

Statement from Steve Barclay, Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

News story

A statement from Steve Barclay on his appointment as Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.



Health and Social Care Secretary Steve Barclay said:

It is an honour to take up the position of Health and Social Care Secretary. Our NHS and social care staff have showed us time and again – throughout the pandemic and beyond – what it means to work with compassion and dedication to transform lives.

This government is investing more than ever before in our NHS and care services to beat the Covid backlogs, recruit 50,000 more nurses, reform social care and ensure patients across the country can access the care they need.

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Ministerial appointments: 5 July 2022

Press release

The Queen has been pleased to approve the following appointments.



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- Rt Hon Nadhim Zahawi MP to be Chancellor of the Exchequer
- Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP to be Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
- Rt Hon Michelle Donelan MP to be Secretary of State for Education

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[Joint statement between the UK and Egypt following the Association Council – 5 July](#)

The Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, the Right Honourable Liz Truss welcomed His Excellency Mr. Sameh Shoukry, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt to London on 5 July for the inaugural meeting of the UK-Egypt Association Council.

The inaugural Association Council created a new platform to further the ambition laid out in the UK-Egypt Association Agreement, signed in December 2020. Within this framework, the Ministers had fruitful discussions on the development of the strategic partnership between the United Kingdom and Egypt.

The Ministers welcomed a number of recent commercial successes between the UK and Egypt, including:

- The two-line Cairo Monorail project, which includes trains manufactured

in Derby, and is supported by UK Export Finance (UKEF)

- The sale of two ex-Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) ships to the Egyptian Navy, including contracts for their refit and upgrade;
- The opening of a new 66MW solar farm by Globeleq, following an investment worth \$80m;
- The finalisation of a \$100m investment by British Investment International (BII) to acquire Alfa Medical Group;
- The launch of commercial operations at the Lekela wind farm, following an investment worth \$325m.

The Ministers discussed prospects for enhanced economic cooperation between the UK and Egypt. They agreed to working intensively to grow bilateral trade and investment, including through tackling any barriers to trade and sharing expertise. They also committed to work towards reviewing and improving market access in the agriculture, healthcare, energy, and financial sectors, through the newly established subcommittee on trade.

The UK and Egypt emphasised their commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation and investment in healthcare and education, given both fields' direct impact on levelling-up, job creation, and enhancing the quality of public services.

The Ministers welcomed deeper technical collaboration that will support joint work to overcome market access barriers in priority sectors. Including:

- A new phase of collaboration between NHS's National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and Egypt's Unified Procurement Authority (UPA), helping to institutionalise Health Technology Assessment (HTA) in Egypt.
- A joint statement of intent signed between Egypt's Energy Regulatory Authority (EERA) and the British Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (OFGEM,) to help in reforming Egypt's renewable energy regulations.

The Ministers welcomed strengthening cooperation in Africa and exploring trilateral cooperation opportunities with African countries in various fields, particularly infrastructure.

The UK welcomed Egypt's preparations to host COP27 in Sharm el Sheikh (November 2022) as it takes over the COP Presidency. The UK and Egypt reinforced cooperation to deliver ambitious outcomes at COP27 building on the Glasgow Climate Pact and previous COP decisions. Both countries noted the importance of supporting developing nations in effecting a just transition, including through the transition to sustainable energy and green hydrogen, as well as in adapting to the impacts of climate change, including through the sustainable & integrated management of natural resources, enhancing resilience and building technical and technological capacities in this regard. The UK commends Egypt's leadership and efforts on renewable energy generation and opportunities for British investors and firms within the energy sector.

The Ministers also discussed a wide range of bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest, including on consular issues and human rights.

The Ministers looked forward to holding the meetings of the Association Council regularly to further enhance Egypt-UK cooperation in various fields and take stock of progress.

BepiColombo

Overview

The BepiColombo spacecraft:

- was launched on 20 October 2018
- is currently in cruise phase towards its destination
- is due to arrive at Mercury in late 2025
- is a joint mission between Europe and Japan
- has key UK involvement

Introduction

Almost as dense as the Earth but not much bigger than our Moon, Mercury is the second smallest planet in the Solar System; scientists believe Mercury's high density can be put down to the planet having a massive iron core.

The surface is pock-marked with enormous craters caused by meteorites smashing into the planet's surface in the early stages of the Solar System's evolution some four billion years ago.

BepiColombo will be only the third spacecraft to visit Mercury in the history of space exploration. The mission will increase our understanding of all aspects of the planet, from its composition, structure, atmosphere and magnetic environment.

Mercury's harsh environment makes it a particularly challenging mission. The spacecraft will have to endure intense sunlight and temperatures up to 350°C while gathering data.

BepiColombo is named after Giuseppe 'Bepi' Colombo (1920-1984), a scientist who studied Mercury's orbital motion in detail as well as orbits and interplanetary travel in general. Although the temperature on Mercury can go as high as 462°C, the side of the planet facing away from the Sun is always very cold. One of the key objectives for BepiColombo is to find out whether there is ice on the cold side of the planet.

The mission will build on the experience gained in using electric propulsion on the SMART-1 mission. BepiColombo's journey will also be helped by the

gravity of the Moon, Earth and Venus during fly-bys to help it on its way to Mercury. It will take the BepiColombo spacecraft seven years to reach its destination.

Technology

BepiColombo consists of four sections: a Mercury Transfer Module (MTM) – designed to get the spacecraft to the planet; two orbiters: the European Mercury Planetary Orbiter (MPO) and the Japanese Mercury Magnetospheric Orbiter (MMO); and a sunshield and interface structure (MOSIF) to protect it during the cruise phase.

ESA is responsible for the larger MPO. Its 11 scientific instruments will study Mercury from a low-polar-orbit.

MIXS will measure fluorescent X-rays that come from the Sun and are reflected off the planet's surface. Fluorescent X-ray measurements can be used to identify chemical elements while measurements at infrared wavelengths can be used to determine mineral composition.

Japan developed the MMO. This has five science instruments on board designed to examine Mercury's magnetic field and magnetosphere – the magnetic 'bubble' surrounding a planet. Mercury intrigues scientists because it is hard to understand why such a small planet can have a magnetic field at all.

BepiColombo will make its way to Mercury with an ion engine. This employs solar panels to generate electricity which is used to produce charged particles from xenon gas. A beam of these charged particles, or ions, is then expelled from the spacecraft. The engine will be used to slow the spacecraft down so that it can eventually be captured by the gravity of Mercury.

UK involvement

Key items of the spacecraft were built in the UK in partnership with several UK science teams. The UK's involvement in BepiColombo is funded by the UK Space Agency.

UK space scientists, led by the University of Leicester, developed one of the key instruments on board BepiColombo: MIXS (Mercury Imaging X-ray Spectrometer). MIXS will be used to help find out about what the planet's surface is made of. This will help to explain how the planet formed during the early history of the Solar System.

Airbus Defence and Space (Germany) was appointed as the prime contractor to build the European components. Airbus UK provided all the spacecraft structures as well as the electrical and chemical propulsion systems for the MTM, the chemical propulsion system for the MPO (which will be the first dual mode propulsion system designed and built in Europe) and the systems which will separate the spacecraft modules on arrival at Mercury.

QinetiQ (UK) was awarded the contract to supply the innovative electric propulsion system for BepiColombo. Electricity generated by solar panels will

be used to produce charged particles from xenon gas. A beam of these charged particles, or ions, is then expelled from the spacecraft to propel it forward. Ion propulsion produces low levels of thrust very efficiently compared with conventional chemical rockets.

SEA Ltd (now Thales Alenia Space UK) was contracted to supply the Remote Interface Units (RIU's) for the MPO and the MTM. The RIU's are important equipment for both spacecraft as they acquire the critical sensor data and telemetry as well as driving the thrusters that control the spacecraft.

[UN Human Rights Council 50: UK statement on Ukraine and Crimea](#)

Thank you, Mr President.

Let us not beat around the bush. It's 131 days since President Putin unleashed his brutal aggression against the independent sovereign state of Ukraine. 131 days of Russian violations of the Charter, human rights, and international humanitarian law, of a scale and a ferocity that we thought we would never see again on this continent.

Over 14 million displaced. At a conservative estimate, almost 5000 civilians killed. Tens of millions around the world facing hunger as a result of the Russian blockade and attacks on Ukraine's ports. The names of Bucha, Mariupol, Kremenchuk forever etched into our memories.

Let me thank you, High Commissioner, for the work of your monitoring mission, in seeking to bring the facts to light. The truth must be told. Accountability is essential.

For the people of Crimea this story of war began eight years ago. Since 2014 Russia has conducted a brutal and systematic campaign of human rights violations against them. And it is getting worse – persecution of Crimean Tatars is intensifying and last year saw a ten-fold rise in arbitrary detentions.

Mr President,

We will not rest until Russia ceases its illegal war, and withdraws its forces and military equipment from the entirety of Ukraine.

High Commissioner,

How best can we uphold the truth in the face of Russian systematic disinformation?