

British Embassy Warsaw signs the Diversity Charter in Poland

World news story

By signing the Diversity Charter, the British Embassy Warsaw undertakes to implement diversity and inclusion policies.



On 30 October, British Embassy Warsaw joined the list of signatories of the Polish Diversity Charter (Karta Różnorodności) which is coordinated by the Responsible Business Forum. The Diversity Charter is a written commitment signed by organisations that commit to maintaining inclusion and diversity and equal treatment policies, as well as the active prevention of discrimination and, bullying and harassment in the workplace.

By signing the Diversity Charter, the British Embassy Warsaw undertakes to implement diversity and inclusion policies, and to promote and disseminate them among all of its stakeholders. This includes:

- Creating a corporate culture that ensures respect for diversity
- Introducing institutional solutions to promote development of equal treatment at work
- Appointing a team to coordinate efforts to combat discrimination at work
- Developing diversity policies , with special emphasis on recruitment, training, promotion and remuneration, and work-life balance – all in dialogue with Embassy staff
- Introducing mechanisms to monitor and counter discrimination

Ambassador Anna Clunes said:

The UK is committed to being a force for good in the world, through a foreign policy which consciously and consistently delivers for everyone in society. To be the best it can possibly be, the British Embassy Warsaw needs the skills of a truly diverse workforce. We must make the most of our talent and ensure every member of staff achieves their full potential. That is why we are committed to

embedding diversity and inclusion into every part of our work. Signing the Diversity Charter is a reminder of the commitment we make to our employees.

Read the [full text of the Diversity Charter](#).

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[The situation in and around Nagorno-Karabakh: UK statement](#)



Thank you Mr Chair.

The United Kingdom welcomed the most recent humanitarian ceasefire and we are once again deeply disappointed to see that it is not being respected.

We strongly condemn the continued shelling of civilian areas. Continued reports of civilian casualties are a stark reminder of the impact that this conflict is having on innocent civilians. Our position is clear; targeting of civilian settlements is deplorable. We offer our condolences to those who have lost loved ones. Our thoughts are with those who have been displaced and

whose lives are being affected.

We call on both parties to respect the ceasefire and return swiftly to the negotiating table; recognising the fact that the continuing violence is having a significant impact on civilians.

We urge the parties to allow the ICRC immediate access as they seek to facilitate return of prisoners of war and repatriate the remains of the deceased.

The international community continues to make clear that there can be no military solution to the situation in and around Nagorno-Karabakh. We urge both parties to return to substantive negotiations under the auspices of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs. The Minsk Group is the primary format through which a settlement must be reached.

Once again I would like to reiterate the UK's support for the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs in their role in mediating negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Thank you.

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Breadth of UK food, drink and innovation set to shine at the 2020 China International Import Expo

- Over 100 brands will be featured at UK's 300sqm Food is GREAT pavilion, showcasing regions across the UK from 5 to 10 November 2020.
- A cutting-edge digital offer will see offline and online activity integrate to provide both a physical and interactive experience for Chinese and international audiences, building on £100 billion of UK-China bilateral trade in 2019.

Through a series of online and offline experiences, Chinese and international audiences will experience some of the finest examples of UK goods, notably in the food, drink and innovation fields. There will be special exhibitions from various areas of the UK, including the Midlands and the North of England:

- Midlands: The region will showcase expertise across food supply chains, from advanced crop raw materials to precise agricultural production. Attendees will be able to sample products from nine food and drink companies from the Midlands, including Chase Distillery gins and vodkas, Weetabix cereals, Thorntons Chocolate and Walkers-Nonsuch shortbread, who are well established in China.
- North of England: The region has one of the highest concentrations of food manufacturing and processing businesses in the UK. This year, the Northern Powerhouse will bring 27 food and drink companies to showcase their products, including Seven Brothers beer, Spirit of Harrogate gins and vodkas, and Pimlico Confectioners sweets. As well as traditional specialisms like bakery, brewing, meat and dairy products, the Northern Powerhouse is at the forefront of innovations and new trends, such as gluten-free and other 'free from' products.

The UK pavilion will also showcase goods from Scotland and Northern Ireland as part of an HMG partnership with Scottish Development International and Invest Northern Ireland, respectively:

- Scotland: 18 Scottish companies will exhibit products ranging from whisky to beer, ice-cream and shortbread. Additionally, robotics company Peacock Technology will introduce its new "Ai5" dairy farming robot, which helps achieve the highest quality milk production by automatically inspecting and disinfecting cows at milking time, giving protection against mastitis – one of the greatest animal health challenges in dairy farming.
- Northern Ireland: Companies such as McCann Apples, Suki Tea, Pure Roast Coffee and Tayto crisps will showcase their products, which range from ciders to whiskey to apple juice.

At the pavilion, there will be a chance to explore how the UK and China can develop their trade relationship, through expert lectures, business seminars, product demonstrations and business-matching activities.

The 100 brands showcasing their products at the UK pavilion are featured on a new, cutting-edge digital platform – www.ukbusinessinchina.com – showcasing more than 300 British companies in total. The digital platform houses a business-matching function, enabling Chinese buyers and UK companies to connect virtually. Chinese business will be able to directly interact with UK companies both offline and online.

Products featured at the UK pavilion can be purchased directly via the brand new Royal Mail cross-border e-commerce platform – www.thebritishchoice.com. The platform will host over 100 UK companies, many of whose products have never been on sale in China before.

Other companies that will be exhibiting include:

- Diageo – with leading brands Tanqueray, Johnnie Walker and Pimm’s, who will share their respective company’s history and showcase a range of products.
- Mintel, a world-leading market intelligence company, will present their 2030 Global Food and Drink Trends. The future-looking trends are designed to help companies prepare for, participate in, and prosper from the evolution in consumer behaviours and attitudes over the next decade.

On 7 November, Her Majesty’s Trade Commission for China and Hong Kong, John Edwards, will host a Net Zero Business Reception at the UK pavilion. The reception will bring together UK and Chinese business leaders to discuss their low carbon ambitions and share best practice from leading companies. It will also build connections with key Chinese business leaders that can be harnessed to drive forward ambitions in the build up to next year’s COP26 Summit.

Industry leader Diageo is the UK’s Strategic Partner at the CIIE. Other Partners present at the UK pavilion include: Baijiu Society, Slimfast, Kendal Nutricare, Ahmad Tea, Wild Bean Café under BP, Mintel and Vitabiotics, as well as Scottish Development International, Invest Northern Ireland, Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine.

The UK pavilion pays tribute to the iconic Crystal Palace originally in Hyde Park, home of the Great Exhibition of 1851, which showcased innovation and technology from the Industrial Revolution.

Graham Stuart MP, Minister for Exports, said:

The China International Import Expo provides a unique opportunity to strengthen and deepen the UK’s commercial ties with China. Last year, for the first time, trade between our countries surpassed £100 billion.

The UK and China share a global outlook and, as we forge new relationships with countries across the world after leaving the EU, we want to increase our business with one of the world’s fastest growing economies.

Boost for families wishing to build their own home

- Law to be reviewed to make it easier for people dreaming of building their own homes
- Councils urged to ensure planning permission is granted for suitable plots
- Measures follow reforms to place local people at the heart of planning process

A review to make it easier for people to build their own home has been announced by Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick today (30 October 2020).

Building or designing your own home plays an important part in helping people get a foot on the housing ladder. Currently there are around 15,000 of these types of homes built every year – an increase of 50% in 2 years. But there is still more to be done to support the self and custom build industry, last estimated be worth almost £4.5 billion to the UK economy.

Councils are currently required to keep a register of those who wish to build in their local area. And by 30 October each year – ‘Right to Build’ day – councils should have granted planning permission to enough suitable plots to match the demand on their register.

The review announced today will examine how effectively these arrangements support self and custom building, including whether they increase land available to support these homes.

To increase transparency, help understand how councils are meeting the needs of their communities and also support developers understand the demand, Mr Jenrick has also announced that the data councils collect on self and custom build in their area will now be published annually.

And the Housing Secretary has written to councils to ensure they consider the demand for these homes when providing land for building and making planning decisions in their area.

Housing Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

We are backing people who want to design and build their own home and today I have launched a review to ensure councils provide enough land and take proper consideration for these homes when making planning decisions in their area.

This will help more people get a foot on the housing ladder and support our building industry as we deliver the homes that this country needs.

Andrew Baddeley-Chappell, CEO of the National Custom & Self Build Association (NaCSBA) said:

England has the lowest known rate of self-commissioned homes in the developed world. Our new homes market is crying out for the greener and higher quality build that goes hand-in-hand with more consumer choice. Housing diversification is key to the government's housing strategy.

This excellent announcement today by the government should help many more people achieve the dream of living in better and more beautiful homes.

Richard Bacon MP, Ambassador for the Right to Build Task Force said:

For many years I have campaigned to increase real choices for the large number of people who want to build their own home or commission a home to their own design from a local SME builder. This led to my private member's bill becoming the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act, which the government has subsequently strengthened.

I warmly welcome the government's review of the current law. Some local councils are already doing an excellent job in providing more opportunities but some others are not yet supporting the spirit of the legislation and have some way to go if they are to grasp the huge opportunities for more and better housing which greater customer choice offers. We need to make sure every council is able to deliver on this important agenda which will help provide more high quality homes.

This follows the recent [Planning for the future white paper](#) published in August, setting out ambitious reforms to modernise the planning system, bringing a new focus on high-quality design and sustainability. The white paper includes proposals to explore how publicly-owned land disposal can support SMEs and the self-build sector.

Ministers from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will also hold a roundtable with the self and custom build sector as well as councils as part of the review.

The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016), sometimes known as 'the Right to Build', requires relevant authorities to:

- keep a register of individuals and groups who wish to self or custom build in their local area
- have regard to demand on their register when undertaking planning, housing, disposal of land and regeneration functions

- grant permissions to enough suitable serviced plots to reflect the demand within 3 years

The Department has already put in place a number of measures to support local councils in meeting requirements around self and custom build, including providing £95,850 of new funding to each local planning authority since 2016 (totalling over £30 million).

It is also supporting councils through the work of the National Custom and Self Build Association's 'Right to Build Task Force', providing £200,000 of funding over the last 2 years.

The National Custom and Self Build Association's 'Right to Build Task Force' has been commissioned to run online workshops with local councils to support the delivery of more self and custom build homes. Further information on the taskforce can be found on the [Right to build website](#).

[Iranian ambassador summoned regarding Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe](#)

Press release

Hamid Baeidinejad was summoned following news that British-Iranian dual national Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe is to be recalled to court in Iran.



Iranian Ambassador Hamid Baeidinejad was summoned to the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) today following news that Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe is to be recalled to court.

Thomas Drew, FCDO Director General for Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan, conveyed the UK's grave concern at this development and called for Iran to end her arbitrary detention.

An FCDO spokesperson said:

We have made it clear to the Iranian ambassador that his country's treatment of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe is unjustified and unacceptable, and is causing an enormous amount of distress.

Iran is further tarnishing its reputation through its actions towards Nazanin. It is time to end her arbitrary detention and that of the other dual British nationals it is holding.

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