

# Joint statement following the meeting of the Financial Provisions Specialised Committee – 26 April 2021

News story

Joint statement between the UK Government and European Commission following the meeting of the Financial Provisions Specialised Committee on 26 April.



The third meeting of the Specialised Committee on Financial Provisions (SCFP) was held yesterday via video conference, co-chaired by officials from the European Commission and UK Government. 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 EU and the UK exchanged updates on the implementation of Part V of the Withdrawal Agreement, relating to financial provisions, following the end of the transition period. They noted positive engagement on the second formal reporting package under the Withdrawal Agreement which was provided by the European Commission at the end of March, and on the communication on 16 April of the first document specifying the relevant amounts to be paid in 2021 in relation to the settlement of the UK's net liabilities under the Withdrawal Agreement. This initial payment will be made in four monthly instalments, from 30 June 2021. The European Commission will submit the payment communications to the UK twice annually, in April and September, until outstanding net liabilities are extinguished.

The EU and UK sides reaffirmed their commitment to complying 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.

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# UK training on RWMIK for Lebanese Army

World news story

A UK team of specialist soldiers part of the UK's 16 Air Assault Brigade; have trained 48 officers and soldiers from four Land Border Regiments.



Lebanese army training on RWMIK vehicles

As part of the UK package of support following the donation of 100 RWMIK Land Rover vehicles in January, a team of specialist UK soldiers has completed the first 4-week package of training and mentoring for officers and soldiers from all four Land Border Regiments.

During a visit to the Bekaa earlier this month, the Head of the British Embassy, Dr. Martin Longden, and the UK Defence Senior Advisor to the Middle East and North Africa (DSAME) Air Marshal Martin Sampson, saw first-hand the training of Lebanese troops at a border post near Baalbek, operated by the Fourth Land Border Regiment.

Over the past four weeks, a UK team of specialist soldiers from the Pathfinders, part of the UK's 16 Air Assault Brigade; have trained 48 officers and soldiers from across the Lebanese army's four Land Border Regiments. The training aims to provide skills to operate the RWMIK vehicles in the rugged terrain of the Lebanese-Syrian border, and enable them to project effectively into the more remote areas of the frontier and to interdict terrorist threats and illegal cross-border activity.

This is the first of a planned series of these training packages, demonstrating the UK's enduring commitment to support the Lebanese army in securing its land border.

Head of the British Embassy Dr. Martin Longden said:

I was delighted, and proud, to see first-hand the progress being

made on this important agenda. The cooperation and partnership between the UK's Armed Forces and the LAF, in support of the State's capacity to control the country's borders, is a critical part of Lebanon's security, sovereignty and prosperity. We will continue to do all we can to support this.

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## [UK Carrier Strike Group will sail to Japan on its maiden deployment](#)

The CSG21 deployment will take place over 28 weeks, from May to December 2021, and will see the Strike Group travel over 26,000 nautical miles of ocean including passage through the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. As well as Japan, CSG21 will visit three other key partners: Singapore, the Republic of Korea and India.

In an era of systemic competition and changing threats, CSG21 will bolster the UK's ability to deliver its defence, foreign policy and trade objectives alongside key allies. Its deployment to the Indo-Pacific will enhance the enduring defence relationships it holds there as the UK looks to pursue deeper engagement in the region in support of shared prosperity and regional stability, with stronger diplomatic and trading ties.

The UK recognises the importance of the region globally, supports the freedom of passage through vital trading routes and is committed to a recognised international system of norms and behaviours that benefit all countries.

The CSG21 visit to Japan and bilateral and multilateral military exercises also represent the UK's increased cooperation with Japan and a deepening of the two countries' relationship.

Secretary of State for Defence, Ben Wallace MP said:

The Carrier Strike Group's engagement with Japan will enhance the already deep defence partnership between our two countries.

The deployment is a symbol of 'Global Britain' in action and demonstrates our commitment to Japan, the Indo-Pacific region, and confronting threats to international order".

The Strike Group will also comprise Type 45 destroyers HMS DEFENDER and HMS DIAMOND, Type 23 anti-submarine frigates HMS KENT and HMS RICHMOND, and tanker and storage ships FORT VICTORIA and RFA TIDESPING.

On the flight deck there will be eighteen F-35B Lightning II fast jets (eight from the UK Lightning Force and ten from US Marine Corps), four Wildcat maritime attack helicopters, seven Merlin Mk2 anti-submarine and airborne early warning helicopters, and three Merlin Mk4 commando helicopters.

CSG21 will be joined by vessels from the United States and a frigate from the Netherlands. As well as exercises involving Japan's Self Defence Forces during its deployment, CSG21 will operate with air and maritime forces from a wide number of international partners including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, France, UAE, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Turkey, Israel, India, Oman, and the Republic of Korea.

British Ambassador to Japan, Julia Longbottom said:

The visit of CSG21 to Japan will be significant moment for both nations and shows just how important the relationship with Japan is to the UK.

The Government made clear in its [Integrated Review](#) that Japan is one of our closest strategic partners, including on security. We are committed to deepening this partnership, and to working even more closely through new trade agreements, deeper partnership in science, technology and data, and on tackling global challenges like climate change. The visit will also be an opportunity to advance our partnership in these areas.

The UK will continue to work in closely with Japan to ensure all engagements will be delivered safely and all entry requirements are adhered to. Personal safety is paramount both for those immediately involved in the CSG21 operations and wider populations.

In preparing for the deployment several protective measures are planned including social distancing as much as possible, 'bubbling' and isolating, enhanced sanitisation, personal protective equipment and testing. All personnel deploying on CSG21 will have been offered vaccination against COVID-19.

For press enquiries: [Ministry of Defence](#)

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# £1.8 billion to keep schools in top condition

Every school in England will be able to access a share of almost £1.8 billion this year to help keep their buildings in the best possible condition.

The annual allocations provided to maintain school buildings will increase by over 20% to £1.8 billion this financial year, helping deliver the government's commitment to build back better from the pandemic.

This comes on top of the one-off funding injection of £560 million announced by the Prime Minister last year, making sure the condition of school buildings doesn't hold any child back from achieving their potential.

The first wave of the School Rebuilding Programme announced last year is also on track, with site inspections and detailed planning work with the 50 schools involved meaning the first rebuild projects will start from this autumn.

Schools Minister Baroness Berridge said:

I know teachers and heads are spending every hour of the working day thinking about how they can make sure the students at their schools recover from the impact of the pandemic, and making sure all children and staff remain safe following the welcome return to face to face teaching.

Alongside our ambitious rebuilding programme for the schools in the worst condition, this government is making sure every school has the investment and financial support it needs to build back better for its students.

Local authorities, larger multi-academy trusts and Voluntary Aided school bodies, such as dioceses, have been allocated condition funding in accordance with the latest data on their estates.

Smaller academy trusts and sixth form colleges schools have been able to submit bids to the department for funding through the Condition Improvement Fund process, so those that have essential maintenance needs do not lose out. In addition, all schools have been allocated individual funding in accordance with their size.

Further details about the School Rebuilding Programme will be set out later in 2021. Projects will range from replacing or refurbishing individual buildings through to whole school rebuilds.

The department also plans to consult this year to gather views on how schools are prioritised for future rounds of the long-term programme, including how

evidence about schools' condition need may be provided to support prioritisation.

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## [UK Foreign Secretary travels to Geneva for key Cyprus talks](#)

Press release

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab will be attending talks hosted by the UN in Geneva this week on the Cyprus problem.



Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, will be attending talks hosted by the UN in Geneva on Tuesday 27 April, aimed at restarting formal negotiations for a solution to the Cyprus problem.

The '5+UN' talks, which will be attended by the leaders of the Greek Cypriots, the Turkish Cypriots and the Foreign Ministers of the three guarantor powers (UK, Greece and Turkey), offer a key opportunity for parties to move the process forward.

In this 5+UN meeting, the Foreign Secretary will reaffirm the UK's support of a comprehensive, just and lasting resolution of the Cyprus problem.

He will underline the potential of a reunited Cyprus, which includes greater opportunities on trade, investment and tourism, as well as bolstering security and stability in the region.

**On the eve of the meetings, Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab said:**

Tomorrow's talks offer an opportunity to restart negotiations aimed at delivering a fair and lasting solution to the Cyprus issue, and

we hope that all parties approach them with creativity and flexibility.

The UK is a strong supporter of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Cyprus issue which remains key to resolving wider tensions in the region.

The 5+UN meeting hosted by UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, will conclude on 29 April.

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