

News story: New Lords minister appointed at DExEU

Martin Callanan, Lord Callanan, has been appointed Minister of State at the Department for Exiting the European Union (DExEU), replacing Joyce Anelay, Baroness Anelay of St Johns.

Lord Callanan, who spent 15 years as a Member of the European Parliament, previously served as the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State of Aviation, International and Security at the Department for Transport.

Baroness Anelay joined DExEU in June 2017, and she has spent 20 years on the front bench.

David Davis, Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, said:

Joyce has made an invaluable contribution to ensuring a successful departure from the EU through her work representing Britain abroad, and representing the Department in the House of Lords.

She's been a great part of our Ministerial team and a good friend. I wish her all the best as she returns to the back benches where she will bring an unparalleled level of experience to the task of scrutinising Brexit legislation on its way through the House of Lords.

I'm delighted to welcome Lord Callanan to the Department – he brings with him a wealth of experience in Brussels and a proven ability in political leadership. I look forward to working together as a Ministerial team to continue delivering the important task of negotiating our exit from the European Union and making a success of Brexit.

Baroness Anelay said:

It has been a huge privilege to work with and see first-hand the dedication of my Ministerial colleagues and the Civil Service as we deliver on the referendum result and negotiate the UK's exit from the EU.

I'm immensely proud of what the Government has achieve while I have been a part of it, and am grateful for having been given the

opportunity to serve.

Baroness Anelay was raised to the peerage in 1996 and served as an Opposition Spokesperson for various departments until being appointed Opposition Chief Whip in 2007.

She was appointed the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict in June 2015. Prior to this she was Chief Whip in the House of Lords and Captain of the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen-at-Arms. She was made a Privy Counsellor in 2009.

In August 2014, she was appointed Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in August 2014, and from July to October 2016 she had additional responsibility at the Department for International Development.

Lord Callanan was a Member of the European Parliament for the North East England constituency from 1999, re-elected in 2004 and 2009.

He became the leader of the European Conservatives and Reformists group from 2011-2014.

He was created a Life Peer on 24 September 2014 taking the title Baron Callanan, of Low Fell in the County of Tyne and Wear.

[News story: Baroness Anelay's resignation letter and Prime Minister's response](#)

Letter from Baroness Anelay to the Prime Minister

Baroness Anelay wrote:

Dear Prime Minister,

It is with regret that I write to confirm formally my resignation as Minister of State for Exiting the European Union. After 20 years on the Front Bench, including four years as Government Chief Whip, and three years as a Minister at the FCO and DExEU, it is a great disappointment that a worsening of an injury sustained in 2015 has forced my decision. I am most grateful to you for your acceptance and understanding.

I am immensely proud of what the Government has achieved while I have been a part of it, and am grateful for having been given the opportunity to serve. I will continue to support you and your Government as strongly from the

backbenches as I have while serving on the Front Bench.

As you are aware I voted remain in the referendum, but having taken the EU Referendum Act through Parliament, I believe that we have a duty to act on the instructions of the electorate. When you asked me to become Minister of State at DExEU in June this year it was therefore an offer I accepted without hesitation.

It has been a privilege to work with, and see first-hand the dedication and commitment of David Davis, Robin Walker, Steve Baker and the team of talented and professional Civil Servants working in support of our negotiations. The analysis and engagement that has taken place since the Department was created has driven the progress in the negotiations to date. I leave the Department certain that the negotiations surrounding our exit, and our future relationship with the EU, will be successful.

Alongside my duties in the House of Lords, where the quality of debate has shown the House at its very best, it has been an honour to represent the Government at the General Affairs Council of the European Union.

During the last three meetings of the General Affairs Council our participation has demonstrated that until we have left, we will continue to play a role in representing the interests of the people of the United Kingdom and continue to contribute to, and shape, the EU agenda. I have spoken in support of the importance of protection for journalists and quality journalism in safeguarding media pluralism; to highlight the UK's on-going commitment to European security; and to advocate for open and free trade. These are all issues which reflect the fact that whilst we may be leaving the EU, we retain shared values, and we wish to remain the closest possible neighbours and friends.

Yours, as ever

Joyce

Rt Hon Baroness Anelay of St Johns DBE

Letter from the Prime Minister to Baroness Anelay

The Prime Minister wrote:

Dear Joyce,

Thank you for your letter informing me of your decision to resign from the Government. I am very sorry that your circumstances have forced you to take this decision, which I fully understand. I am disappointed that we will no longer have the benefit of your wisdom and experience in Government, but I know that you will continue to contribute to proceedings in the House of Lords.

You should be extremely proud of your 20 years of service to our party and our country as a member of the Conservative front bench team in the House of

Lords.

You have served the Government with distinction since 2010, as our Chief Whip in the House of Lords for four years, and as a Minister of State in several departments since 2014. I am particularly grateful for your work in the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the Department for Exiting the European Union since I became Prime Minister in July 2016.

As you say in your letter, we have a very strong team of Ministers and officials in the Department for Exiting the European Union. Thanks to your work as part of that team, you leave the Department in a strong position as we continue our negotiations with the European Union and work to secure the right deal for the whole of the United Kingdom.

Thank you again for your service, and I wish you all the best for the future.

With best wishes

Theresa

[News story: Ministerial appointments: 27 October 2017](#)

The Queen has approved the departures from Government of the Rt Hon Baroness Anelay of St Johns DBE and Lord Prior of Brampton.

The Queen has been pleased to approve the following ministerial appointments:

- Lord Callanan as a Minister of State at the Department for Exiting the European Union (having previously been a Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Transport).
- Rt Hon Lord Henley as a Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.
- Lord Duncan of Springbank as a joint Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Scotland Office and the Northern Ireland Office (having previously been a joint Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Scotland Office and the Wales Office).
- Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth as a joint Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Wales Office (having previously been a joint Parliamentary Under

Secretary of State at the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Northern Ireland Office).

- Baroness Sugg CBE as a Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Transport (having previously been a Government Whip (Baroness in Waiting)).
- Baroness Stedman-Scott OBE as a Government Whip (Baroness in Waiting).

Read Baroness Anelay's resignation letter and the Prime Minister's reply.

[Speech: International Religious Freedom Day](#)

Video message from Human Rights Minister, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon

[International Religious Freedom Day](#)

Introduction

Thank you Jim, and my thanks to you and your APPG colleagues for organising today's event. I want to take this opportunity to pay special tribute to you all for your tireless work in raising awareness of violations of the right to freedom of religion or belief around the world. This awareness is vital in galvanising support for collective action.

I am delighted to be here for the launch of your extremely comprehensive report. The analysis and recommendations it contains will further enrich the Government's understanding and help to inform our approach.

Your invitation recalled the so-called Father of Religious Freedom, Thomas Helwys – a Protestant dissenter in England at the turn of the 17th century. Unlike other reformers, Helwys did not just defend his own religious group. Uniquely for his time, he also defended the rights of others to practice their religion. Indeed he was the first person to write a defence of universal religious freedom in the English language. His experience is a reminder that religious persecution in its different forms has a long history and that this country is no exception. We all know that it continues to this day. It could be dispiriting to dwell on the fact that we are still fighting the same battles 400 years later. However, it is my personal view that this knowledge should in fact galvanise us to be even more determined and activist in defending and protecting the right to freedom of religion or belief in the 21st century. That is what the Government, through the FC0 and

our posts around the world, is committed to do. I would like to give you a flavour of our work today.

HMG Action

International law and the rules-based international system are fundamental to all our work, and on this issue they could not be clearer.

Article 18 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights sets out the right to choose a religion or belief – or indeed, to have no belief at all – and the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights enshrines this right into law, along with guarantees on non-discrimination, equal access to justice and the protection of the law.

Yet despite this clear legal position, people around the world continue to be denied their rights. They suffer prejudice, persecution and physical harm for their faith or belief. We are working hard to tackle this injustice, both through international institutions and with individual countries.

Multilateral Work

Multilaterally, we work with likeminded partners to build and maintain consensus on the issue of freedom of religion or belief through lobbying other countries and supporting relevant UN resolutions.

Our work on Daesh is a good example of this approach. Daesh is responsible for the appalling persecution of Yezidi, Christian and Mandaean minorities, as well as the majority Muslim population, in Syria and Iraq.

We have been at the forefront of the international campaign to defeat Daesh, joining with others at the UN General Assembly last year to launch a campaign to bring Daesh to Justice. More recently, we drafted a ground-breaking UN resolution that will ensure Daesh's crimes do not go unpunished. The resolution will send a UN-led investigative team to Iraq to assist with the vital work of gathering evidence of Daesh atrocities and help Iraq to bring Daesh to justice. The UK has contributed one million pounds to get this team up and running.

We will continue to work with the Iraqi Government, the UN and the international community to deliver justice; to promote the rights of all minorities; and to ensure that humanitarian aid reaches those in greatest need.

Bilateral Work

We also use our extensive diplomatic network to engage with countries individually. In Bangladesh, where the Ahmadi community faces significant persecution, I visited their Mosque in Dhaka and made a call for religious tolerance.

In Russia, following the Supreme Court's ban on Jehovah's Witnesses as 'extremists', we continue to call on the state to uphold religious freedom.

In Eritrea, we have called on the Government to release all prisoners detained without due process, including the Orthodox Patriarch, Abune Antonios, and others detained for their religious beliefs.

We remain deeply concerned by violence against Christians and Muslims in Burma, and particularly the Rohingya in Rakhine State. We have been active on this issue for some time. Successive Ministers, including my predecessor Baroness Anelay last year, the Foreign Secretary in January, and my Rt Hon Friend the Minister for Asia Mark Field last month – have met Burmese community leaders to listen to their views and encourage greater tolerance.

We also continue to press for religious freedoms in Iran. Members of the Baha'i community recently expressed their thanks for our lobbying work which they said had played a significant role in the release of Mahvash Sabet. I am pleased to be addressing a Parliamentary seminar organised by the UK Baha'I community next month.

Programme Work

Projects that directly support freedom of religion or belief remain an important element of our Magna Carta Fund human rights programme. One project that we are particularly proud of is helping secondary school teachers in the Middle East and North Africa to create lesson plans that promote tolerance and freedom of religion or belief.

Report Recommendations

Before I finish I would like to address one of the recommendations of the report that relates directly to our work: That UK government staff should have an extensive knowledge and understanding of religion and Freedom of Religion or Belief.

I agree and indeed we have for several years been running religious literacy training to enhance the expertise of our staff. We recently launched our re-designed 'Religion and Diplomacy' course in association with LSE Faith Centre. We strongly encourage FC0 staff to participate, and we also open it up to those in other government departments who are working on similar issues. Feedback from recent participants has been overwhelmingly positive. We will continue to review the course to ensure it is as effective as possible.

We have also developed detailed guidance for our staff – a 'toolkit' in Whitehall jargon – something that we regularly promote to ensure that staff are making the most of it. There is always room for improvement, and in this as in other areas we continually strive to enhance our corporate expertise.

Working with Civil Society

We agree, that engagement with government and non-governmental actors working on country-specific issues is important for advancing freedom of religion or belief. That is why Ministers and officials regularly meet with faith actors and civil society to discuss areas of concern and identify ways to address them.

I want to take this further. That is why we are developing a new strategy to increase this engagement across our network. Just a few days ago, I held the first in a series of roundtables with faith representatives. We had useful discussions on Burma, on freedom of religion or belief more generally, and on how we can work together in the future. This new initiative provides a powerful platform for an exchange of views from faith perspectives, an opportunity to champion the rights and causes of others, as Thomas Helwys did. There is no greater example of the positive power of faith than when we speak out with one voice in defence of our common humanity. If I as a Muslim speak out for a Hindu. If Elizabeth as a Christian speaks out Sikh. As we look across this great and diverse city of London, we see churches, mosques, synagogues, temples and other buildings of religious worship. The modern tapestry that defines the UK today rests on the values of humanity that all faiths share.

Conclusion

I am going to hand over to Baroness Berridge in a moment. I will conclude by thanking the APPG once again for their report. We will consider its recommendations carefully and look forward to continuing to strengthen our collaboration and partnership with you in this regard.

As Minister for Human Rights, and as a man of faith, I give my personal commitment to work tirelessly to promote and defend freedom of religion or belief for everyone, everywhere.

[Press release: Chemical disposal update – Friday 27 October 2017](#)

Work to safely dispose of chemicals at Sellafield has continued this week and will continue over the weekend.

The disposals will take place during daylight hours and may be audible off-site. We have provided updates directly to staff and stakeholders in the immediate vicinity of the site.

The process that experts from the Army's Explosive Ordnance Disposal team is using to safely dispose of the chemicals is in line with best practice and chemical disposal regulations.

With the exception of the laboratory where the chemicals are being retrieved from, the site will continue to operate as normal over the weekend.

Key facts

- The chemicals are in sealed glass bottles of good condition.

- The chemicals are being disposed of appropriately.
- The materials involved are solvents which are widely used in industry.
- The Explosive Ordnance Disposal team deal with hundreds of these issues every year, recovering chemicals from science laboratories in places like schools, universities and hospitals.
- Because this is happening on the Sellafield site we exercise extreme caution and leave nothing to chance.