mission will provide follow up in the coming period. Education is also key here. The Mission's support for improving integrated education, including your assistance on a concept for secondary education that will contribute to legislative amendments on anti-discrimination, gender equality, inclusion and inter-ethnic integration is highly valuable. These are all essential elements in any society. Combating hate crimes is vitally important, and we welcome your support to police officers for educational campaigns in schools to address this.

Secondly on professionalism of the police, we are pleased to note the newly adopted code of ethics designed to combat corruption and misconduct. We welcome that the Mission facilitated a study visit to the United Kingdom for staff from the Ministry of Internal Affairs to learn about the UK's external oversight structures and police anti-corruption regimes.

Focussing on an inter-agency approach for addressing victims of trafficking in human beings and gender-based violence is essential. We welcome your training of a variety of professionals, including police officers, psychologists, sociologists and civil society organisations to protect the rights of victims and survivors, and of vulnerable migrants.

Thirdly, we commend the Mission on its activities over this period on gender. This includes on women's leadership and empowerment to deal with serious and organised crime, as well as recommendations leading to legislative revisions which, for the first time, include a definition of sexual extortion and categorising it as a criminal offence. We appreciate the Mission's meaningful

progress in mainstreaming a gender perspective into programmatic work, and the Participatory Gender Audit, the recommendations of which will be taken into account by the Mission.

Thank you Ambassador Koja for joining us today, and please pass on our appreciation to your team.

Thank you Chair.

Government unveils investment for energy technologies of the future

- ‘British energy security strategy’ backed up with hundreds of millions of pounds of investment for developing cutting-edge energy technologies.
- support will unlock investment and opportunities in hydrogen, advanced nuclear and Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage (CCUS)
- new technologies will boost UK energy security, provide cheap, clean energy to homes and businesses and create thousands of jobs

The government has today (Friday 8 April 2022) launched a wide-ranging £375 million package of support for innovative energy technologies that will power British homes and businesses for decades to come and further strengthen the nation’s energy security.

This includes £240 million to support the production of hydrogen as a clean, low-cost energy technology, £2.5 million of funding to develop next-generation nuclear technology and a further £5 million towards research into carbon capture.

Today’s investment will support research, development and deployment of these cutting-edge technologies and give the country the energy independence it needs, reducing reliance on expensive fossil fuels. From next-generation nuclear reactors, to hydrogen for industry, power, transport and potentially heating, the government is revolutionising the way the UK gets its energy across a range of technologies.

Yesterday’s [‘British energy security strategy’](#), unveiled by the Prime Minister, sets out how Great Britain will accelerate the deployment of wind, new nuclear, solar and hydrogen, whilst supporting the production of domestic oil and gas in the nearer term – which could see 95% of electricity by 2030 being low carbon.

Business and Energy Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

This investment will unlock the enormous potential of hydrogen,

advanced nuclear reactors and Carbon Capture to level up the UK energy landscape and deliver for businesses and households.

High gas prices and Russia's aggression in Ukraine have highlighted the urgent need to produce more of our energy here in the UK.

That's why we have set out bold plans to harness clean, cutting-edge, homegrown technologies and build the energy security we need for the future.

UK government for Scotland Minister Malcolm Offord said:

Harnessing the enormous potential of low-carbon technology is at the core of our plans to bolster the UK's domestic energy supply, for the benefit of families and businesses across the country.

This UK government backing will accelerate innovation in some of the most promising technologies, including the development of hydrogen energy and next-generation nuclear reactors. Funding for vital carbon capture research, including three projects in Scotland, will help us meet our ambitions for decarbonisation.

Government support

Today's government support includes:

The £240 million Net Zero Hydrogen Fund, funding low carbon hydrogen production projects, with the aim of awarding funding from the end of 2022. This will advance the government's ambition to have up to 2GW of low-carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2025 and up to 10GW installed by 2030, using electricity to produce power by splitting water into hydrogen and oxygen.

The Hydrogen Business Model, which will support further investment in hydrogen production with £100 million for electrolytic projects to cover the difference between the cost of production (the strike price) and the sale price for hydrogen (reference price). Funding for this will launch this summer.

The Industrial Hydrogen Accelerator, a £26 million innovation funding programme to support UK industry in adopting hydrogen as a clean, affordable fuel source for sectors like manufacturing by demonstrating the feasibility of hydrogen to businesses and reducing the cost of switching energy systems.

A £2.5 million competition for bidders seeking to develop a UK Advanced Modular Reactor (AMR). These reactors use novel and innovative fuels, coolants, and technologies to generate high-temperature heat for industrial applications as well as for electricity to power people's homes. Industry representatives are invited to apply for a share of this funding to develop their projects. On top of this, the Business and Energy Secretary has also announced today that nuclear regulators (the Office for Nuclear Regulations

and Environment Agency) have been provided with an additional £830,000 of funding to help bring the development of UK AMRs to fruition.

£5 million government funding for accelerating Carbon Capture and Storage (CCUS) Technologies under the ACT 3 scheme. CCUS entails capturing, transporting and storing greenhouse gas emissions that would otherwise be released into the atmosphere meaning energy can be stored and used. ACT 3 is an international initiative between 14 countries worldwide including the UK, aimed at accelerating CCUS technologies through funding research and innovation projects and the funding will support the commercialisation of the technology so that companies right here in the UK can invest in it.

In addition to this funding, the government is also publishing a range of important documents and guidelines to support the development of these industries.

Government support for hydrogen is also being complemented by extensive private investment, including ITM Power's announcement of a new electrolyser plant in Sheffield which will support the hydrogen industry and create 500 jobs.

More information

All of these programmes are receiving support through the Net Zero Innovation Portfolio.

In addition to the investments detailed above, we are also publishing the following.

The **Hydrogen Investor Roadmap** to shine a spotlight on the numerous investment opportunities across the hydrogen value chain and drive private investment in hydrogen to help boost the homegrown UK hydrogen industry built on clean, affordable power. The **CCUS Investor Roadmap** will be published alongside this and summarises the current engagement of government and industry, outlining further opportunities to deliver CCUS and drive investment.

The **response to our consultation on a Low Carbon Hydrogen Standard**, with the intention of setting a maximum threshold for greenhouse gas emissions allowed in the production process for hydrogen to be considered low carbon under the Net Zero Hydrogen Fund and hydrogen business model.

The **Hydrogen Business Model** to bring forward significant private investment in new low carbon hydrogen production, with government providing an initial £100 million in revenue support funded by the Industrial Decarbonisation and Hydrogen Revenue Support (IDHRS) scheme.

The **response to our consultation on the Hydrogen Business Model** also provides an update on the government reviews of hydrogen network and storage infrastructure requirements in the 2020s and beyond, as committed to in the Hydrogen Strategy.

The Industrial Hydrogen Accelerator

The Industrial Hydrogen Accelerator is a £26 million innovation funding programme to support the demonstration of end-to-end industrial fuel switching to hydrogen in the UK. It aims to prove the feasibility and reduce the costs and risks of hydrogen fuel switching systems.

The scope will include the full technology chain, from hydrogen generation and storage through to industrial end-use, including the integration of the components in a single project.

The projects will develop knowledge on design and implementation of industrial hydrogen systems and showcase 'first-of-a-kind' blueprints to enable deployment in the late 2020s.

The fund will open for applications in the week commencing 25 April 2022 and demonstration projects must be complete by March 2025. [Find more information on the IHA.](#)

ACT 3

ACT 3 is an international initiative between 14 countries worldwide including the UK, aimed at accelerating and maturing carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS) technologies through funding research and innovation projects. CCUS entails capturing, transporting and storing greenhouse gas emissions that would otherwise be released into the atmosphere.

ACT partners include the Province of Alberta, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Switzerland, Turkey, UK and the USA.

The UK element of the ACT 3 programme is funded from the NZIP and will be providing up to £5 million in funding up until 31 March 2025 for CCUS developers to expand on their research. The £5 million provided by the UK will contribute to a total funding pot of around £40 million (including in-kind and industry funds), of which around £25 million is being provided by ACT partners.

ACT 3 follows on from ACT 1 and 2 which provided a total of around £58 million, where 15 UK projects were funded a total of £13 million from this pot. Some key outputs from the programme include international collaboration, dissemination of findings, and promoting the acceleration of CCS technologies towards full scale/commercialisation. [Find out more about ACT.](#)

AMR Demonstration Programme

High Temperature Gas Reactors (HTGRs) are the technology focus for this innovation programme as they optimise opportunities for decarbonising industrial heat by 2050. This was announced at the Nuclear Industry Association (NIA) annual conference on 2 December 2021 by Energy Minister Greg Hands.

The AMR Research, Development and Demonstration Programme: Market Engagement was carried out during February and March 2022.

Previously, we published a [prior information notice](#) which set out our intention to publish formal competition documents for the initial phase (Phase A) of the programme in Spring 2022.

[Russia's actions in Ukraine fall far short of the standard set by the Human Rights Council: UK at UN General Assembly](#)

Mr President,

When establishing the Human Rights Council, this General Assembly unanimously agreed that "members elected to the Council shall uphold the highest standards in the promotion and the protection of human rights." Russia's actions in Ukraine fall far short of that standard.

We have all now seen the horrific images from Bucha and Irpin of civilians deliberately killed in areas from which Russian forces have recently withdrawn. As President Zelenskyy said to the Security Council on Tuesday, it was difficult to find a war crime that Russia did not commit in Bucha.

Reports of executions, rape and mass graves leave no doubt that Russia has committed gross and systematic violations of human rights: the threshold for suspension from the Human Rights Council. I strongly welcome the General Assembly's decision to send a clear message: Russia has no place on the Human Rights Council.

This vote today delivers another message to Putin, that those who stand by him or speak in his name, must stop killing innocent civilians and end this war now.

Mr. President,

We take note of the fact that following their suspension, Russia has subsequently declared its withdrawal from the Human Rights Council. We understand this will trigger a by-election, and we welcome the opportunity this presents for a Member State from the region, who will genuinely promote and protect human rights, to take that seat.

Mr. President,

Today's vote is a victory for human rights, upholding the credibility of the Human Rights Council and the principles of the UN Charter.

Thank you.

Mali: The reports from Moura underline the extent of Russia's malign activity globally: UK at UN Security Council

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Kingdom.

I want to start by thanking SRSG Wane for his remarks today – and through him, pay tribute to all members of MINUSMA, whether civilians or in uniform, serving the UN in Mali. I also want to thank Madame Samaké for her briefing. Her words are a clear reminder of the invaluable contribution women make, including in societies affected by conflict and poverty. We must ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in the pursuit of lasting peace. I also welcome the Representative of Mali to our meeting.

Like other Council members, the United Kingdom is horrified by reports indicating that hundreds of people were killed in Moura last week, following a counterterrorism operation carried out by the Malian Armed Forces, with the alleged involvement of the Wagner Group. This needs an urgent, transparent and impartial investigation, to bring those responsible to justice. The government must grant MINUSMA full access to Moura, without further delay.

The latest reports from Moura follow a clear trend in a surge of human rights abuses since the deployment of the Wagner Group to Mali – as also highlighted in the deeply concerning Human Rights Watch report in March. We know that, as of early 2022, around 1,000 Russian mercenary personnel have been stationed across Mali. Just as the presence of Russian mercenaries drove an increase in human rights violations and abuses in the Central African Republic last year, we fear we are now seeing the same in Mali. This underlines the extent of Russia's malign activity globally, which serves to damage efforts to address peace and security in contexts beyond Ukraine.

With the threat to communities in Mali growing, it is vital that MINUSMA is able to carry out its human rights tasks. We thank MINUSMA for their continued efforts to investigate, document and report on all allegations. We encourage the publication of human rights findings in full, and at the earliest opportunity.

We note with concern the increasing restrictions imposed by the Malian authorities on MINUSMA operations. MINUSMA's freedom of movement and its

Status of Forces Agreement must be respected. Only last month, UK Peacekeepers came under fire from a Malian Armed Forces helicopter. We look forward to receiving the outcome of the UN's investigation into this concerning incident as soon as possible. We were deeply saddened to learn that three Egyptian peacekeepers were killed last month in IED attacks. On behalf of the UK, I would like to extend my deepest sympathies.

On the political transition, the United Kingdom continues to support ECOWAS's dialogue with the Malian authorities on a revised timeline for elections, so that sanctions can gradually be lifted, and attention turned towards electoral preparations. We recognise the sincere desire of many Malians for substantive reform. However, we believe it is only through elections and a return to constitutional, democratic rule, that long-term reform can be driven forward, with the support of partners.

The United Kingdom remains committed to supporting those most in need in Mali, and we provided more than \$16 million in humanitarian aid in 2021. However, the mobilisation of resource by the international community must also be accompanied by unimpeded, safe and sustained humanitarian access – including in those areas that are hardest to reach.

I resume my function as President of the Council.

[Future farming in Devon's Axe catchment](#)

The film 'Future farming in the Axe catchment' is available now on YouTube

[Future Farming in the Axe Catchment](#)

The River Axe is of national significance as a designated Special Area of Conservation. It is in poor condition due to degraded ecology, siltation and nutrient enrichment in the form of elevated phosphate.

Since 2016 we have been carrying out a regulatory project working with farmers in the catchment to achieve compliance with the aim to bring the river back to good condition.

Land management has changed dramatically in the Axe catchment over recent decades. The intensification of farming means that heavy agricultural machinery is on the land a lot more than it used to be, often at inappropriate times when the soil is wet. As many of the soils in the catchment have a high clay content, they are vulnerable to compaction, which generates run-off as little rainfall is able percolate through the soil.

Richard Smith, Soils Technical Specialist for the Environment Agency said:

Because of the state of the land we have run off, and soil, phosphates, nutrients and dung are all washed into the backwaters of the river and deposited on the gravels. They then behave like an enriched field – certain things thrive, but sensitive plants don't – so we end up with what is a muddy pond.

Where farms are found not to be compliant with regulations – the Silage, Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Oil (SSAFO) regulations and Farming Rules for Water (FRfW) – the Environment Agency works with the farmer to draw up a plan to move them into compliance and offers advice on how they may be eligible for grants from Catchment Sensitive Farming.

Stuart Hunter, Senior Advisor for the Environment Agency, said:

We work with farmers to find the most efficient way of making them compliant and protect the environment. It's made clear to the farmer that they need to be compliant, and that we expect progress to be made, if not we would look to regulation and enforcing the necessary improvements.

The film illustrates how many farmers have taken on-board the Environment Agency's advice and guidance. There are simple improvements, such as covering silage clamps to avoid rainwater draining into a slurry store. And other more long-term changes, such as changing to a completely grass-based system of feed or reducing the density of their dairy herd.

Stuart added:

With climate change, impacts are going to be more extreme – intense rainfall, drier periods – farming needs to adapt and change on the Axe, to become more sustainable as a business and to protect the environment.

We hope the film shows how we work with the people we regulate in order to improve the environment. People are often aware when they are not doing something right, which means they are not complying with the regulations. It's not a surprise when we discuss what is required in order to comply. Most farmers react well to advice and take the right actions to become compliant, however with the minority who don't engage and remain non-compliant we will not hesitate to use our enforcement powers – we want to work with farmers, supporting them to make changes and in doing so protect and enhance this precious river.