

Growing risks to security from environmental threats and damage to critical energy infrastructure: UK statement to the OSCE

Thank you, Mr Chair. And many thanks to the speakers for their particularly enlightening presentations on this interesting topic.

I would like to start by thanking you as chair of the Economic and Environmental Committee (EEC) for dedicating a session to a topic that is of utmost importance and relevance to the OSCE. As we have recognised, changes to the environment can affect security, for example, the exacerbating effect of climate change on security, through issues like resource scarcity, crop failure, and driving displacement.

But as we have heard, conversely, conflict and insecurity can have an effect on the environment, via pollution, contamination and degradation – impacting those directly affected by conflict, with spill over consequences for the surrounding regions.

[As Secretary General Helga Schmid said recently](#), we are seeing more and more accounts of the potentially disastrous environmental impacts of President Putin's unprovoked and illegal war in Ukraine. And as always, innocent civilians are paying the heaviest price.

International humanitarian law recognises that some harm to the environment is an inevitable consequence of armed conflict. But it includes provisions on protecting the natural environment and requires warring parties to take the possibility of environmental damage into account – another international obligation that Russia is ignoring.

As the Deputy Minister mentioned earlier, yesterday was International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day. It is with gravest concern that we have witnessed attacks at Ukrainian nuclear facilities. We are deeply concerned over the working conditions at Zaporizhzhya, and until recently, at the Chernobyl site. Ukrainian authorities must have unfettered access to all nuclear facilities on Ukraine's sovereign territory. We stand ready to support Ukraine and work with agencies and expert partners in the UK and internationally to ensure that all risks have been considered. Such risks can spill over to other countries in region – as we saw in 1986, Hungary, Poland, and Scandinavia all endured increased radiation levels following the Chernobyl disaster.

The brutal attacks in Ukraine have shown the environmental damage that militaries can do. But even militaries at peace can have significant environmental impact. In the UK for example, defence accounts for 50% of central government emissions. In future, our armed forces will embrace the

green energy transition, trialling new types of vehicles, fuels standards, and energy storage. Our defence ministry's Climate Change and Sustainability Strategic Approach report sets out how we will do this.

President Putin's war against Ukraine has resulted in the destruction of gas pipelines and thermal and hydroelectric power plants. This damage to energy infrastructure creates insecurities far beyond Ukraine's national borders. In the UK, in response, our Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure – who provide guidance to government and industry on infrastructure vulnerability – have updated their guidance on personnel and physical security, espionage and hostile activity.

Mr Chair, the UK believes that the OSCE will have a role to play in a post-Ukraine conflict environment. For instance, [last year's Decision on security and climate](#) was hard-fought, and provides a solid basis for further work by the OSCE and collaboration between participating States. But as well as damaging the planet, conflicts also divert attention and resources away from addressing existential climate challenges and break down the cooperation needed to address them. We look forward to continuing in this sense of collaboration when this again becomes possible.

President Putin has chosen this war, and so is choosing the international isolation that comes with it. Many countries are limiting their consumption of Russian energy, with the UK planning to phase out imports of Russian oil by the end of this year. Reducing our collective dependence on Putin's oil and gas has a practical as well as moral imperative – we must accelerate the drive for renewables, go twice as fast as we can on wind, and make better use of hydrocarbons.

As the world collectively shows its disgust at President Putin's illegal war of aggression, and stops buying his oil and gas, the Russian state will ultimately be forced to return to one of its most successful international exports – human misery.

Thank you.

[New drive to tackle terrorism in prisons](#)

- more influential radicalisers targeted for separation in specialist units
- £6 million expansion of close supervision centres that house the most violent offenders
- landmark independent review cites substantial investment by government to tackle terrorism in prisons

The step is part of a comprehensive and bolstered approach to clamping down on terrorist activity in jails in England and Wales, following the publication of a landmark review carried out by Jonathan Hall QC – the Government’s Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation.

As part of these measures, a new £1.2 million team will quickly identify and target the most influential and charismatic terrorists, so they can be moved to one of the Prison Service’s three ‘Separation Centres’ – completely apart from the main prison population.

In line with Jonathan Hall’s recommendation, the process for referring prisoners to the centres will also be strengthened against potential legal challenge. At the same time, the Government’s new Bill of Rights will limit terrorists’ ability to bring trivial claims against their treatment under the Human Rights Act.

Meanwhile, £6 million will be invested to expand ‘Close Supervision Centres’, where the most physically violent offenders can be held – including terrorists. This will prevent their potential recruitment to extremist causes.

Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Justice Secretary, Dominic Raab said:

The threat from terrorism is evolving, so our response must adapt.

We are going to take a more decisive approach in our prisons, not allowing cultural and religious sensitivities to deter us from nipping in the bud early signs of terrorist risk.

We will isolate more of the most radical terrorists in separation centres, and our Bill of Rights will prevent terrorists using the Human Rights Act to claim a ‘right to socialise’ in prison.

Since the shocking terror attacks of 2019 and 2020, the government has delivered the largest overhaul of terrorist sentencing and supervision in decades in order to keep the public safe. This includes ending the automatic early release of terrorist offenders and tougher sentences for the most serious offences.

Today, the Deputy Prime Minister detailed how the government will go further than ever in meeting the evolving threat of terrorism head on, while accepting recommendations made by Jonathan Hall QC in his report. The recommendations were designed to ensure the Government’s response remains flexible, swift and decisive when it comes to keeping the public safe, and include:

- Strengthening the referral process for offenders placed in Separation Centres – making sure there are no trivial grounds on which terrorist offenders can frustrate their placement in separation centres
- Handing Governors greater autonomy for tackling and reducing terrorist

behaviour in their prisons – ensuring they have the knowledge, resource and skills to meet this challenge and putting key targets in place to improve performance

- Improving and future-proofing the training received by frontline staff to spot the signs of terrorist activity behind bars – ensuring they remain one step ahead of the game by getting the most up-to-date information on evolving threats and the most effective means to tackle them

In his report, published today, Jonathan Hall praised the substantial investment made by the government in tackling terrorism in prisons.

Since 2017, 32 terrorist plots have been uncovered and intercepted by the Security Service MI5 and Counter Terrorism Policing

Despite this, terrorism remains an ever-present and evolving threat, with the UK's national threat level set at substantial following a number of devastating attacks, including at Fishmongers' Hall, Streatham, Reading and the first attack inside a British prison at HMP Whitemoor.

The government has taken major steps to clamp down on terrorist activity behind bars and keep the public safe – with over 200 prisoners convicted of terrorist offences in the estate at any one time, and a similar number considered a terrorist risk.

Separation Centres and Close Supervision Centres are limiting the interactions of terrorist offenders and stringent monitoring of communications has been introduced to intercept further intelligence, networks and plotting.

A specialist training programme has also equipped 15,500 of our frontline prison officers to identify and challenge terrorist behaviour.

At the same time, the Counter-Terrorism and Sentencing Act, which became law in 2021, represented the largest overhaul of terrorist sentencing and monitoring in a generation. The new Serious Terrorism Offence introduced a 14-year minimum jail term and minimum licence period of seven years. The Act also widened the range of offences classed as terror-connected and increased maximum penalties for certain terrorism offences.

Note to editors

Jonathan Hall's [report on Terrorism in Prisons and the government's response](#) is published on GOV.UK.

International Trade Secretary speech at City Week 2022

I am delighted to be speaking at City Week for the first time and welcoming you all to today's exciting FinTech programme.

Since I became Trade Secretary seven months ago, I've travelled the world, banging the drum for the UK's financial services everywhere I go.

I'm so pleased we were able to have the Ukrainian Ambassador, an extraordinary man. And that I think every single one of the Ukrainian citizens are showing a strength of purpose that I hope we would have if we were under such terrible strain.

But, we have been working very closely as a government, thinking how we can support Ukraine whilst also ensuring that Putin's illegal war fails. And we have just announced yesterday the liberalisation of all tariffs with our trade with Ukraine.

We're the first to do it, and I'm going to be encouraging other countries to do the same, whilst trying to use the sanctions tools we have – both financially and trade – to bring down Putin's ability to fund his illegal war. We also want to make sure we support Ukraine's economy, which of course is under huge strain because so much of its agricultural businesses are presently unable to move forward for this year, to help them with every aspect of trade that we can.

And I encourage all of you to think in your own spheres how you can do that. And if there's any way you think government can do more to support the Ukrainians, whether in-country or across the world, please do share that as this is a commitment we as a government are one hundred percent committed to and we also want to encourage others across the world to do the same.

But of course as I've travelled, and exactly to that, I've seen across the world – and I've been travelling, from Baltimore to Singapore, Ottawa to Jakarta – this extraordinary passion and success through the strength of the innovation and expertise of our UK's banks, wealth managers, and FinTechs, the subject of today's particular focus for you.

And I've seen it for myself, everywhere I've been, your international reputation genuinely is second to none – I get the best bit, I get to take all the credit for all the hard work you do, as people say to me regularly; you have an extraordinary industry there and we want to do more to be like you.

So we want to harness these international relationships and they want to understand your know-how and be part of the success that UK FinTech brings.

And my message to them has been loud and clear: The City is open for business. The City wants to work with you. The City is staying ahead of the

competition.

Because this is what the City has always done.

The drive, dynamism, and determination has made the UK's financial services what they are today. Seizing opportunities created by Global Britain.

We are the world's largest financial services net exporter, Europe's leading fintech hub, and a world-leading fundraising centre.

Over a million people in the UK are employed in financial services, with two-thirds based outside the capital.

As a report from TheCityUK showed, in all but two British regions, financial services are the leading services export. This is levelling up in action.

Your openness to new ideas, markets, and technology has put FinTech at the heart of this national network of financial excellence. Creating high skilled, well-paid jobs; apprenticeships for our young people; and spreading opportunity.

Almost half of Europe's Fintech unicorns were built right here in the UK. Klarna is marching ahead in Manchester, Sage is putting the new in Newcastle – I visited their offices the other day and was fantastic to see a company that I've witnessed grow over a number of decades – and Atom Bank is delivering in Durham, just around the corner from my constituency.

While banking giants Goldman Sachs are driving digital and opening a new office at the nucleus of Birmingham's burgeoning financial sector.

So, I think we can all agree that in FinTech, business is booming. Last year, the UK racked up more investment than France, Germany, and the Netherlands put together.

This matters. Because FinTech is about more than just finance, it's about greasing the wheels of commerce, so entrepreneurs across the country can drive their businesses forward, ignite growth, and accelerate towards global markets.

Whether it's Wise moving money across borders seamlessly, Xero making filing accounts a piece of cake, or Tide allowing businesses to set up banking at the drop of a hat, FinTech sets entrepreneurs free to do more of what want to do really well.

Our government couldn't value this work and our entire financial sector more.

That's why my friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer asked Ron Kalifa to carry out an independent review of UK FinTech, and we're pulling out all the stops to deliver his recommendations.

The FCA has already expanded its world-leading Regulatory Sandbox, piloting a new 'scalebox' to support newly authorised firms.

And just last month, my department and Innovate Finance launched the International FinTech Group, uniting industry and government to keep our FinTechs on top of the world.

That's also why since we reclaimed our independent trade policy, my department has been opening doors for our financial services businesses across the globe.

Our Free Trade Agreement with Japan cements the City's long-standing reputation as a bridge between East and West.

Our deal with Australia boasts ambitious financial services and digital chapters.

And we were the first European nation to sign a Digital Economy Agreement with Singapore, uniting two financial services powerhouses.

And we're really just getting started. You have my word – we will do everything in our power to help you to satisfy the global demand for your excellence.

Because hidden obstacles, protectionism, and antiquated rules are preventing our innovators from conquering new markets.

So that's why we are continuing on our mission to strike a series of advanced, high-standard agreements with leading nations across the world.

We are on course to accede to the £8 billion CPTPP this year, which is going to create a plethora of opportunities for you across eleven dynamic markets. The partnership's modern rulebook unlocks trusted cross-border data flows and sweeps away local restrictions that stand in the way of services exports.

The CPTPP is a baseline agreement, so we can break even more ground in deals with its members. Just as we are with Canada. Last month, I travelled to Ottawa to launch negotiations on a trade agreement that's going to go much further than ever before in innovation, digital, and data.

In January, I also headed to New Delhi to kick off negotiations on a comprehensive free trade agreement with India, you'll see that the Prime Minister was there at the weekend, helping our campaign to deliver a really impactful Free Trade Agreement.

We're seeing some really radical, different and open views there that we want to harness and we want to work alongside India to get that success.

Both our economies are orientated towards services, digital and tech, but at the moment India is only our 15th largest trading partner. Doing a deal can put this right by giving British businesses a 'first mover' advantage in India's markets.

We are also leading efforts to make the World Trade Organisation fit for purpose as the home of modern trade.

The WTO was established in 1995, when less than 1% of the world's population were online. So, the UK is committed to modernising the organisation and advancing digital regulations.

Before today's programme gets under way, I want to make you a promise that our government is completely committed to smashing through the obstacles in the way of our FinTech's and financiers and regulating to embrace competitiveness and innovation.

You already provide a platform for our nation to deliver so much wealth and innovation. There is a global appetite for UK services, for FinTech, and for finance. And our trade agreements are opening doors in data, digital, and services.

So, if we strive side-by-side and invigorate investment, we can lead the world in FinTech and digital, stay ahead in finance, and set our businesses free to grow through trade.

Writing a new chapter for our financial services, driving levelling up across the country, and proving the doubters wrong yet again.

Thank you, and I hope you enjoy the concluding day of what's been another fantastic City Week.

Scout missions

Scout missions are a new element in ESA's Earth Observation Programme.

The idea is to prove new concepts using small satellites developed in a fast, agile manner, which add scientific value to data from current satellites.

The concepts can then be scaled up in larger missions.

The UK has won the competition to build and deliver the first two missions, which makes use of our strengths in building small satellites and our scientific expertise. These missions seek to deliver vital new information about our climate and environment in a new, faster, cheaper way.

Both missions are due for launch at the end of 2024.

Scout Mission: CubeMAP

Key features

The Scout [CubeMAP mission](#) will be a constellation of multiple separate CubeSats.

Its goal is to study, understand, and quantify processes in the tropical upper troposphere and stratosphere (UTS), particularly in the context of climate change and increased emissions in the tropics. The mission will provide insights on the composition of the UTS, study its variability, and its effects on climate and vice-versa.

In particular, the constellation will make observations in tropical and sub-tropical latitudes to observe aerosols and gases such as:

- water vapour
- carbon dioxide
- methane
- nitrous oxide

All of these play a key role in the greenhouse effect and climate change.

The mission is packed with novelty and innovation: a novel concept of measurement from a constellation is used to profile the atmosphere, for which the sun, the atmosphere and the satellite are aligned; and new instrument technologies enable miniaturisation and the use of nanosatellites.

The mission comprises three 12-litre cubesats, each carrying thermal infrared spectrometers, as well as a visible near-infrared hyperspectral solar disk imager as a secondary instrument.

UK involvement

The UK is the initiator and the scientific and payload lead of the mission. With the contract now signed, GomSpace in Denmark will lead an industrial consortium to build CubeMAP. The consortium includes Rutherford Appleton Laboratory (RAL) in the UK, GomSpace in Luxembourg and in Sweden, Enpulsion in Austria, Hyperion in the Netherlands and Kongsberg Satellite Services (KSAT) in Norway.

Scout Mission: HydroGNSS

With funding from [ESA's Scout programme](#), Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd (SSTL) is building HydroGNSS, a 55kg small satellite to measure climate change variables.

Credit: SSTL

Key features

The HydroGNSS satellite will take measurements of key hydrological climate variables, using a technique called GNSS Reflectometry, including:

- soil moisture,
- freeze thaw state over permafrost,
- inundation and wetlands, and above ground biomass

The purpose is to measure parameters directly linked to [Essential Climate Variables](#) (ECV) – key indicators that are used to describe the Earth’s changing climate on a global scale. Collectively, there are 54 ECVs which provide empirical evidence to support climate science and better predict future change. Of these, around 60% can be addressed by satellite data.

ECVs are specified by the Global Climate Observing System, a system that comprises the climate-relevant components of many contributing observing systems and networks.

Knowledge of these variables helps scientists understand climate change and the data is a valuable tool for many applications including weather modelling, ecology mapping, agricultural planning and flood preparedness.

Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) Reflectometry is a technique whereby signals from GPS satellites reflected off the land, ice and ocean and can be collected by a low-power receiver on a small satellite in low-Earth orbit, and used to yield important geophysical measurements.

Credit: SSTL

HydroGNSS paves the way for an affordable future constellation that can offer much more frequent, responsive measurements than is possible with traditional remote sensing satellite systems, offering a new ability to monitor very dynamic phenomena such as freeze and thaw cycles of permafrost and helping to fill the gaps in our monitoring of the Earth’s vital signs for the future.

UK involvement

Led by Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd (SSTL), working closely with partners at Sapienza, Tor Vergata and IFAC-CNR in Italy, FMI in Finland, IEC/IEEC in Spain, National Oceanographic Centre (NOC) in UK, and University of Nottingham to tackle the scientific and technological challenges involved. The mission and satellite are designed, built and operated in the UK by Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd.

[Indiana-UK: Mordaunt-Holcomb meeting, 27 April](#)

News story

The Department for International Trade today welcomed the Governor of Indiana, Eric Holcomb, to the United Kingdom (27 April) to discuss strengthening trade.



Minister of State at the Department for International Trade, the Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP, is pleased to welcome the Governor of Indiana, Eric Holcomb, to the United Kingdom today, 27 April. Minister Mordaunt and Governor Holcomb are pleased to announce that the UK and Indiana are in the final stages of negotiating a trade and economic development Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Building upon the strong existing relationship between the UK and Indiana, the MOU enshrines the political will on both sides to enhance bilateral cooperation across economic development and trade and investment issues in the interests of UK and Indiana business. The MOU will have tangible benefits for both parties, aiming to remove barriers to trade and investment and increase opportunities for UK and Indiana businesses to invest and create jobs. Building on the UK's COP26 Presidency, we will include provisions on low emissions technology development and broad sustainability goals. Provisions on innovation and regulatory cooperation will look to future-proof cooperation on disruptive technologies and the sharing of best practices around resilient regulatory frameworks. A section on workforce development will aim to deliver accessible and inclusive workforce training and opportunities, acknowledging the shift towards a low carbon economy and collaborating on transitioning workers to adapt to new technologies and sustain communities. There will be a focus across a range of priority sectors, both where the UK and Indiana already collaborate and where there is opportunity to do more. Minister Mordaunt and Governor Holcomb note the good progress on negotiations to date, and look forward to formally signing the MOU at the Indiana Global Economic Summit in May. They affirm their commitment to working closely with each other to implement and build upon this agreement through regular dialogue and cooperation.

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