

Environment Agency protects thousands from flood devastation as Storm Eunice batters the Severn Estuary

Press release

Powerful flood defences along Severn Estuary stand up to full force of Storm Eunice.



The Environment Agency's flood gate at Lydney

- Hundreds of Environment Agency officers prepare barriers and pumps ready to protect communities
- More than 2,000 homes and businesses along Severn Estuary avoid devastation of flooding

Early action by the Environment Agency has protected thousands of homes and businesses along the Severn Estuary from the devastation of flooding as Storm Eunice hit the West.

Environment Agency operatives worked around the clock to make sure flood defences along the estuary were braced for the tidal surge caused by the gale force winds on Friday morning.

Powerful flood defences and gates at Avonmouth, Lydney, Sharpness and Epney worked to deflect the full force of the tidal surge along 80 miles of the estuary and reduced the risk of flooding to nearby communities.

Preparations included:

- More than 100 Environment Agency staff out on tidal watch at critical points to ensure flood barriers were prepared for the worst of the tidal surge
- 15 high-volume pumps were ready to be deployed from the Environment Agency's Gloucester Depot
- 10 Severe Flood Warnings issued by the Environment Agency urging people

to take action

Environment Agency Operations Manager Anthony Perry said:

The predicted tidal surge along the Severn Estuary from Storm Eunice had the potential to have a significant impact on properties along the Severn Estuary and we took every precaution to make sure we were prepared for the worst scenario the storm could bring.

Our flood defences stood up to the challenge and provided valuable protection to more than 2,000 homes and businesses along the estuary.

Without the investment of these defences many communities could have been flooded and faced weeks before being able to return to their homes. Instead, residents faced minimal disruption and businesses are able to carry on their operations.

You can check your flood risk, sign up for free flood warnings and keep up to date with the latest situation at <https://www.gov.uk/check-flood-risk>, call Floodline on 0345 988 1188 or follow @EnvAgency on Twitter for the latest flood updates.

ENDS

- The Environment Agency planned for the worst scenario as there was a real risk to life. Fortunately the tidal surge along the Severn Estuary was not as high as predicted although still posed a significant threat of flooding.
- In the 2020 Budget the Government doubled its investment in flood and coastal erosion risk management in England by committing a record £5.2 billion over the next 6 years. This long-term commitment will better protect hundreds of thousands of properties, including homes, businesses, schools and hospitals.
- For every £1 spent improving protection from flooding and coastal erosion, we avoid around £5 of property damages. This long-term commitment will make homes, businesses and infrastructure more resilient to the increasing impacts of climate change.
- This record investment will help the nation 'build back better' by making properties more resilient to flooding, and 'build back greener' by working with nature to make us more resilient to climate change.
- The Capital Programme will also prove central to the Environment Agency reaching its target of becoming a net zero organisation by 2030 – by embracing innovative ways of working that minimise the carbon emissions we produce, and the carbon produced through our supply chain, when we build flood defences.
- The investment across the country will help enable communities adapt to the future risk of climate crisis.
- Using partnership funding enables us to secure investment beyond levels affordable to central government alone and enables more local choice,

while encouraging innovative, cost-effective options where communities may play a greater role.

Published 18 February 2022

[Storm Eunice – Stay away from the coast](#)

Press release

HM Coastguard is issuing a plea for people to stay away from the coast as Storm Eunice hits the UK.



There have been multiple reports of people at the waterline taking pictures of the waves, and even of families standing by the surf line with their children. The Met Office has issued a red 'danger to life' weather warning and winds of 122mph have been recorded.

HM Coastguard Tactical Commander Ben Hambling said: "The reports we are receiving are absolutely terrifying. In these conditions all it takes is one wave.

"A dramatic photograph or selfie is not worth risking your life for and those who are going to the coast to take pictures are also putting our teams at risk.

"We are urging people in the strongest possible terms to stay away from the coast."

If you do get into trouble or believe anybody to be in difficulty at the coast or at sea, please call 999 and ask for the Coastguard.

Published 18 February 2022

Accessibility for all

News story

We explore GAD's ongoing accessibility project to ensure as many users as possible can access our information.



GAD's commitment to ensuring as many users as possible can read our information is [explored in this blog](#). This is all part of an ongoing project to embed accessibility into our documents across a range of platforms and products. These have included a refreshed colour palette and understanding the importance of the HTML format for website publications.

Published 18 February 2022

Year 2 of The Earthshot Prize: HM Ambassador meets Greek Official Nominators

- Created by HRH The Duke of Cambridge and The Royal Foundation, The Earthshot Prize is the most exciting global environment prize in history, designed to discover and scale the best solutions to repair our planet over the next 10 years.
- After a breakthrough first year awarding £1 million each to 5 incredible Winners, The Earthshot Prize is searching to find the next cohort of ground-breaking eco-innovators
- 5 Official Nominators representing Greece are included amongst the total of over 300 hand-picked Official Nominators, representing over 80

countries worldwide, who will nominate the best and brightest solutions from around the world with the potential to repair and regenerate the planet

In its second year, The Earthshot Prize continues its ambitious search for the world's greatest eco-innovators and their breakthrough solutions, expanding its network of Nominators with over 300 organisations from more than 80 countries – including 5 organisations from Greece – representing not-for-profit, foundation, investment, corporate, academic, governmental and community led organisations.

Each of these organisations are searching their expert networks and communities to find truly ground-breaking eco-solutions that can repair and regenerate the planet, and will submit their nominations by 4 March 2022. Throughout the year, these nominations will be assessed and evaluated to discover the 5 Winners for 2022, who will each receive a £1 million grant to scale the impact of their work.

Last year, the 5 Winners provided solutions that included coral reef farming, pioneering green hydrogen, entrepreneurial technology to access to electricity in energy-poor countries, a city-wide food programme to eliminate waste, and a country-wide policy to halt deforestation and protect the rainforest.

HRH The Duke of Cambridge said:

The 2021 Winners and Finalists have set the bar incredibly high. I can't wait to see what solutions the Prize helps to champion this coming year. In 2022, we are determined to go further by seeking even more nominations from every corner of the world, ensuring that we spotlight and scale the very best ideas and innovations that will put our planet on a sustainable path and protect our world for generations to come.

This year the 5 Greek Official Nominators are: Common Seas, Cyclades Preservation Fund (CPF), EPLO Institute for Sustainable Development, Organisation Earth, and PCAI – Polygreen Culture & Art Initiative. HM Ambassador to Greece Matthew Lodge had the opportunity to meet with representatives of all 5 Greek Nominators and discuss the impact of The Earthshot Prize's reinforced reach in Southern Europe, highlighting the importance of these organisations' role in the nomination process and the significance of their contribution to the ultimate objective of the Prize.

HM Ambassador Matthew Lodge stated:

Following a successful inaugural year for The Earthshot Prize, launched by His Royal Highness The Duke of Cambridge in October 2020, I am delighted that for 2022, we are extending the initiative

to include five Official Nominators from across the environment, science and climate community in Greece. With their first-hand knowledge of the hundreds of individuals and groups who are active in Greece and who are deeply committed to protecting the environment and its biodiversity, these nominators can play a vital role. As we all know, there is immense talent in Greece and I am confident that we will hear more about some of the remarkable innovative work that is being done, irrespective of who the eventual prize Winners are this year.

As recent events have reminded us, the challenge presented by Climate Change is real. The United Kingdom is committed to working with our international partners and with civil society, businesses and people on the frontline of climate change so that we can inspire positive Climate Action. Throughout this year of the UK's COP26 Presidency, we continue to work to promote global ambition towards a zero-carbon economy.

The Earthshot Prize has identified 'tipping point' sectors, which have the potential to generate significant impact in the next five years and accelerate positive change, in areas including: personal transportation, regenerative agriculture, future-fit buildings, and extending the life of fashion, food and plastic products. The Prize is seeking nominations in these areas, and will also prioritise indigenous, and women-led solutions, Web3.0 enabled solutions, nominations that unlock new financial models which value nature, and finally, wild cards – the out-of-the-box, blue sky solutions that have transformative impact potential.

The Earthshot Prize nominations will go through an independent assessment process run by Deloitte, which will lead to a longlist of 30 nominations. A panel of independent experts, will advise on Finalists, and The Earthshot Prize Council including Prince William, Sir David Attenborough, Shakira and Christiana Figueres, will select the 5 Winners, each of which will win £1m in prize money. Finalists of The Earthshot Prize, to be announced later in the year, will access a unique platform of support and will attend a magical Awards Ceremony to be broadcast globally at the end of 2022.

Further information

For more information about The Earthshot Prize, visit: www.earthshotprize.org

If you are interested in being considered for a nomination, reach out to one of the 5 Official Nominators in Greece: earthshotprize.org/awards/nominators/

British Embassy Athens supports the climate agenda and encourages dialogue and best practices on this issue. Anyone interested can find out more about our initiatives via our social media accounts: [UK in Greece on Facebook](#), [@ukingreece on Twitter](#) and on [the Twitter account of HM Ambassador Matthew Lodge @FCDOMJLodge](#).

[The UK promotes alliances for biodiversity in Guatemala](#)

World news story

The British Ambassador, Nick Whittingham, celebrated the achievements of COP26 in Guatemala at a reception with the government, civil society and executives.



The meeting was an opportunity to highlight the achievements of COP26, which was held last year in Glasgow, Scotland. Representatives from all over the world, including Guatemala, attended the meeting to ratify their commitments in the fight against climate change and adaptation measures in nature.

Amongst the achievements of COP26, Ambassador Whittingham highlighted the countries' agreement to keep the planet's temperature within the objective of 1.5 degrees. Furthermore, 90% of the global economy has committed to zero emissions compared to 30% about a year ago. He also highlighted the Glasgow commitment to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by the end of this decade by 2030, which was signed by 141 countries representing more than 90% of global forest cover, including Guatemala.

The United Kingdom also congratulated Guatemala for its participation at COP26 and for reaching agreements in benefit of the country. Among them, an initiative in favour of the forests of Central America, and the adherence of Guatemala to the declaration of the oceans. Representatives from the Ministry of the Environment, the National Council for Protected Areas (CONAP), the National Institute of Forests (INAB), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Congress, members of civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, attended the event.

Finally, Ambassador Whittingham highlighted that the United Kingdom will continue supporting Guatemala in these objectives through the [Biodiverse Landscapes Fund](#). This US\$20 million initiative will help Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Belize to protect biodiversity, face the impacts of

climate change and reduce poverty for 7 years. Implementation of the Fund is expected to start at the end of 2022.

Published 18 February 2022