

# Protocol on Gibraltar – unilateral statement by the UK

Press release

UK statement following the second meeting of the UK-EU Specialised Committee via videoconference.



The second meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Specialised Committee on implementation of the Protocol on Gibraltar was held today, co-chaired by officials from the UK Government and European Commission.

The Government of Gibraltar was represented by the Attorney General of Gibraltar.

The Committee was established by the Withdrawal Agreement to facilitate the application and implementation of the Protocol on Gibraltar.

The UK and EU exchanged updates on progress against the key elements of the Protocol: Citizens' Rights, Environmental Matters, Police and Customs cooperation and Fiscal Matters.

Significant progress has been made throughout the year towards fulfilling the commitments outlined in the Protocol and the MOUs. Cooperation between UK Government / HM Government of Gibraltar and Spain has been fostered by regular meetings of the MOU coordinating committees. Common goals have been established, notably on citizens' rights where considerable progress has been made towards fulfilling the provisions outlined in the Protocol.

The UK is committed to ensuring the implementation of the Protocol to provide continued security and prosperity to Gibraltar and the region.

Today's discussions in no way affect UK sovereignty over Gibraltar, which remains unchanged.

Published 18 November 2020

---

# [Dstl demonstrates satellite operation capability](#)

News story

Dstl is leading defence research and development in space.



In early November the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) welcomed broadcaster Forces News for an exclusive demonstration of its Hermes relocatable ground station and mission operations centre. Hermes represents the [first time in nearly 20 years](#) a UK government-owned and operated asset communicated with a satellite.

As the satellite passes over the ground station, the antenna locks on and the satellite transmits the data it collected during its journey around the Earth.

Hermes represents a significant investment in space R&D and increases the UK government's space-related capabilities. Space technologies underpin our combat capabilities and can give the UK operational advantage over potential adversaries, for example with satellite imagery being used by frontline command.

The development and demonstration of Hermes occurred in collaboration with Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd, who provided control of a low-Earth orbit satellite, Carbonite-2, to Dstl for tasking validation and verification purposes.

Published 18 November 2020

---

# UK Government sends rallying cry to Welsh business

Press release

The UK Government in Wales hosted a live virtual event on Thursday 12 November to help Welsh businesses prepare for the end of the Transition Period



Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart has met more than 130 Welsh businesses to urge them to prepare for the end of the EU Transition period and to highlight the help available to them.

With less than 50 days to go until the end of the Transition Period, the UK Government in Wales is carrying out a series of events to communicate directly with Welsh businesses and representative groups on key Transition issues.

Forming part of the UK-wide Check, Change, Go campaign, the Welsh Secretary hosted a live virtual event on Thursday (12 November) and highlighted the need for preparedness by 31 December for any business which trades with the EU. He also pointed to UK Government support to help firms prepare.

The Welsh Secretary was joined by Liz Maher from South Wales Chambers of Commerce who chaired the discussion and an HMRC expert Claire Wilson who provided an overview of customs processes for importing/exporting from 1 January 2021, taking questions from the audience.

## **Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart said:**

In less than seven weeks' time it's vital that Welsh business must be ready to move people, data, goods and services between the UK and the EU as smoothly as possible.

While negotiation with the EU are ongoing, it is a fact that the way companies do business with the EU will change so everyone needs to prepare if they have not done so already.

Sectors across Wales will feel the benefits of our new relationship with the EU but they have to act now to make critical changes in time and the UK Government with expert guidance stands ready to support them.

## **Jo Price, Director Director of International, South and Wales Chambers of Commerce:**

The virtual discussion was a well timed event to outline the issues Welsh Businesses will face from 1st January 2021 and it is something we urge all SME's to take an active part in preparing for. HMRC are very clear about a number of changes that businesses need make to ensure they continue to trade with the EU once the transition period ends. The message is "act now" and the Chambers of Commerce are fully geared up to help with the practicalities.

The UK is leaving the EU single market and customs union, and the end of the transition period will affect citizens, businesses, as well as travel to and from the EU

Businesses will need to take action now if they are:

Published 18 November 2020

---

## **[Dame Glenys Stacey: speech to AOC's FE Summit, 18 November 2020](#)**

Good morning and thank you for inviting me to join you today. Thank you for inviting me to speak today, I do appreciate it.

And thank you as well for all the exceptional work you are doing, to mitigate for your students the truly baleful and ongoing impact of the pandemic on education. I appreciate and applaud everyone's efforts here and your resolve to best educate your students and protect their futures. It is outstanding in so many respects, but it is also what I have long known and respected, in the FE sector. A heartfelt thank you from me

Much of the talk in recent months has been of GCSEs and A levels but today I'd like to focus on vocational and technical qualifications. These are particularly important to many of your students, and they are increasing in prominence generally with the government's Post-16 qualification review and the anticipated FE White Paper.

But first, I do want to make clear that we at Ofqual are sorry for what happened this summer: the distress and anxiety it caused for many students and their parents; the problem it created for teachers; and the impact it had on higher and further education providers. For our part, we are truly sorry for that.

The government has since renewed its commitment to examinations. I welcome that: we know this is generally the best way of testing knowledge and understanding, and the feedback we are getting from recent focus groups at Ofqual shows that parents and students, they are welcoming it too. In this year, because of the pandemic, there are new challenges, in assessing the right things in the right ways, so that even under exceptional assessment and examination arrangements, we still want to get sufficiently valid and reliable results for your students.

Now, awarding organisations with high levels of subject knowledge and expertise have the ability to consider how the right things should be assessed, and how to adapt assessment in this exceptional year. But they must also have a deep understanding of how centres and your colleges operate and their student cohort, as well as the needs of future employers or higher education providers.

So, from my perspective, knowing the challenges on the ground, understanding the impact of change and appreciating how these qualifications are used is critical to developing appropriate assessment – not just this year, but for the longer-term future actually, as well as for this year.

With these things in mind, we are regulating awarding organisations in novel ways, in these extraordinary times. We have got something called the Extraordinary Regulatory Framework – bit of a mouthful, but it allows awarding organisations to use their judgement to adapt assessments and qualifications where necessary and appropriate.

Just thinking that through, particular skills and levels of practical competence are important for a student to be able to demonstrate their mastery and move into employment. Missed learning in key areas can make the difference between a student understanding safe and unsafe practices in some subject areas – and that is another key issue for us. Any changes proposed by awarding bodies do need to protect these key attributes of particular qualifications

And as AoC are telling us on your behalf, there have been difficulties in students accessing mandatory work placements as a result of the pandemic, so we have that to look at as well.

For those students intending to progress to higher education, often taking VTQs alongside A levels, there are other challenges. We know how important it is that there is coherence with GCSEs, AS and A levels. And so awarding organisations must try, as far as possible, to ensure that adaptations made to assessments do not advantage or disadvantage students against those taking GCSEs, AS and A levels. There needs to be a level playing field there.

Taking into account public health advice such as social distancing constraints, awarding organisations are putting in place a wide range of adaptations for vocational and technical qualifications to free up time for teaching and learning; and make these assessments as manageable and flexible as possible. And we've been encouraging professional bodies and employers to work closely with their awarding organisations so that students are not unreasonably penalised for loss of learning during this difficult time

So some examples then, assessment tasks or briefs may be available earlier or assessment windows extended. Assessments may be streamlined to free up for time for teaching and learning – without reducing the content that is taught. And, of course, there is the introduction of remote assessment and remote invigilation – allowing assessments to take place in different settings.

Now there are risks involved with these adaptations. We are monitoring how awarding organisations make use of these new freedoms, with a keen eye on validity, but also an awareness of the practicalities of assessment for many of these qualifications. For example we hear from you that the January RQF exams are likely to be logistically challenging – we're actively looking at what we can do and we do recognise the need for early certainty.

And we are working closely with the awarding organisations and sector bodies, including AoC, to set in place consistent approaches wherever possible and appropriate. This is not only in relation to qualifications with much in common, such as functional skills qualifications, but also in relation to how and when awarding organisations communicate with you to help you receive the information you keenly need.

So just to finish off, and to look further ahead, we welcome the upcoming White Paper, of course, and government's ambitions for a high quality, coherent qualification market which offers the right level of choice for all types of learners at all levels. We want to see the detail of that. In the meantime, we are strengthening our capacity and redoubling our efforts in anticipation – so for example, we are gathering and publishing more data than ever before about VTQs, and I will mention here our VTQ landscape explorer analytics tool, it's a nice useful piece of kit that we're updating on our website this week.

To finish, as you balance the necessary changes and adaptations during this pandemic with caring for your students', and your own health and wellbeing, we, together with AoC, the awarding organisations, DfE and many other stakeholders across the whole sector, are working hard to safeguard sufficient validity in assessments but also keeping at heart the student perspective. Above all, we want students to have the reassurance and confidence that they have been treated fairly, and future employers to have confidence in the skills of their new employees.

---

# Government takes historic step towards net-zero with end of sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030

- plans to accelerate a greener transport future through 2-step phase-out of petrol and diesel cars
- news comes as over £1.8 billion invested in infrastructure and grants to increase access to zero-emission vehicles and promote a green economic recovery
- new phase-out date central to UK economic growth and levelling-up agenda, as government commits nearly £500 million funding to support 169,000 jobs, help industry transition towards zero emission vehicles and maintain UK's leading position in global automotive market

The UK has taken another historic step on the road to ending its contribution to climate change while boosting jobs in the process, as the Prime Minister, Transport Secretary and Business Secretary announced the end of the sale of new petrol and diesel cars in the UK by 2030. This will put the UK on course to be the fastest G7 country to decarbonise cars and vans.

Following [consultation with stakeholders, industry and the wider public](#), a 2-phased approach to the process was announced today (Wednesday 18 November 2020).

Step 1 will see the phase-out date for the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans brought forward to 2030.

Step 2 will see all new cars and vans be fully zero emission at the tailpipe from 2035.

Between 2030 and 2035, new cars and vans can be sold if they have the capability to drive a significant distance with zero emissions (for example, plug-in hybrids or full hybrids), and this will be defined through consultation.

The move is underpinned by over £1.8 billion to support greater uptake of zero emission vehicles for greener car journeys. New measures announced today include [more chargepoints to build on our world-class infrastructure network, alongside innovation for new clean technologies](#). This investment will improve air quality in our towns and cities, and support economic growth right across the UK, putting us at the forefront of the zero-emission vehicle revolution with vehicles built right here in the UK.

Part of today's announcement is £1.3 billion to accelerate the roll-out of chargepoints for electric vehicles in homes, streets across the UK and on motorways across England, so people can more easily and conveniently charge their cars. Charging vehicles will become second nature and a part of everyday life, just like charging your mobile phone is today.

To meet future demand, the government is providing grants for homeowners, businesses and local authorities to install chargepoints, and is also supporting the deployment of rapid chargepoints. This has already supported the installation of over 140,000 residential chargepoints and 9,000 chargepoints for staff parking at businesses. Government has also already supported the development of a network of over 19,000 public chargepoints, including over 3,500 rapid devices, in partnership with local authorities and private sector investment, making it one of the largest networks in Europe.

Today, a driver is never more than 25 miles away from a rapid chargepoint anywhere along England's motorways and major A roads.

The government today has also pledged £582 million in grants for those buying zero or ultra-low emission vehicles to make them cheaper to buy and incentivise more people to make the transition.

Alongside the further funding, after laying legislation this week, [green number plates](#) are set to be introduced from December 2020 to increase awareness of cleaner vehicles on our roads and help local authorities bring in local incentives. For example, drivers could benefit from local initiatives such as cheaper parking and cost-free entry into zero-emission zones.

To ensure the phase-out dates are met and to support interim carbon budgets, the Department for Transport will publish a green paper in the coming months on the post-EU regulatory regime for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from new road vehicles. This will consider both overall fleet efficiency and how to best deliver the transition to 100% zero emission sales for cars and vans. A consultation on the phase-out of new diesel heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) to put the UK in the vanguard of zero emission freight will also be launched.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

The UK is going further and faster than any other major economy to decarbonise transport, harnessing the power of clean, green technology to end the UK's contribution to climate change by 2050.

Bringing forward the phase-out date could create 40,000 extra jobs by 2030, particularly in our manufacturing heartlands of the North East and across the Midlands, and will see emissions reductions equivalent to taking more than 4 million cars off the road.

We are also leading the charge when it comes to the transition to zero emission vehicles and today's timely boost in funding builds on our world-leading £2.5 billion package to encourage drivers to make the switch.

The government is also stepping up its commitment to help the sector transition towards zero emission vehicles by boosting the development of clean, green technologies for zero emission vehicles on UK soil – from battery packs to recycling infrastructure and super-lightweight components.



As part of this, the government is committing £500 million of funding over the next 4 years through the [Automotive Transformation Fund](#) to put the UK at the forefront of the design and manufacturing of the next generation of zero emission vehicles.

The investment will help build a rich, diverse and sustainable supply chain that will form a vital part of the future industry, ensure the enormous strength the UK has in innovation can progress, and help maintain our position in a globally competitive market. It will also support around 169,000 jobs in the industry, including in our strong manufacturing bases across the Midlands and the North East.

Business Secretary and COP26 President Alok Sharma said:

Today's £500 million pledge will help our automotive industry transition towards electric vehicle production, open up new opportunities to build zero-carbon vehicles right here in the UK, while strengthening regional supply chains with new Gigafactories – creating thousands of new highly skilled jobs.

I hope other nations will follow suit as the UK makes another ambitious commitment to protect our planet and reach our all-important target to end our contribution to climate change by 2050.

For the first time, ministers from the world's largest car markets will come together on 27 November 2020 to form a new Zero Emission Vehicle Transition Council. Hosted by the Business Secretary, this will help to accelerate the pace of the global transition – with further meetings council meetings to take place in 2021, including at COP26.

As host of COP26, the UK is leading the way to double the pace of the global transition to a greener future, working with international partners, governments, industry, businesses and civil society to make the transition to zero emission vehicles easier, cheaper and faster for all.

For a greener maritime sector, the government is investing £20 million in a new clean maritime demonstration competition, which will support the UK design and development of clean maritime technology. This 1-year 'springboard programme' will lay the foundation for a network of real world projects to kick-start government investment in decarbonising the maritime sector ahead of COP26.

The government is also announcing the first stage of a new £15 million sustainable aviation fuel competition, which will support the early development of new industrial plants in the UK, and £3 million for a sustainable aviation fuel clearing house. £3 million will also be invested in research and development for the infrastructure needed to support the introduction of new electric and hydrogen planes.

There is also a further £1 million of funding being announced to extend e-bike hire schemes, which will allow those who are retired, studying, self-

employed or looking for work to access the physical and health benefits of e-bikes.