

# NPT Safeguards Agreement with Iran: E3 statement to the IAEA, March 2022

Chair,

France, Germany, and the United Kingdom thank Director-General Grossi for his report on the implementation of safeguards in Iran, contained in GOV/2022/5.

We fully support and commend the IAEA for its professional, independent and impartial verification of Iran's safeguards obligations, and its efforts to fully clarify information concerning the correctness and completeness of Iran's declarations under its NPT Safeguards Agreement. We re-emphasise the importance of the IAEA continuing to evaluate all safeguards-relevant information available, in line with its mandate.

It is in this context that we note the recent Joint Statement between the IAEA and the AEIOI which aims to "accelerate and strengthen their cooperation and dialogue aimed at the resolution of the issues" as mentioned in details in the Director General's report contained in GOV/2021/52. We strongly urge Iran to now seize this opportunity and fully cooperate with the IAEA after more than two years without substantive engagement. Iran needs to provide the technically credible information, documentation and answers that the Agency deems necessary without any delay, as it is legally obliged to do so.

We reject any public suggestion there is a "political solution" to these issues – the Agency must be able to perform its technical mandate free of political pressure. We remain as committed as ever to upholding the Agency's independence. It is only through Iran's full and substantial technical cooperation with the IAEA that the Director General would be able to report these issues have been clarified and resolved and are no longer outstanding.

The E3 deeply regret that – despite repeated calls by Board members and the June 2020 resolution adopted by the Board of Governors – these safeguards issues have neither been clarified nor has Iran declared related nuclear material, equipment, activities or locations. These are not merely issues of the past: these are about the present and the future, the integrity of the safeguards regime. Indeed, as the DG has repeatedly reported, the Agency had found indications that nuclear material had been present at three undeclared locations. The whereabouts of this nuclear material are still unknown to the Agency. It is essential that the IAEA be able to fully account for nuclear material as per its mandate.

We take note of the Agency's assessment that it has "no additional questions on the issue related to Location 2 and, therefore, that this issue could be considered as no longer outstanding at this stage". We re-emphasize that legally Iran is legally obliged to declare all nuclear activities and clarify them in a complete manner.

The Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, together with the Additional

Protocol, present the current verification standard. We remain deeply concerned that Iran has stopped applying the Additional Protocol more than a year ago. We urge Iran to fulfil its obligations under the CSA and to reapply and ratify the Additional Protocol as soon as possible. This would be an important confidence-building step. It is also a necessary condition for the IAEA to eventually reach the Broader Conclusion that all nuclear material in Iran remains in peaceful uses.

We recall that implementation of the Modified Code 3.1 is a legal obligation for Iran under the Subsidiary Arrangement to its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement which cannot be modified or stopped unilaterally.

The E3 take note that there have been no further instances of intimidation of IAEA inspectors in Iran since the last report. We reaffirm that the Director General should provide further updates if this situation changes. In addition, we call on Iran to provide the necessary written clarifications requested in the Agency's letter dated 16 November 2021.

Recalling the resolution adopted by the Board in June 2020 upon our initiative, we will follow the implementation of the Joint Statement closely and encourage the Director General to continue reporting to the Board of Governors, as appropriate. We would welcome making this report contained in GOV/2022/5 public.

Thank you, Chair.

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## [Minister for Tech and the Digital Economy speech at Digital City Festival](#)

Good morning,

I am Chris Philp, Minister for Technology and the Digital Economy, and it's my absolute pleasure to be joining you here today, in person, after what seems like a lifetime of video calls. It's exciting to once again feel the buzz and energy in a room, and I am so proud to be able to be here to champion such a vital and innovative sector.

But before we turn to tech, I think it is right that we call to mind the terrible atrocities being committed by the Putin regime in Ukraine. The world is appalled at Russia's invasion. The Prime Minister has called this an attack without provocation and without any credible excuse, and it is right that the UK with other countries has referred Russia to the International Criminal Court for investigation into war crimes, including the indiscriminate deliberate bombing of civilians. Our thoughts are with the

Ukrainian people as they suffer today.

Our government has launched an unprecedented package of economic sanctions developed with our international partners as well as led the way in providing weapons, in large quantities, to the Ukrainian government to use in protecting themselves. Those weapons are being used as we speak in defence of freedom.

And at DCMS, we have been working with our counterparts and governing bodies around the world to further isolate Russia by preventing them from competing in key international sporting and cultural events.

The tech community has also responded in admirable fashion. Wise were quick to place restrictions on money transfers to Russia. SpaceX have activated their Starlink satellites to give Ukraine a digital connectivity backup. Several major social media platforms have now banned RT from operating in Europe and have worked to ensure that the truth is heard by the Russian people. I would like to thank everyone for the work they are doing to support Ukraine during their hour of darkness.

Finally on Ukraine, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the potential for a heightened threat of cyber attack. I urge all public and private sector organisations to redouble their work on cyber security and be extra vigilant to the risks of cyber attacks at this time.

But let me now turn to a happier topic: the future of the UK's booming tech economy.

Ensuring a thriving tech sector is critical to the future of the UK economy – it is critical to growth, critical to job creation and critical to raising the UK's productivity. It is a top priority for the whole government, from the Prime Minister down. We are determined that the UK will be a science and tech superpower, and lead the world in areas like AI, quantum computing and advanced non-silicon semiconductors. We should be hugely proud of the successes of our tech sector and celebrate the jobs and wealth that has been created. We are unashamed of success, and enthusiastically celebrate what the tech sector has accomplished so far.

To start with, the UK has now given birth to 120 unicorns – private businesses valued at more than \$1bn – joining the US and China as the only nations to have created over 100 unicorns. We are Europe's undisputed tech powerhouse, boasting more unicorns created than Germany and France combined. Last year, the UK created 29 new unicorns – one every 13 days. And the UK is a world leading hub for fundraising. We saw £29.4 billion raised here in 2021 for private tech businesses – far more than any other European country at double second-placed Germany and triple third-placed France. We also easily led Europe on the public markets, with 37 tech IPOs last year.

As UK tech continues to thrive, I am delighted that our herd of unicorns is spreading across the UK. Seven cities across the UK are now home to at least two unicorn companies. Right here in Manchester we have amazing examples of this in companies such as Matillion, which provides data transformation

services for the cloud, and Evergreen Life, a personal health record app used by over 870,000 people.

These successes are due to year upon year of record-breaking growth and investment. The UK's tech startup and scaleup ecosystem is now valued at a staggering \$975 billion.

And crucially these investments are being realised across the whole of the UK. Recent statistics have shown that Venture Capital funding in Manchester increased by 65% in 2021, with tech startups raising a record £309 million in funding. This is a clear show of confidence in Manchester's tech sector, and has been accompanied by new jobs, with tech job vacancies increasing by 164% in 2021.

Sustained investment and growth across the North West means the region's digital sector is expected to grow by at least £2.7 billion in annual Gross Value Added by 2025 and create an additional 50,000 jobs.

However, tech's innovation and our ambitions cannot flourish in a vacuum. To create the best possible conditions for innovators we need talent...we need investment...and we need ideas. On talent, we are investing in 1,000 PhDs in Artificial intelligence, 2,000 Masters conversion courses in AI and this Spring we are introducing new visa routes that make it fast and easy for highly skilled people to come to the UK. If you don't know about these please look up the new routes – including the scale-up visa route for growing tech businesses. On ideas, the autumn budget saw the expansion of R&D tax credits to cover data and cloud compute and government's R&D budget is increasing from almost £15 billion in 2021-22 a year to £20 billion a year in 2024-25. And we've already heard about the record level of investment in UK tech.

But in addition to these things we also need the right regulatory environment.

This government is committed to delivering proportionate, pro-innovation, and coherent regulation. Now that we are out of the EU, we will ensure the UK has a competitive advantage by adopting an approach to regulation that is light touch, promotes innovation and growth and also promotes competition. In the past, over-regulation of areas like Genetically Modified Organisms by the EU has stifled innovation in Europe, and GMO innovation consequently mainly took place in the US. We will avoid that mistake in the future. Areas like data are at risk of being over-regulated by Europe to the point that innovation is inhibited and business growth held back. We have a chance now to take an approach which of course protects data privacy but avoids imposing excessive burdens on business or the research community. Similarly with AI, we can adopt a proportionate approach that allows AI innovation to safely flourish and grow here in the UK. We will make sure that the UK is the best jurisdiction in the world for growth and innovation – using the freedoms that we now have outside the EU.

When designed effectively, regulation can be an enabler of innovation, not a blocker. It can help create the conditions in which innovation thrives and can trial new products and services – for example, through the use of

regulatory sandboxes for emerging technologies or business models. And we can ensure new entrants join the market and compete with established incumbents. Effective and coherent regulation can also enhance consumer trust and drive the uptake of digital products and services. We have seen all this in action in the way that the UK's enlightened approach to Fintech has helped create a world-leading ecosystem here.

2022 will be a landmark year for shaping the rules that govern digital technologies. We will introduce pioneering online safety legislation, unveil our finalised proposals for the new pro-competition regime, drive forward our pro-growth, pro-innovation data reforms and publish a White Paper on AI governance.

We will start – as we must – by addressing harms to users that threaten to undermine confidence in digital products and services. Through the Online Safety Bill, we will take much needed action to protect children and the most vulnerable from illegal and harmful content. Today, we have announced a new duty in the Bill to protect people from scam ads on the largest platforms. Online fraud affects millions every year and the new duty will protect people from this awful crime. In parallel, we have launched a consultation, through our Online Advertising Programme, to seek views on developing a coherent and streamlined approach to regulating online advertising more broadly. Together, these measures will ensure a joined up approach to digital regulation, strengthening trust in the digital economy, while protecting consumers and keeping users safe online.

And now that we have left the European Union, we have a chance to advance our strategic interests through our own independent data protection regime. Our reforms will significantly reduce burdens on business and other organisations. But the real prize from our reforms is creating an enabling environment for data-driven innovation that will massively boost the UK's productivity and the competitiveness of our industries. It will make the UK a destination of choice to host cutting edge data driven scientific and tech activity and as a hub for global, data driven trade.

But it is important to be clear here – the protection of people's personal data will be at the heart of our new regime. Without public trust, we risk missing out on the benefits a society powered by responsible data use has to offer. And far from being a barrier to innovation or trade, we know that regulatory certainty and high data protection standards allow businesses and consumers to thrive.

And through the introduction of our new pro-competition regime for digital markets, we will unlock opportunities for small and challenger firms and make it easier for them to compete and innovate on a level playing field – and in doing so deliver more choice and better services for consumers. These measures signal our intention to support our nation of startups and place a thriving digital economy at the heart of the government's vision for long-term economic growth. We do not want large dominant incumbents to prevent new businesses from developing or to abuse their market position and extract what amounts to excessive economic rents by overcharging.

The issues that I've talked about already such as online safety, data, AI and digital competition are rightly the subject of much of today's debate given their ground-breaking nature – but we don't want the conversation or ambitions for the UK to end here. Given the right conditions, innovation can generate change at breakneck speed – for example, in quantum technologies, use of blockchain, web 3.0, the expansion of the metaverse, to mention just a few of the hot topics of today and for tomorrow.

To maximise the benefits of these exciting, next-generation developments, to lead this revolution, and to truly turbocharge our digital economy, we must ensure that innovation takes place safely, in a thriving, competitive environment and that it is ultimately in the interests of citizens across the whole of the UK. Regulation must be designed from the outset to deliver these outcomes. Our Plan for Digital Regulation has charted the approach that we will take to these new challenges through light-touch, proportionate regulation that promotes the safety and rights of users, supports a thriving democracy and unleashes competition and growth.

But it goes without saying that we are at the start of a much longer journey. We will need to innovate and adapt our approach to regulation to meet the opportunities and challenges posed by new tech developments. Effective horizon-scanning – drawing on the collective insights of government, regulators, industry, academia – will have a major role to play.

And collaborative horizon-scanning is of course only one part of the picture. We will find ways to make sure that the regulatory ecosystem as a whole is effective and coherent in the face of new challenges. I'm proud to say that the UK is already ahead of the curve on this point, thanks to the steps we are taking to upskill our digital regulators and through the creation of the world-leading Digital Regulation Cooperation Forum, which ensures effective coordination between our key regulators, particularly the ICO, OFCOM, FCA and CMA. The DRCF in particular has a vital role to play in delivering on our vision for a coherent, pro-innovation landscape, and the Secretary of State has today written to the Forum setting out the government's priorities for the digital regulatory landscape as it finalises its work plan for the next year.

Cooperation with like minded international partners will also be critical – building on our successful G7 and Future Tech Forum. There is always more to be done to maximise the benefits of effective collaboration, and we will continue to look for ways to deliver progress on this point.

I would like to hear your views on this today as well. Working together we will make sure that the UK remains on track to become a global science and tech superpower. We have achieved so much in the UK already and secured our position as Europe's leading tech nation. Now, by driving forward the UK as the best place in the world for ideas, talent and investment – supported by light-touch regulation – together we can together forge an even brighter future.

Thank you.

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# Natural England and Environment Agency launch joint legal action in response to River Lugg damage

Press release

Banks of the River Lugg were damaged in December 2020 causing suspected significant and long-term ecological harm.



The River Lugg in Herefordshire, pre December 2020

- Natural England and the Environment Agency are today launching legal action against the landowner
- The area is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which means permissions need to be granted before work can take place

Natural England and the Environment Agency have announced today they are beginning legal action against a landowner for damage to a protected area of the River Lugg in Herefordshire.

This follows a joint Natural England and Environment Agency in-depth investigation into ecological harm to the 1.5 kilometre of the protected stretch of the River Lugg. This investigation followed reports of unauthorised activity including dredging and changing the shape (profiling) of the riverbank in Kingsland in Herefordshire in December 2020.

This has been a serious and complex investigation which has taken a considerable length of time to complete.

The charges being brought against the landowner relate to:

- unconsented operations and causing damage to a Site of Special Scientific Interest
- carrying out activities within 8 metres of the River Lugg which were

- likely to cause damage to or endanger the stability of the river
- causing a water discharge activity, namely a discharge of silt into the River Lugg
  - failing to take reasonable precaution to prevent agricultural pollution from land management and cultivation practices on agricultural land
  - wilfully disturbing spawn or spawning fish, or any bed, bank or shallow on which any spawn or spawning fish may be
  - breach of a stop notice

The charges also relate to further works which are alleged to have been carried out by the landowner in December 2021.

Court action will now follow at Kidderminster Magistrates' Court.

Oliver Harmar, Chief Operating Officer at Natural England said:

The decimation of this section of the River Lugg has been devastating to the local environment and to local people, destroying the habitats of iconic wildlife such as otters, kingfisher and salmon. It was heart-breaking to see this beautiful riverside illegally damaged.

The River Lugg, post 2020

The River Lugg, post 2020

The area is protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) due to its importance for nature. Consent is required before any works are carried out within a SSSI to the river which had not been granted.

[A press release on the unauthorised work was issued on 7 December 2020.](#)

Natural England is responsible for ensuring protection of SSSI areas and the Environment Agency is responsible for flood risk management, fish and spawning and the way rivers function.

Natural England has regulatory powers to prevent damage taking place to SSSIs and to take appropriate enforcement action, including prosecuting offenders where damage occurs.

The Environment Agency has powers to prosecute under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016; Water Resources Act 1991; and the Salmon and Fresh Water Fisheries Act 1975.

The hearing will be held at Kidderminster Magistrates' Court on 18 May 2022.

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## £113 million UK trade boost supports major roadworks in Cameroon

- UK Export Finance provides £113 million of financial support for the Cameroonian Government, boosting bilateral trade and supporting jobs
- Deal unlocks millions of pounds worth of business for UK suppliers to install and upgrade new roads that will link the capital with vital trade ports
- Data shows UK trade with Cameroon increased by 40% in the last year as the UK marks the first anniversary of its trade agreement with Cameroon

A £113 million finance package has been agreed with Cameroon to help UK businesses complete essential roadworks that will unlock the country's economic potential.

UK trade with Cameroon is on the rise, with the value of trade between the two nations reaching £231 million at the end of 2021, up 40% on the previous year.

Today marks the first anniversary of the United Kingdom signing its [Economic Partnership Agreement with Cameroon](#), ensuring that British and Cameroonian businesses could continue to trade freely without any additional tariffs or barriers.

The new deal underwritten by UK Export Finance (UKEF) will support the expansion of the Douala East Entrance Road, which connects the capital in Cameroon with vital trading ports. When completed the expanded road will dramatically improve the transport of goods in Cameroon and strengthen economic ties with landlocked neighbours Chad and the Central African Republic.

**Mike Freer MP, Minister for Exports, said:**

Africa is one of the most exciting continents on which to do business. That's why this government worked so quickly to ensure trade agreements were rolled over and exports could continue unabated.

This new deal backed by UK Export Finance is a huge boost to the UK's growing trade with Cameroon. It will help keep the wheels of trade turning and provide opportunities for British companies to showcase their world-class expertise.

UKEF will provide a mix of Buyer Credit and Direct Lending support worth £113

million (Euro 135 million) and the transaction was arranged by Standard Chartered Bank.

UKEF can help foreign countries with financial support to make their projects happen, if they commit to sourcing goods and services from the UK. This helps open new doors for world-class British suppliers to trade overseas.

International company Magil Construction will undertake the works on the Douala Road project with crucial assistance from the UK supply chain, which will support jobs and boost trade in the UK.

Magil has strong credentials in Cameroon, working on some of the largest projects in the country. They have recently completed the construction of the Douala Soccer Stadium used at the recent African Cup of Nations.

**Ralph Tropea, Executive Advisor at Magil Construction, said:**

We are grateful for the assistance provided by UKEF with its team of professionals, at every level, to make this deal for the Douala East Entrance Road Project a reality. Magil Construction is proud partner in this Project which is a testament to economic and business cooperation by the UK, Cameroon and stakeholders from conception to construction.

**Mustafa Sajjad Hussain, Executive Director, Structured Export Finance, Standard Chartered Bank, said:**

We are very pleased to support the Republic of Cameroon by structuring a competitive financing package to deliver critical infrastructure in the country. The newly restored road will bring social and economic benefits to Douala's inhabitants and communities in the surrounding areas, helping to build long-term sustainable growth in central Africa.

UKEF has up to £2 billion available to support UK exports to Cameroon and can continue to back projects in Cameroon with its financial support.

**Contact**

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**[UK strengthens ban on Russia aircraft and introduces new trade sanctions](#)**

News story

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss has announced a new suite of aviation sanctions.



- New powers to detain Russian aircraft and remove aircraft belonging to designated individuals and entities from the UK register
- Ban on the export of aviation and space-related goods and technology, including technical assistance
- Further ban on UK companies providing insurance and re-insurance services in relation to these goods and technology

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss has announced a new suite of aviation sanctions giving the UK Government new powers to detain any Russian aircraft here in the UK. We have also strengthened the current overflight and landing ban on Russian aircraft, laying new legislation today to make it a criminal offence for any Russian aircraft to fly or land in the UK.

The ban includes any aircraft owned, operated or chartered by anyone connected with Russia or designated individuals or entities, and will include the power to detain any aircraft owned by persons connected with Russia.

The new powers will also allow the Government to remove aircraft belonging to designated Russian individuals and entities from the UK aircraft register.

Additional trade measures, also introduced today, will prevent UK exports of aviation or space-related items and technology to Russia, including related services such as insurance and reinsurance services. This means cover is withdrawn on existing policies and UK insurers and reinsurers will be unable to pay claims in respect of existing policies in these sectors.

These new measures will further tighten the growing economic pressure on Russia and ensures the UK is in line with sanctions imposed by our allies.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

Banning Russian flagged planes from the UK and making it a criminal offence to fly them will inflict more economic pain on Russia and those close to the Kremlin.

We will continue to support Ukraine diplomatically, economically and defensively in the face of Putin's illegal invasion, and work to isolate Russia on the international stage.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

Putin must fail and so we were one of the first countries to ban Russian aircraft and today we are going even further by making it a criminal offence for Russian aircraft to operate in UK airspace.

We will always work to deny Putin and his cronies the right to continue as normal while innocent Ukrainians suffer.

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