

50 Ambassadors sign letter supporting LGBT rights in Poland

50 Ambassadors of countries from all corners of the world and representatives of international organisations have expressed their support for 'efforts to raise public awareness of the issues affecting the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community and other communities in Poland facing similar challenges.'

In an open letter, usually published annually on the occasion of Poland's Equality Parade, signatories recognise 'the need to jointly work on an environment of non-discrimination, tolerance and mutual acceptance'. They pay tribute to the hard work of LGBTI and other communities, in Poland and around the world, seeking to end discrimination 'in particular on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.'

As this year's Equality Parade was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic the letter was released publically on 27 September and will be presented to the organisers of the Equality Parade and a representative of the Polish government on 9 October by the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium in Poland Luc Jacobs, together with Anna Clunes from the British Embassy (as the coordinator of last year's letter) and the Ambassador of Denmark, Ole Toft (as next year's coordinator).

The full text of the letter is as follows:

Open letter of the Ambassadors of Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, the Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States and Venezuela, as well as the General Representative of the Flemish Community and the Flemish Region, the General Delegate of the French Community and the Walloon Region, the Representatives in Poland of the European Commission and of the UNHCR, the First Deputy Director/Director's alternate of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Head of Office of the International Organization for Migration and the Secretary General of the Community of Democracies.

This letter has been coordinated by the Embassy of the Kingdom of Belgium in Poland.

Although due to epidemiological circumstances the 2020 Warsaw Equality Parade could not take place at the foreseen date we express our support for the efforts to raise public awareness of issues affecting the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community and other communities in Poland facing similar challenges.

We also acknowledge similar efforts in Białystok, Bielsko–Biała, Częstochowa, Gniezno, Kalisz, Katowice, Kielce, Koszalin, Kraków, Lublin, Łódź, Nowy Sącz, Olsztyn, Opole, Płock, Poznań, Rzeszów, Szczecin, Tarnów, Toruń, Trójmiasto, Włocławek, Wrocław and Zielona Góra.

We affirm the inherent dignity of each individual as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Respect for these fundamental rights, which are also enshrined in OSCE commitments and the obligations and standards of the Council of Europe and the European Union as communities of rights and values, obliges governments to protect all citizens from violence and discrimination and to ensure they enjoy equal opportunities.

To this end, and in particular to shield communities in need of protection from verbal and physical abuse and hate speech, we need to jointly work on an environment of non-discrimination, tolerance and mutual acceptance. This includes in particular sectors such as education, health, social affairs, citizenship, public service and public documents.

We pay tribute to the hard work of LGBTI and other communities in Poland and around the world, as well as the work of all those who seek to ensure human rights for LGBTI and other persons belonging to communities facing similar challenges, and to end discrimination in particular on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Human rights are universal and everyone, including LGBTI persons, are entitled to their full enjoyment. This is something that everyone should support.

Signed,

H.E. Shpresa Kureta, Ambassador of the Republic of Albania

H.E. Ana María Ramírez, Ambassador of the Argentine Republic

H.E. Lloyd David Hargreave Brodrick, Ambassador of Australia

H.E. Werner Almhofer, Ambassador of Austria

H.E. Luc Jacobs, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Belgium

H.E. Leslie Scanlon, Ambassador of Canada

H.E. Tomislav Vidošević, Ambassador of the Republic of Croatia

H.E. Petros Kestoras, Ambassador of Republic of Cyprus

H.E. Ivan Jestřáb, Ambassador of the Czech Republic

H.E. Ole Toft, Royal Ambassador of Denmark

H.E. Aníbal de Castro, Ambassador of the Dominican Republic

H.E. Juha Ottman, Ambassador of Finland

H.E. Frédéric Billet, Ambassador of France

H.E. Arndt Freytag von Loringhoven, Ambassador of Germany

H.E. Michael-Efstratios C. Daratzikis, Ambassador of the Hellenic Republic

H.E. María Erla Marelsdóttir, Ambassador of Iceland

H.E. Tsewang Namgyal, Ambassador of India

H.E. Emer O'Connell, Ambassador of Ireland

H.E. Alexander Ben-Zvi, Ambassador of Israel

H.E. Aldo Amati, Ambassador of Italy

H.E. Tsukasa Kawada, Ambassador of Japan

H.E. Edgars Bondars, Ambassador of Latvia

H.E. Eduardas Borisovas, Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania

H.E. Paul Schmit, Ambassador of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

H.E. John Paul Grech, Ambassador of Malta

H.E. Alejandro Negrín, Ambassador of Mexico

H.E. Budimir Šegrt, Ambassador of Montenegro

H.E. Daphne Bergsma, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

H.E. Mary Thurston, Ambassador of New Zealand

H.E. Vasil Panovski, Ambassador of the Republic of North Macedonia

H.E. Anders Eide, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Norway

H.E. Luís Manuel Ribeiro Cabaço, Ambassador of Portugal

H.E. Dario Galassi, Ambassador of San Marino

H.E. Nikola Zurovac, Ambassador of the Republic of Serbia

H.E. Božena Forštnarič Boroje, Ambassador of Slovenia

Daniel StemmerChargé D' Affaires a.i., Embassy of South Africa

H.E. Francisco Javier Sanabria Valderrama, Ambassador of Spain

H.E. Stefan Gullgren, Ambassador of Sweden

H.E. Jürg Burri, Ambassador of Switzerland

H.E. Andrii Deshchytsia, Ambassador of Ukraine

H.E. Anna Clunes, Ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

H.E. Georgette Mosbacher, Ambassador of the United States of America

H.E. Luis Gómez Urdaneta, Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

Dries Willems, General Representative of the Flemish Community and the Flemish Region

Anne Defourny, General Delegate of the French Community and the Walloon Region

Katarzyna Gardapkhadze, First Deputy Director/Director's alternate of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights ODIHR

Marek Prawda, Head of Representation, European Commission in Poland

Christine Goyer, Representative, UNHCR Representation in Poland

Thomas E. Garrett, Secretary General of the Community of Democracies

Hanna Dobrzyńska, Director, International Organization for Migration (IOM)

[Take-off for UK-built supercomputer nanosatellites](#)

- Two of the satellites have onboard a supercomputer capable of making hyper-accurate predictions for shipping to support maritime trade

Four shoebox-sized and government-backed satellites, including two supercomputers, have launched this afternoon (Monday 28 September).

The 'nanosatellites', which are built in Glasgow and are no larger than a microwave, have joined a fleet of nearly 100 objects in low Earth orbit that monitor shipping movements, helping predict global trade and making business more cost effective and efficient.

Like mobile phones, satellites are also getting smaller and smarter and nanosatellites are roughly the size of a shoe box. Despite their size, they can do almost everything a conventional satellite does.

Two of the Spire nanosatellites have an onboard supercomputer and intelligent machine-learning algorithms that can provide hyper-accurate predictions of the locations of boats, track their whereabouts and calculate their arrival times at ports, allowing port businesses and authorities to manage busy docks safely.

Two further Spire satellites launched alongside them today, both of which will be used to forge inter-satellite links. These connections allow satellites to act as relays, sending data to one another and down to ground stations, which cuts the time between data collection and its delivery.

Made by Spire Global UK, the nanosatellites, which are some of the smartest satellites ever built in the UK, are backed by over £10 million of investment from the UK Space Agency and took off on a Soyuz launcher at 12.20pm (BST).

Science Minister Amanda Solloway said:

While nanosatellites are just the size of a shoe box, they have the power and intelligence of a regular satellite and are driving a revolution in how we observe our planet.

Backed by £10 million of UK government funding, these extraordinary nanosatellites will not only help predict global trade and make businesses more cost effective, but will ensure the UK remains at the forefront of satellite development.

The market for these smaller satellites, which are designed to orbit close to Earth's atmosphere, is growing rapidly. According to a report by the Satellite Industry Association and Bryce Space and Technology, a total of 292 of the spacecraft were launched into space in 2017, compared with 55 in 2016.

This shift is fuelled by a wave of innovation that has made satellites cheaper to produce and the emergence of new commercial launch providers, such as SpaceX, which have made space more accessible.

The Government is supporting the development of spaceports across the country and the growing launch industry, which will see satellites lifting off from UK soil for the first time in the coming years.

Nanosatellites enable, among other advances, the ability to observe Earth's environment more completely and regularly than ever before. Recent advances in optics and communication technologies have improved the smaller spacecrafts' capabilities for remote sensing and imaging.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart said:

Scotland's space sector is very ambitious. I'm delighted the UK Government has invested £10 million in this exciting Glasgow-based company.

These nanosatellites will join an orbital fleet of over a 100 that predict global trade movements – aiming to make trade predictions hyper-accurate.

This funding will help to bolster the UK's role as a leader in space innovation.

Spire staff design and build all the sub-systems and integrate and test the whole spacecraft in the company's Glasgow headquarters.

The satellites have been developed under a European Space Agency (ESA) Pioneer programme, which is a partnership project co-funded by the UK Space Agency. The UK remains a leading member of ESA, which is independent of the EU.

Despite the coronavirus pandemic, work has progressed with strong backing from the UK Space Agency which, working with ESA, has extended exceptional support to small and medium-sized enterprises working in the space industry.

Elodie Viau, Director of Telecommunications and Integrated Applications at ESA, said:

These nanosatellites are part of ESA's Pioneer programme to support industry to deliver fast and affordable access to space in the field of telecommunications. The programme creates opportunities for both established and new players in the fast-changing and competitive satellite communications market.

ESA's Pioneer programme is one of the partnership projects that is aimed at de-risking partners' investments, answering market needs. It is part of ESA's programme of Advanced Research in Telecommunication Systems (ARTES).

The programme creates new opportunities for both established and new players in the fast-changing and competitive satellite communications market.

UK leads thousands of NATO troops in major exercise off Scottish coast

Taking part will be the Royal Navy's largest and most powerful warship HMS Queen Elizabeth, taking her place at the heart of a UK-led NATO Carrier Strike Group.

With her will be F-35B stealth jets from the UK and US, training together in UK skies for the first time.

Exercise Joint Warrior, taking place for 11 days off the coast of north west Scotland from next Monday, will feature 11 nations combining an overall contribution of over 6,000 personnel, 81 aircraft, 28 ships and two submarines.

Minister for the Armed Forces James Heappey said:

Allies and adversaries alike will not fail to take note of the powerful new contribution the UK's Carrier Strike Group offers NATO when it participates in Exercise Joint Warrior next week.

With US and UK F-35B jets exercising together over our shores for the first as part of a group featuring 6,000 personnel from 11 nations, this UK-led exercise underlines the leading role we play in upholding European security through NATO.

NATO Allies taking part in the exercise are the UK, USA, Netherlands, Portugal, Belgium, Canada, France, Denmark, Norway and Lithuania. NATO Enhanced Opportunity Partner Australia will also contribute.

In order to protect all armed forces personnel and the public, a wide range of mitigations measures have been introduced to reduce the risks posed by the Covid-19 virus.

Exercise Joint Warrior is a UK-led multinational military exercise held twice a year in the spring and autumn that features all three single services of the UK Armed Forces – the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force conducting combined joint operations. It offers a crucial function in training NATO forces for high-readiness deployments on operations, representing a significant pillar of the UK's leading role in the Alliance.

This autumn's exercise offers a key step in the development of the UK's Carrier Strike Group (CSG) capability. With US Marine Corps F-35B jets and their UK counterparts training embarking on HMS Queen Elizabeth, this is the largest number of aircraft at sea on a British Royal Navy carrier since 1983 and is the largest number of F-35B jets at sea in history.

[Public sector insurance survey](#)

A range of public sector organisations have been sharing their experiences about the impact of COVID-19 on their insurance policies and claims.

The Government Actuary's Department (GAD) [created a survey](#) to investigate the changes to their insurance risks and the response of the insurance market.

Insurance and coronavirus

While central government departments typically find it cheaper to retain their risks, local government organisations rely on commercial insurance.

GAD's work includes providing insurance-related advice to the UK public sector. We wanted to help public sector authorities make sense of the impact of COVID-19 on their insurance arrangements.

In our survey we asked these authorities how COVID-19 had affected their insurance risks, including the:

- immediate impact on claims they're incurring
- response from insurers
- outlook for their total cost of risk

We received 80 responses from unitary authorities, county and district councils, metropolitan districts and London boroughs, as well as fire and police authorities.

Respondents shared their views on the immediate and ongoing impact of the pandemic on their claims experience and insurance policies. They also answered questions around the future impact of COVID-19 on different types of risks, as well as how they anticipate managing the total cost of risk in the future.

Mixed picture

GAD's Head of Business Development Ian Rogers devised the survey. He said: "This is an important insight into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on public sector organisations.

"The immediate impact was a mixed picture. Most respondents experienced some change in claims costs, although whether this was positive depended on the type of authority and mix of risks. A third of respondents also reported a deterioration in their dealings with insurers.

"The survey results indicated a clear consensus on the outlook for the insurance market, with the vast majority (92%) anticipating adverse impacts. As well as price increases, there are concerns about restrictions on cover and reduced availability of some types of insurance.

"To mitigate against this, authorities are expecting to self-insure more of their risks and exploring alternative risk transfer arrangements."

[The Annual Research and Development Review](#)

News story

Each year Sellafield Ltd produces a short report into the work of their research and development teams.



WEDA is a wall cleaning remotely operated vehicle used to clean pond walls on the Sellafield site

The report is a fascinating insight into the highly complicated world of Sellafield.

We know that at its core, our work involves taking waste out of our ponds and silos and making it safe for storage, then knocking down what we no longer need.

But the science behind that is incredible, and R&D is at the forefront.

The report is designed to help everyone understand why the science is so important, and how we work in collaboration with organisations across the UK to meet the challenges of our site. It includes:

- using lasers to monitor hydrogen levels round the stored waste in our Box Encapsulation Plant Product Store
- new robots which can attach themselves to the walls of our Pile Fuel Storage Pond to scrub away debris and ground-in dirt as we lower the water levels
- giving our glovebox operators remote access to their job – putting them in a control room away from active areas but still allowing them to grip, cut and move around hazardous materials as if they were there
- creating ‘smart cans’ for storing our special nuclear material, which will be able to monitor themselves when stored and warn if something isn’t happening as expected.

Rebecca Weston, Chief Operating Officer, Sellafield Ltd said

Our R&D professionals – from inside and outside the nuclear sector, working at and with Sellafield to solve problems – are among the best in the world.

And they need to be, to understand and create and ultimately implement solutions to the complex issues only a 70-year-old nuclear facility built on a constricted site can offer, and then

try to anticipate what the next problem might be.

Ours is a fascinating business to be in, and this report gives an insight into the incredible, diverse, historic and ground-breaking world in which we operate.

The new Sellafield Ltd 2019/20 Annual Research and Development Review can be found [here](#).

Published 28 September 2020