

UK steps up fight against fake news

The Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, will today (7 July) announce a package of £18m over three years to counter disinformation and fake news across Eastern Europe and strengthen independent media in the Western Balkans.

The funding from the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) will support freedom of expression and independent local voices in the Western Balkans to boost the creation of balanced, non-biased content.

Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said:

With only 10 per cent of the world's population having access to a free media, fake news and disinformation continue to undermine and destabilise societies.

Today's funding announcement will support journalists working in some of the most repressive societies and step up the attack against fake news.

My aim for this conference is to work with my counterparts to agree a way to protect media freedom and impose a cost on those who abuse it.

Building on the experience of the Salisbury incident, the UK has become a global leader in countering disinformation, and recently launched a new training offer for government and public sector officials on spotting and dealing with disinformation, which has also had interest from international governments.

This funding announcement comes days before Mr Hunt's Global Conference for Media Freedom. Delegations from over 100 countries and international organisation, and 60 ministers, and more than 1,000 journalists, academics and campaigners will convene in London on Wednesday and Thursday to take action to improve media freedom globally.

New research from NGO Freedom House shows that only 10 per cent of the world's population have access to a free media.

At the conference, Lord Neuberger the former President of the UK Supreme Court, will be announced as the chair the High Level Panel of Legal Experts on media freedom.

The panel includes some of the world's top lawyers and will work with governments and other partners to counter draconian laws that hinder journalists from freely going about their work.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

- The funding is part of a £100m, five year commitment to counter disinformation and support independent media in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.