

# G7 nations to boost international research response to future crises

News story

G7 science ministers have committed to strengthening international collaboration on scientific research, as nations work together to build back better from the pandemic.



The meeting of G7 ministers took place today (13 July) to discuss ways to promote the free flow of scientific knowledge across borders and enhance cooperation while protecting international research and innovation from security risks.

Ministers were also joined by Dr Fabiola Giannotti, Director General of CERN, and member of the G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council (GEAC) to discuss widening participation in scientific research through efforts to promote diversity and inclusion.

Today's meeting follows the G7 Compact on Research Collaboration, published following the summit last month alongside the Leaders' Communique, which committed G7 nations to support policies, legal frameworks and programmes which will protect and enhance international scientific research and collaboration.

The agreement means G7 Science Ministries, including the UK's Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS), will work together to address barriers that hinder research cooperation, improving our ability to respond to future crises such as pandemics.

Science Minister Amanda Solloway said:

This pandemic has demonstrated the urgent need for governments to work together to tackle our common challenges. From genomic sequencing to vaccines, our scientists and researchers have achieved far more working across borders than they would have been able to alone.

I'm pleased that today's Ministerial and the G7 Research Compact set the foundations for even more effective collaboration in the years ahead.

Through the publication of the Research Compact, the G7 have committed to:

- promote the efficient and secure processing and sharing of research data across the G7 and beyond
- a pilot study focussed on data sharing in emergencies in order to build resilience against future shocks
- establish a working group to develop common principles on the security and integrity of the research ecosystem

The G7 Research Compact also stresses the commitment of nations to developing a strong, diverse and resilient science and research community. The Compact highlights the importance of deepening participation of underserved, underrepresented and marginalised communities, and increasing momentum on dismantling the barriers to participation in research and innovation. This is further supported by the work of the G7 Gender Equality Advisory Council.

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## **Regulatory Policy Committee statement on The Draft Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2021**

News story

This is the Regulatory Policy Committee statement on The Draft Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2021

The Draft Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2021 were debated in the House of Commons today, 13th July 2021. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has not yet submitted an appropriate impact assessment (IA) to the RPC for us to assess and provide an opinion on. As a qualifying regulatory provision, an IA should have been produced by the Department, submitted to the RPC for independent scrutiny, seen by ministers and presented to Parliament.

We remain open to the DHSC submitting an appropriate IA for RPC scrutiny to allow us to provide an opinion on whether it is fit for purpose or not fit for purpose.

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## [Cellnex and CK Hutchison deal raises competition concerns](#)

Cellnex is an independent supplier of telecommunications infrastructure, currently active across several European countries. CK Hutchison is a multinational conglomerate that currently owns and operates the Three mobile network in the UK.

The proposed deal under review by the CMA, in which Cellnex has agreed to buy Three's UK passive infrastructure assets, is one of a series of transactions, worth £8.6bn (€10bn) in total, involving the sale of CK Hutchison's assets in several European countries. Passive infrastructure assets are structures, such as towers and masts, that mobile network operators, and other wireless communication network providers, attach electronic equipment to in order to operate their networks.

In May 2021, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) announced an investigation into the proposed merger. Following the conclusion of its Phase 1 investigation, the CMA has found that the merger raises competition concerns in relation to the independent supply of passive infrastructure

assets.

Cellnex is already, by some distance, the largest independent supplier of mobile towers in the UK, following its acquisition of the telecommunications division of Arqiva in 2020. The CMA is concerned that its purchase of the large number of assets owned by Three would further strengthen its position in this market.

In its initial analysis, the CMA found evidence to suggest that CK Hutchison, when considering how to monetise its passive infrastructure assets, could have sold these to an alternative buyer rather than existing market leader Cellnex. This would have increased the competition that Cellnex faces at present.

Given the loss of this alternative competition, and the limited competition that Cellnex currently faces from smaller independent tower providers and mobile network operators, the CMA is concerned that this deal could result in higher prices or lower quality services for network operators, with a knock-on adverse impact for users of mobile networks across the UK.

Mike Walker, Chief Economic Adviser at the CMA, said:

It's important that services provided to mobile networks remain competitive so that the millions of businesses and consumers across the UK that use mobile phones can enjoy lower prices.

Cellnex is already the largest independent supplier of mobile towers in the UK. We're concerned that this deal could help to lock in this position and prevent the emergence of new direct competition.

Cellnex and CK Hutchison have 5 working days to offer legally-binding proposals to the CMA to address the competition concerns identified. The CMA would then have a further 5 working days to consider whether to accept any offer instead of referring the case to a Phase 2 investigation.

For more information, visit the [Cellnex / CK Hutchison UK towers merger inquiry page](#).

#### **Notes to editors:**

- Cellnex has agreed to buy Three's UK passive infrastructure assets (and certain interests deriving from these) in the UK.
  - All media enquiries should be directed to the CMA press office by email on [press@cma.gov.uk](mailto:press@cma.gov.uk), or by phone on 020 3738 6460.
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# Call for bids: deliver a climate change event in Slovakia

The British Embassy in Bratislava is seeking a partner to deliver a climate change focused Race to Zero themed event and follow up activity to support Slovak towns, cities and regions to join the UN backed Race to Zero campaign and commit to carbon neutrality.

In November 2021, the UK, together with our partners Italy, will host the [COP26 international climate conference](#). Leaders from around the world will converge on Glasgow to deliver on the Paris Agreement and seek to secure global net zero by 2050. Climate change affects us all and we must all take steps to tackle it. That is why the British Embassy in Bratislava has brought the UN's Race to Zero Campaign to Slovakia. The Race to Zero is the largest ever alliance committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. 733 cities, 31 regions, 3,067 businesses, 173 of the biggest investors, and 622 Higher Education Institutions have already joined globally.

The British Embassy has already hosted Race to Zero themed events for business (together with the British Chamber of Commerce) and for universities. We are looking for a delivery partner to deliver a Race to Zero themed event for towns, cities and regions in Slovakia.

## **Objectives**

Our objective is to support as many towns, cities and regions in Slovakia to join the Race to Zero and commit to achieve climate neutrality as possible. The minimum goal is to secure 15 commitments from Slovak towns, cities and regions to join the Race to Zero.

We are seeking a partner to deliver this goal by organising a COVID secure, engaging and informative event that will:

- inspire municipalities to take action
- educate municipalities on the campaign and how they can join
- advise municipalities on how to create and implement a strategy for a municipality to become carbon neutral
- introduce possible financing opportunities through the Recovery Plan or other sources
- have a sustained impact after the event to secure as many commitments as possible

Read further information on the [Race to Zero campaign](#).

## **Outputs**

The successful bidder will be expected to provide end-to-end delivery of a conference of up to one day and secure at least 15 commitments to join the Race to Zero from across Slovakia's towns, cities and regions.

We would expect this to include at least:

- designing the event and programme including identifying topics, speakers and moderators for the discussions
- identifying, recruiting and liaising with participants from across Slovakia, including developing a communications plan
- delivering the event in a Covid-19 secure manner (implementers should outline how they would achieve this (e.g. online/ hybrid/ in person))
- production of a report following the event to summarise the outcome of the discussions and recommended next steps
- design and implement plans to sustain the impact of the event to secure as many commitments to join the Race to Zero as possible

The Embassy will agree in advance with the successful implementer how we will work together to deliver the outcome, including through a pre-arranged schedule of progress updates.

## **Timing**

Our preference would be for an event in October 2021. All activity must be completed by 14 March 2021.

## **Funding available**

We invite bids of up to €20,000.

## **How to apply**

An Embassy programme board panel will assess the bids by 9 August 2021.

The outcome of the programme board will be communicated to all bidders by 13 August 2021.

## **Key criteria against which bids will be assessed**

- we can only grant this funding to non-profit organisations
- feasibility of proposals setting out how this activity would be delivered
- value for money
- alignment with Embassy objectives
- how impact will be sustained after the event
- consideration of how to ensure any event is sufficiently engaging
- consideration of gender balance of speakers and participants. All panels must be mixed-gender
- consideration of environmental impact of the proposal
- consideration of risks to delivery

## **[Call For Bids Information](#)**

PDF, 159KB, 3 pages

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## [Rail Minister launches forum to help rough sleepers](#)

- rough sleeping on rail forum launched to help end homelessness and support those most in need
- Rail Minister visits Birmingham New Street station to see how the industry and Shelter have supported 168 people since last spring through outreach programme
- forum builds on the existing rough sleeping on rail charter to bring together the rail industry to help end rough sleeping by the end of this Parliament

The Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris has today (13 July 2021) launched a new forum designed to coordinate the industry in helping those who are sleeping rough at stations across the country.

The forum, which has been introduced to meet the government's objective of ending rough sleeping by 2024, will unite the industry for the first time in ensuring a measured approach is taken when supporting those most in need.

A groundbreaking pilot scheme is being run by Shelter on behalf of Network Rail to support those in need. As part of the pilot, Shelter has trained a number of Network Rail staff to connect with the people they encounter sleeping rough and refer them to Shelter's expert services.

The 2 station pilots in Birmingham and Manchester have already helped 168 people since their launch last spring and are part of Network Rail's ongoing [routes out of homelessness programme](#). Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris was shown around the scheme today, as he visited Birmingham New Street station.

In summer 2020, the [rough sleeping on rail charter](#) was established by Network Rail and the Secretary of State for Transport was one of the first signatories. The charter sets out principles aimed at preventing and reducing rough sleeping and safeguarding those most vulnerable. The principles include:

- recognising and addressing risks of homelessness on the network and reduce, but not displace, individuals

- protecting the most vulnerable people in the community on or near the British railways with a safeguarding approach
- to work together as an industry with the wider transport sector to talk openly about homelessness

Chris Heaton-Harris Rail Minister said:

We are determined to help those people sleeping rough at stations across the country, which is why last year we produced the rough sleeping on rail charter.

The wonderful pilot scheme operated by Shelter on behalf of Network Rail is making a real difference and I am pleased to see that we have helped over 150 people in the last year alone.

Now our rough sleeping on rail forum will align and unite industry efforts, allowing for more outreach programmes, like I have seen today, to be developed and support those in need.

The rough sleeping on rail forum will convene quarterly to bring together the rail industry, enforcement, charities and local authorities on the issue of rough sleeping, with the first meeting today, 13 July 2021.

Martin Frobisher OBE, Network Rail's group safety and engineering director, said:

Our routes out of homelessness campaign is making a real difference all over the country, offering some of the most vulnerable people in our society hope for a better future.

The expertise of charity partners like Shelter has been vital in making this a success. Bringing together these charity partners with the rail industry through the rough sleeping on rail forum will be hugely beneficial in making sure we are giving the right support to those who need it.