

Home Secretary meeting with Belgium Interior Minister

During Verlinden's 2 day visit to the UK, the Home Secretary briefed her counterpart on how the UK is supporting Ukrainians, including the extension of the existing family route and introduction of an uncapped humanitarian sponsorship pathway.

On the subject of illegal migration, they both agreed that a crucial part of tackling this shared challenge is international partnership and cooperation.

During the meeting, the Home Secretary confirmed that the UK will fund a package of security measures to tackle dangerous illegal journeys between the two countries, facilitated by criminal gangs. This will support a new command and operational response centre, roll out surveillance technology and provide additional frontline resource along the Belgian border.

This increased information sharing and partnership working will help reduce the number of people making these dangerous journeys, prevent the loss of life across the Channel and dismantle more criminal gangs.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

Countries across Europe and beyond must work together to respond to issues which have a global impact.

Minister Verlinden and I reasserted at our meeting that our respective governments abhor Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The attack on a sovereign state is in clear breach of international law and norms and cannot be without consequences.

Our commitment to jointly tackle illegal immigration through the introduction of new security measures in Belgium, will show how critical collaborative working is to saving lives and disrupting the business model of international criminal gangs.

Those practical steps complement the changes to the law we are making here in the UK as we implement our New Plan for Immigration and overhaul our broken asylum system, which currently does little to disincentivise individuals from attempting to enter the UK illegally.

Interior Minister Annelies Verlinden said:

The United Kingdom is an important neighbour and excellent operational cooperation between our two countries is therefore important. Organised crime, such as migrant smuggling, does not

stop at borders. In a post-Brexit era, it is important to continue working together to stop these illegal activities.

In regard to illegal migration to the UK, our police officers are strongly committed to dismantling criminal networks, which in turn has a positive impact in mitigating the problem in France.

Information exchange is key in our joint commitment to tackle organised crime. I look forward to starting negotiations with a view to concluding a police cooperation agreement. Such an agreement between Belgium and the UK should create the possibility of exchanging even more information in real time with a view to disrupting networks of people smugglers and other forms of organised crime, such as drug trafficking and child sexual abuse.

The meeting was also an opportunity officially to start negotiations between both countries on a law enforcement cooperation agreement, to further enhance the partnership between the UK and Belgium, demonstrating a continued commitment to working together across judicial cooperation and law enforcement.

These measures and closer cooperation follow a joint declaration between the 2 countries to tackle organised immigration crime, signed by the UK Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, and Belgian Prime Minister, Alexander De Croo, in November 2021.

During the meeting the Home Secretary welcomed the Belgian initiative to discuss a bilateral law enforcement cooperation agreement. She noted that the UK values law enforcement cooperation with Belgium, and is keen to explore how this can be further strengthened.

The Home Secretary also praised Belgium's recent successful police operations against drugs-related crime and welcomed further discussions regarding serious and organised crime threats. This will provide an opportunity to collaborate on approaches to tackling shared threats, particularly in tackling drug supply.

Both look forward to speaking again and remain in contact in the weeks and months ahead.

International collaboration on AI and data governance

Good afternoon everyone, to those here in London and to all those joining us from around the world. It's a real pleasure to be speaking with you today.

Thank you Jeni for that very kind introduction, and for your leadership of GPAI's work on data governance. You are a credit to the UK; thanks for all that you do.

My thanks also go to those at the Open Data Institute, The Alan Turing Institute, the Data Trusts Initiative, GPAI's Montreal Centre of Expertise and all other partners who have put in countless hours of effort to produce these reports.

It's fascinating to hear first-hand about the forefront of research on data governance, and the UK is proud to have supported such important work.

Thank you to AI UK as well for having me here today. This Government sees AI as a truly transformative set of technologies with the power to drive growth and prosperity around the country so everyone can benefit.

And as Minister for Technology and the Digital Economy, I am keenly aware of the importance of the UK's AI sector.

Events like AI UK demonstrate how the UK is leading the way in AI development by showcasing the best of our home-grown talent, whilst offering a vital platform to discuss how we can foster better links with our international partners.

But before I begin, we must firstly acknowledge the impact that digital connectivity and the free transfer of trustworthy data has in upholding our democratic freedoms, in light of events unfolding in Ukraine.

In my Department, we have mobilised policy teams from digital and tech, to cyber security and online mis- and disinformation to do what we can to help.

And this Government has launched an unprecedented package of economic sanctions developed, working in close collaboration with our international partners.

Our thoughts are with the Ukrainian people today.

International collaboration on AI and data has never been more important.

These technologies are already transforming lives across each corner of the globe. Every day, our lives are made easier, and the services we use are made better, by AI and data applications.

Autocompleted text in emails; mapping apps helping us get from A to B; suggestions for new contacts based on who we've connected with previously online – the list goes on and on.

But to completely understand the extent of this transformation, we need to hear from all communities around the world – to understand how the introduction of AI across societies impacts people differently.

We also need to ensure that data and AI technologies can help us tackle the biggest challenges facing us globally – such as climate change, or new

pandemics.

These are the key motivations that have guided the research you're going to hear a bit more about today.

Bringing together colleagues from here in the UK, Canada, Kenya, Chile, India and many other countries, the projects we'll be discussing this afternoon exemplify the best of cross-national research focused on overcoming these challenges.

I want to commend The Alan Turing Institute and their Policy Pilot Partners for working with communities right across the globe – in particular those in the Global South – through their research on furthering our understanding of data justice.

And as Jeni discussed, the ODI's research on data trusts shines an important light on how better stewardship of our data can equip citizens with the tools to confront climate change.

This work is timely, and much needed.

I'll come to the focus of the research in more detail shortly.

But – as all of you who have been listening to talks at AI UK will know, this year's conference is based around the UK's world-leading National AI Strategy.

And as the Minister who launched this Strategy back in September, it would be remiss of me to not mention how proud I am of the work that's been done since the Strategy's publication.

In a short space of time we've taken significant steps to keep the UK at the forefront of AI; I am pleased to announce we are launching our second call for the Turing AI World-Leading Researcher Fellowships.

We are making up to £20 million of funding available through two rounds, which will support exceptional AI researchers to advance AI through world-leading programmes of research.

This is part of a strategic government investment to retain, attract and develop AI research talent; the new fellowships will join the existing cohort of 25 Turing AI Fellowships awarded to date, including five world-leading researcher fellowships, that have been awarded to date.

Applications for the prestigious Fellowships open in the coming weeks.

The Strategy also sets out how the UK can build international collaboration on AI governance.

Indeed, one of the Strategy's three Pillars focuses on ensuring the UK gets the national and international governance of AI technologies right, because this will encourage innovation and investment, and most importantly, protect the public and our communities.

This requires forging new strong partnerships across academia and industry to understand how we can do this properly, as demonstrated by the Data Governance work presented today.

Our work on this pillar started with the publication of the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation's AI assurance roadmap, the first major step towards reviewing the AI governance landscape.

There is a huge opportunity here: not only will an effective AI assurance ecosystem enable the trustworthy adoption of AI, but it also represents a new multi-billion pound professional services industry in its own right.

The roadmap was followed by the AI Standards Hub Pilot. We are pleased that the Hub will be led by The Turing, partnered with the National Physical Laboratory and British Standards Institution.

In this, we aim to increase the UK's contribution to the development of global AI technical standards. We will explore international collaboration with similar initiatives to ensure standards are shaped by a wide range of AI experts, in line with our shared values.

And we'll be setting out more details about the UK's approach to international AI governance in the upcoming White Paper, which will be published later this year.

Our Strategy is a bold 10-year vision, where we cooperate with our overseas partners on using AI for good and advocate for international standards that reflect our values.

We must all work together – across governments, global industry and civil society more broadly – by supporting research into these emerging technologies to determine how we can use them for the betterment of society.

To encourage further collaboration, the UK and its partners around the world must combine our efforts through international frameworks.

That is why we are keen to continue our involvement with organisations like the Global Partnership on AI. We are proud to be one of GPAI's founding members, highlighting our longstanding commitment to bring key partners around the table to discuss the development of AI.

I attended GPAI's Ministerial Council meeting in Paris last November, where I was able to hear first-hand about the Partnership's brilliant work.

I was particularly intrigued to hear about the research commissioned by GPAI's Working Groups, focusing on Responsible AI, the Future of Work, Innovation and Commercialisation, AI and Pandemic Response, and – of course – Data Governance.

Besides the work you're hearing about today, a fantastic example of this cutting-edge research includes the recent Climate Change and AI report, led by the Responsible AI Working Group and presented at COP 26. The report sets out clear recommendations on how governments can support the responsible use

of AI to tackle climate change.

This, alongside the other innovative research projects conducted by the Working Groups over the past year, exemplifies why organisations like GPAI are so important for governments and society more broadly. Each Working Group links experts from every corner of the globe to solve some of the biggest challenges facing us today.

For example, the Climate Change report was written by researchers in the UK, Germany and Canada, whilst overseen by colleagues in France, Sweden and the USA – demonstrating the truly global nature of the work that GPAI does.

The UK's Office for AI also seconded one of its officials to help establish the Partnership's Montreal Centre of Expertise, backing the initiative of the Canadian and Quebec Governments in setting up the Centre and building on years of collaboration on AI between our two great countries.

I firmly believe that only through this kind of international collaboration can we effectively and smoothly facilitate the introduction of AI across society.

And I'm looking forward to seeing the results of the innovative research that GPAI produces over the coming months, alongside the two projects we're discussing today.

That brings me onto the two exciting projects you'll be soon hearing more about on this stage.

As you're all aware, the research being presented today is one of the outputs of GPAI's Data Governance Working Group.

The UK is proud to have contributed £1 million to this work, making a significant contribution to turning data trust theory into practice, and facilitating one of the largest and most comprehensive global consultations to date on data justice.

On Data Trusts, a research team bringing together the ODI, the Data Trusts Initiative and the Aapti (pronounced AP-TEE) Institute examined how real-world data trusts can empower individuals to more actively control how their data is measured, particularly in relation to the climate.

The team consulted with more than 50 organisations around the world and looked at three key use cases.

The first focused on city cycling – with a particular focus on London and how a data trust with the cycling community here could help guide planning on infrastructure investment; The second looked at small shareholder farming in India, examining how data trusts can support local farmers in generating local datasets suited to their environmental circumstances.

And lastly, they looked at Peru as a case study on climate migration, using their feasibility assessment to consider how local communities and organisations could form a climate and displacement data trust, providing a

powerful mechanism for indigenous data stewardship.

This critical examination helped the team to draft a clear roadmap for how similar data trusts for climate change could be implemented in the UK, as well as in other cities around the world.

The UK has been a pioneer in the field of data trusts, thanks to institutions such as the ODI and the Data Trusts Initiative.

And it's wonderful to see this work now being taken forward on the international stage.

Meanwhile, the Turing and its partners focused on expanding our understanding of Data Justice in the age of AI.

The UK's support for this research has produced new guides on data justice that will help policy makers and AI leaders make informed decisions on policy that protects the communities at risk of marginalisation by AI and machine learning systems.

I'm particularly pleased that this research has involved 12 Policy Pilot Partners from low and medium income countries across Africa, Asia, Oceania and Latin America.

For too long, our focus on the impact of AI and data more has ignored much of the world and focused only on high income countries. It's important that we support research that incorporates and understands the impacts of data collection on all people around the globe.

To all those that have worked tirelessly to complete both these projects, thank you for your efforts.

Managing our data transparently and effectively has never been more important, especially when it comes to AI and machine learning.

We need to make sure that data and AI can be used for society's benefit, whilst ensuring that data systems reflect the needs of all those in society.

It's important to emphasise again that these are not national issues, but international.

AI and data are already transforming lives everywhere, and it's vital that we work together to confront the issues we face as a global community.

Before I finish, I'd like to reiterate to everyone listening that the UK is always open to work with colleagues across the world to push the boundaries of research on emerging technologies.

This Government will always encourage scientific innovation here in the UK, but we are equally determined to facilitate close collaboration with our international partners to advance new research.

I hope the reports presented here today provide a stepping stone for even

broader collaboration.

Thank you all very much for your time today, and have a fantastic remainder of AI UK.

[UK Statement at the UN General Assembly emergency special session on Ukraine](#)

Thank you, Mr President.

The United Kingdom welcomes the reconvening of the Emergency Special Session on the crisis in Ukraine.

Since the General Assembly last met, just over 3 weeks ago, Russia's premeditated and unprovoked war in Ukraine has caused a humanitarian catastrophe.

Over 3 million refugees, including 1.5 million children, have fled Ukraine. Another 6.5 million have fled their homes in Ukraine.

Over 12 million require humanitarian assistance.

And, as we heard from the Secretary General yesterday, other countries too are paying a heavy price: a global food, energy and economic crisis is setting in, which alongside COVID19, risks further undermining the SDGs and creating a wider humanitarian catastrophe.

President Putin's war against the Ukrainian people is the sole cause of this crisis.

Bombs fall on scared children. Mariupol is under medieval siege. Innocent families have been without food, water or power for days.

Essential civilian infrastructure has been targeted from the very beginning, with 62 attacks on healthcare facilities, confirmed by the World Health Organisation.

The UK is doing our part to support the Ukrainian government and people, as well as its neighbours.

We have donated over £400 million of aid for necessities and medical equipment.

The people of Ukraine are looking to the United Nations for humanitarian assistance, for an end to the war, and to defend the principle of territorial

integrity and the UN Charter.

We can send a united message, we can help the people of Ukraine, we can condemn Russia's invasion and we can reinforce the founding principles upon which the United Nations was built.

We can support a resolution which is already backed by 86 co-sponsors from across all regions.

The UK will vote with Ukraine. We urge states to do the same.

Let me finish by echoing the Secretary General's appeal to the Russian Federation yesterday:

"How many more Mariupols must be destroyed? Continuing the war in Ukraine is morally unacceptable, politically indefensible and militarily nonsensical. It's time to end this absurd war."

Thank you.

[More vital medicines from UK arrive in Ukraine](#)

- Truck carrying vital medicines such as insulin and antibiotics arrives in Ukraine
- Delivery of 175,000 doses will support diabetics and people with chronic conditions struggling to access treatment

A refrigerated truck carrying 175,000 doses of crucial medicines has arrived in Ukraine from the UK to help the country cope with the health emergency caused by the Russian invasion.

The delivery of 24 pallets of medicines follows an urgent request from the Ukrainian government to help diabetics and people with chronic conditions who are unable to access treatment following the turmoil caused to supply chains.

Today's donation includes antibiotics and insulin, as well as a muscle relaxant to support surgery. It was the first delivery of so-called cold chain medicines from the UK which require complex transportation and handling. The truck travelled more than 1,200 miles overland from a UK supply depot, via the Channel Tunnel, to Lviv in Ukraine.

More than 4 million medical items have so far been donated by the UK to

Ukraine. Items such as wound packs, intensive care equipment and other medicines have already been delivered by the UK with 11 delivery flights over the past three weeks.

Some of these items have already been used in hospitals in Lviv and Kyiv.

The UK government has been working closely with Ukrainian officials to deliver targeted support to make sure medical items are reaching the people who need them most.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

The unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine is an atrocity and has caused misery to millions of people.

The UK is doing everything it can to provide humanitarian aid to the people of Ukraine to ensure they are able to access the treatments they deserve and have the equipment they need to save lives.

We stand shoulder to shoulder with our friends in Ukraine and we are working closely with the government to provide the best possible support.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

Russia's appalling war is causing untold and unnecessary human suffering.

The UK stands with the people of Ukraine and continues to provide vital humanitarian aid to support people in Ukraine and the region.

Humanitarian Advisor Rachel Kessler said:

The need for support and medical supplies in Ukraine is clear. So far over 60 health facilities have been destroyed in the fighting, in addition to those made inaccessible or which have run out of supplies.

Many people in the areas with heavy fighting have suffered injuries, including women, children and elderly people who have been unable to move to safety. This conflict is devastating communities, with hospitals and medical centres stretched to capacity, in urgent need of supplies and drugs.

The continued flow of UK humanitarian support is critical. We know from the Government of Ukraine that UK supplies, including wound care kits, medicines and intensive care unit equipment have now reached all regions of Ukraine, including Kyiv.

Some of the significant items sent to the Ukraine so far include: * Nearly 3,000 adult resuscitators

- Around 160,000 wound care packs
- Over 300,000 sterile needles
- Over 32,000 packs of bandages
- 1,600 pieces of equipment for ventilators
- Over 54,000 cannulas
- Almost 300,000 packs of medicines – around 2.5 million doses – including antibiotics and painkillers
- 72,000 packs of gloves
- 28,000 FFP3 masks

The 4 million medical items donated form part of the government's wider humanitarian response to this emergency. The UK government flew 21 children with cancer to the UK, who are now receiving lifesaving treatment from the NHS.

On Thursday 17 March, the government announced that Ukrainians fleeing their home country will be guaranteed free access to NHS healthcare, including hospital services, GP and nurse consultations, urgent care centres and injury units.

More than 10,200 visas have been granted through the Ukraine Family Scheme and, for those with valid Ukrainian passports, the government has removed the need to attend an in-person appointment to conduct biometric checks before travelling to the UK.

Since Monday 14 March, people in the UK have been able to register their interest in sponsoring a named Ukrainian under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, with more than 150,000 people registering.

The government has provided £400 million in humanitarian and economic aid to Ukraine and neighbouring countries since the Russian invasion started, along with defensive anti-tank and anti-aircraft weaponry.

G7 Health Ministers' statement on Ukraine

We, the G7 Health Ministers, strongly condemn President Putin's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine, which has already caused thousands of deaths and suffering for millions of people and which grossly violates international law, including the UN Charter, and undermines international peace and security. We demand that Russia immediately cease its unprovoked and unjustified military actions, withdraw all its forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence, and abide by UN General Assembly resolution titled "Aggression against Ukraine" supported by 141 states at the 11th emergency special session as well as the legally binding decision by the International Court of Justice ordering Russia to immediately suspend its war of aggression against Ukraine.

We also condemn in the strongest possible terms indiscriminate attacks on the Ukrainian population, and health facilities and health workers who are caught in the crossfire in Ukraine. We fully support the joint statement issued by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population fund (UNFPA) and the World Health Organization (WHO) on 13 March to stop the devastating impact of attacks on health care facilities in Ukraine, such as the horrific shelling of the maternity hospital in Mariupol. Intentionally directing attacks at civilians and civilian infrastructure, including health care facilities and workers, violates International Humanitarian Law. Health must remain a priority, with health workers being protected so they can provide emergency care to save lives, and with health systems and facilities being protected so that they remain accessible to all who need them.

Aid organisations are finding it increasingly difficult to deliver medical aid to people in need, with the problem becoming more acute as the war spreads, having a direct negative impact on public health. Humanitarian partners and health care workers must be able to safely maintain essential health service delivery for civilians across Ukraine as well as for refugees crossing into neighbouring countries. International humanitarian and human rights law must be upheld, and the protection of civilians must remain a top priority.

Since the start of Russia's further invasion, 64 attacks hitting health care facilities have been documented in the WHO's Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care, resulting in 15 deaths and 37 injuries. In most of the cases, health care facilities were damaged or destroyed. Beyond the immediate deaths and injuries, these attacks have a huge impact on people's lives and reduce access to essential health services – especially for sick and wounded people as well as for children, pregnant women, older persons and other vulnerable populations – and can lead to delayed treatments, worsening the prognosis of

affected people and resulting in indirect deaths. Attacks on health care facilities will have a long-term impact on people's ability to recover from illnesses many years after the conflict is over. These attacks must stop immediately. Health workers on the frontline must have unhindered access to support populations in need.

The healthcare system in Ukraine is under significant strain. We are extremely concerned about the disruptions in medical supplies and essential and routine health services as well as widespread destruction of water infrastructure and sanitation. The lack of access to such essential services is having an extremely serious negative impact on the health of people in Ukraine and the region. Every effort to prevent collapse of the healthcare system must be made.

We commend the work of organizations and staff coordinating and delivering essential health support and services to people affected in Ukraine and the neighbouring countries, including WHO, ICRC, UN agencies and international organizations. We also remain vigilant of the ongoing spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases in Ukraine and amongst displaced persons and refugee populations who have taken shelter in the neighbouring countries, and we are ready to provide specific support through safe and efficacious COVID-19 vaccines dose-sharing.

WHO has issued an emergency appeal for 57.5 million US Dollars for Ukraine. WHO is delivering care and support to people affected by this crisis via the WHO Contingency Fund for Emergencies through the government and partners. So far, WHO has rapidly delivered more than 100 metric tons of medical commodities to Ukraine and released more than 10 million US Dollars from its Contingency Fund for Emergencies to respond to the region's urgent health needs. The WHO Contingency Fund for Emergencies has proven to be one of the highly effective tools in emergencies. However, it is nearly depleted.

We thank WHO and other international organizations and entities across the region for their tireless work as well as coordination with Ukraine's Ministry of Health, providing health supplies, including medicines and diagnostics, trauma and emergency surgery kits, to Ukraine to keep medical supply chains open and deliver life-saving care as well and psycho-social support to those in need, as well as their support to neighbouring countries.