

# Joint statement following the fourth meeting of the Specialised Committee on Financial Provisions

News story

The fourth meeting of the Specialised Committee on Financial Provisions (SCFP) was held today (12 November)



The fourth meeting of the Specialised Committee on Financial Provisions (SCFP) was held today via video conference, co-chaired by officials from the UK Government and European Commission. This Committee is tasked by the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee to undertake work related to implementing the financial provisions in Part V of the Withdrawal Agreement.

The UK and the EU exchanged updates on the implementation of Part V of the Withdrawal Agreement, relating to financial provisions.

They noted the communication on 16 September of the second document specifying the relevant amounts to be paid in relation to the settlement of the UK's net liabilities under the Withdrawal Agreement. Payments will be made in eight equal monthly instalments which commenced at the end of October. The European Commission will continue to submit payment communications to the UK twice annually, in April and September, until outstanding net liabilities are extinguished. The Specialised Committee also noted the positive engagement on the preparations for the third formal reporting package due at the end of March 2022 under the Withdrawal Agreement.

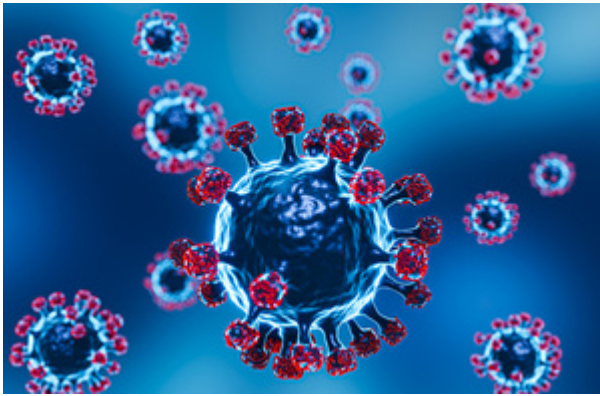
The UK and EU sides reaffirmed their commitment to comply with their legal obligations under the Withdrawal Agreement.

The two sides committed to continue working collaboratively on a range of implementation issues, in recognition of the mutual benefit of smooth implementation of the financial provisions of the Withdrawal Agreement.

## [The impact of C-19 on gender and racial inequalities](#)

### News story

This month we held a special event that gave officials the opportunity to look at some of the latest academic research on the impact of COVID-19



Earlier this month, in partnership with the [Institute of Social and Economic Research](#) and the [ESRC Research Centre for Micro-Social Change](#) based in the University of Essex, we held four online seminars, giving eight world-leading academics the opportunity to speak about the impact of COVID-19 on gender and racial inequalities, focusing on the UK but also referencing international examples. Our experts addressed a range of topics, from housing to mental health, to harassment and perception of social cohesion.

To prepare for these sessions, and make the research as applicable as possible to a government audience, we discussed the academic's research with them beforehand and explored the best way to highlight key messages and potential policy implications. We also advised on ways to structure their fantastic research to maximise engagement with an unfamiliar audience.

The Open Innovation Team (OIT) prides itself on creating and strengthening networks between academia and policy, so we were very happy to see a high level of engagement on all sides and saw around a total of 400 government officials attend these special events.

It was fantastic to have OIT's guidance and feedback when developing the talk, which really helped me feel confident speaking more freely outside my own immediate research and more broadly about the field in general. It was heartening to see such a large

audience and the level of questions was excellent too. I would be delighted to do something like this again in the future – Professor Renee Luthra.

The info about collaborating with academics sounded interesting. The Q&A section was good and [it was] useful that enough time was given to that – this helped bring the focus to discuss what government [and] the Civil Service can do in relation to the research – UK Government Official.

The series was carefully curated to appeal across departments and to cover as much as possible of our recent research on the inequalities of the impact of COVID across the population. The questions from the audience were exceptionally engaged and pertinent. This has been a really important channel for us to put evidence in front of government – Emilia Del Bono, Director of MiSoc.

With special thanks to Ben Etheridge, Birgitta Rabe, Susan Harkness, Sonia Bhalotri, Angus Holford, Amy Clair, Renee Luthra and Magda Borkowska for presenting their research.

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## **UKAEA awards £2.3million of innovation contracts to address technical challenges of fusion energy**

Fifteen organisations have secured UKAEA contracts to demonstrate how their innovative solutions and technologies can contribute to the development of commercial fusion energy.

The contracts – worth between £50,000 and £250,000 – were funded by UKAEA's new 'Fusion Industry Programme' and awarded through the UK Government 'Small Business Research Initiative'. They focus on challenges in digital engineering and hydrogen technology and are relevant across the range of approaches to developing commercial fusion energy.

Organisations awarded contracts to help accelerate fusion power plant design with next-generation digital tools include Assystem, CAE Tech, CRA, First

Light Fusion, Full Matrix, Hybird Ltd, Slingshot Simulations and the University of Manchester.

Aqsorption, CageCapture, Gencoa, IDOM, IS-Instruments, Jacobs and the University of Bristol have all been successful securing funding to reduce fusion power plant fuel requirements by researching advanced production and handling technologies for hydrogen isotopes.

Tim Bestwick, UKAEA's Chief Technology Officer, said: "Fusion energy holds enormous promise as a low-carbon energy source for the world, but it is technically very challenging. This scheme is helping engage a range of organisations and industrial partners to address these important challenges. We are very pleased to have the opportunity to work alongside these organisations, and hope to include many others as the scheme develops".

Lyndsey Mooring, FIP Delivery Manager, said: "By using the established Small Business Research Initiative to seek innovations to these fusion challenges, UKAEA has been able to support a diverse set of organisations. This is important to bring us all closer to commercial fusion energy."

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## [How can creativity and technology be harnessed for good?](#)

**Location:** Dubai, United Arab Emirates

**Delivered on:** 10 November 2021 (Transcript of the speech, exactly as it was delivered)

Good afternoon everybody. I'm delighted to be invited today as the Minister for Sport, Tourism, Heritage and Civil Society, and as a representative from the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to support these important discussions on 'How will we Create?' and open today's panel session on 'How creativity and technology can be harnessed for 'good'?'

I am honoured to be invited by our friends here in the United Arab Emirates, and I wish to start by congratulating them on the fiftieth anniversary of its founding in 1971.

The United Kingdom and the United Arab Emirates are committed to tackling global issues together, in friendship, and in recognition of the opportunity created by the depth of our relationship. Together, we have established a new, and ambitious 'Partnership for the Future' which will strengthen the deep and historic relations that our countries share.

And in the same vein, the United Kingdom and United Arab Emirates are important trading partners. The UK Government is currently laying the

foundation for an advanced trade deal between the United Kingdom and the Gulf Cooperation Council, of which of course the United Arab Emirates is a key member. The GCC and UK already enjoy very strong economic relationships, with £30.3 billion of overall trade in goods and services in 2020. We will build on this history to ensure that the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom are able to work closely together to promote prosperity and security for our citizens, tackle climate change, and expand the exchange of knowledge, skills and ideas.

In this spirit, I am pleased to be here to support this thought-provoking panel session. Before we start, I would like to credit our Official Heritage Partner for the UK Pavilion, The Royal College of Art. The RCA's contribution to the UK Pavilion at Expo 2020 will bring together a wide range of interdisciplinary projects from staff, current students and alumni. It showcases the strength and importance of art, design and innovation – highlighting the significant role creative education plays in ensuring that a global Britain can innovate for a sustainable future. Yesterday, the RCA brilliantly hosted a workshop, and guided students to imagine “A city in a day”.

What do we mean by harnessing creativity and technology for ‘good’? I believe we mean championing “wellbeing”, in the very broad sense, for people and the planet that we live on. I believe we also mean creating economic growth and positive ecological change, which are not and must not be incompatible aims.

Today, as we emerge from a global pandemic, and climate change forces us to rethink and re-evaluate the way we live our lives, humankind's creative and technological talents will be key to demonstrate resilience and innovation, and shape the sustainable society of tomorrow.

I am proud to belong to a Department, and a Government that consistently champions the immense benefits that our cultural and creative industries bring to UK and international audiences. I'm delighted to be joined this week by 27 of the UK's leading creative companies. These companies with us today possess an impressive array of UK creative expertise, and a vast portfolio of successful project experience across a range of disciplines. They are keen to explore how they might help foster more collaboration with decision-makers across the Emirates, and build upon our strong commercial and cultural ties.

Of course 2022 will be a year of celebration for the UK, with a year-round programme of major sporting and cultural events: the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games will form one of three key pillars of landmark events, alongside Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee and the Unboxed programme: showcasing the nation's talent in science, technology, engineering, arts and maths. As international travel reopens, we want to welcome the world to the UK so visitors can experience these exciting events for themselves.

In the UK, the cultural and creative industries are an integral part of our economy, contributing over £115 billion in 2019 and accounting for almost 6% of GDP and nearly 12% of the UK's international exports. And their influence goes way beyond these economic successes, as they contribute to enriching our communities' wellbeing and inspiring future generations of innovators and

artists in the UK and internationally.

And that is why in response to the pandemic, the UK Government introduced an unprecedented set of measures to tackle the crisis facing our most loved cultural and creative organisations, and ensuring these sectors can continue to thrive at home and across the world. We introduced a Culture Recovery Fund totalling nearly £2 billion, along with a further six month extension to the £500 million Film and TV Production Restart Scheme, and extended pan-economy support for both individuals and businesses. The UK's £800 million Live Events Reinsurance Scheme will give the events industry the confidence they need to plan for the future.

As we emerge from the pandemic, our creative sectors will be key to support our resilience, growth and innovation potential. As they create opportunities and boost livelihoods across the country, our film, TV and video games industries are our great British success story, with production and development hubs spread right across the UK. At home and beyond, UK creative industries will play a crucial role in building a wealthier, innovative and highly skilled economy, sharing new content and ideas with international audiences. UK creative technologies, from immersive experiences to music streaming platforms, form part of a new generation of startups and scaleups. Sitting between creativity and technology, these businesses deliver impressive revenues, with the UK's virtual reality industry alone growing at an annual rate of 34% and with an estimated £1.2bn in revenue by 2022.

These businesses will play a key role in driving future economic growth. And this is why the UK Government invests in programmes such as Creative Scale-Up and Creative Careers, which have encouraged growth and talent development across the creative industries right across the country. Together with UK Research and Innovation, we continue to provide support for research and development across the UK through the Creative Clusters programme, and encourage these businesses to drive the ideas of tomorrow.

Our creative sectors have demonstrated their resilience, innovation, and staying power over the last two years. Their adoption of digital technology has enabled worldwide online access to our great national and regional museums, concert halls and artists. More than 10 million people viewed the productions of our National Theatre in the first few months of lockdown, and hearteningly, the National Theatre says its streaming figures equate to its venues being completely filled for 11 years, which is a remarkable figure. Although these can never fully match the live experience, digital alternatives have enabled greater access to cultural productions and entertainment. We will continue to support digital solutions, through programmes such as the UK Research and Innovation's 'Audience of the Future' programme, for the development of innovative content, and pioneering cutting-edge, immersive experiences that are accessible to the general public across the world.

UK creative technologies have the potential to be leading on our response to climate change, through ambitious innovative sustainable practices, and contributing to our Net Zero target for 2050. This impressive site here at Expo 2022 is an example of the wonders innovative design and cutting-edge

technology can bring to life. I want to commend the sustainability-themed pavilion, in particular its landscape design and visitor experience for “Terra”, which was co-led by the Eden project, the UK’s iconic environmental visitor attraction.

The UK is already leading in sustainable fashion of course. From world-leading labels such as Stella McCartney to innovative small to medium organisations, the UK fashion industry is taking significant action on sustainability, which was showcased just last month, through our successful UK Expo 2020 ‘WEAR Breakthrough Moment’. Through the ‘Institute of Positive Fashion programme’ launched by the British Fashion Council, UK businesses are leading the way in driving change to transform the industry to a more circular, sustainable model, which will deliver significant environmental and economic impacts.

Working in partnership, with our friends from the Gulf, is absolutely key to delivering these objectives ahead of us.

I’m looking forward to today’s discussions, which will be a force of collective intelligence, and an opportunity to hear from thought leaders from a vast array of sectors. Including Design: with Priestman Goode, Film and Television: with the British Film Institute, Museums: with the V&A, and Digital arts and technologies: with the Biome collective and Disguise.

So that’s enough from me, over to the panel, thank you very much.

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## **Changes to Annual Compliance Report for Regulated Pub Companies**

News story

The Pubs Code requires all Code Compliance Officers from the regulated pub companies to submit an annual compliance report to the PCA relating to each financial year. This year we have made improvements to the report format and to the data we are collecting. These changes will not only help the PCA to monitor compliance more effectively, but they will provide more meaningful information and insights for the industry.



This new report format applies to the latest annual compliance report covering the period of 01 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

## What has changed?

We have made a number of changes to provide greater clarity and detail about how a pub company has complied with the Code over the financial year. The new format includes a detailed breakdown of any alleged Code breaches by regulation, the number that the pub company accepted had occurred, and the steps it took in relation to these breaches. It also requires the pub company to explain in more detail how it has complied with specific duties across the Code. This includes steps it has taken to improve Code-related arrangements following published PCA information, advice, guidance, and regulatory activity.

This annual compliance report offers a clear benchmark from which the PCA can monitor trends over time, and more easily compare compliance across the regulated pub companies. It further reinforces the Code Compliance Officer's responsibility to verify their pub company's compliance with the Pubs Code and to address any issues proactively.

Head of Regulation Development and Compliance, Agnieszka Scott said:

Pub companies not only need to demonstrate effective compliance to the PCA as regulator, but to their tied tenants and the wider industry too. This new report format provides even greater transparency and accountability.

The PCA and I appreciate the Code Compliance Officers' efforts in completing the new report format, and we are now looking closely at what these reports tell us.

## Where can I read the annual compliance reports?

Each pub company is responsible for verifying the information in its compliance report. As such, information from compliance reports is made publicly available by the pub companies on their websites. Pub companies have now started publishing their annual compliance reports for 01 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.



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