

Press release: PM meeting with Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi: 23 February 2017

From:

First published:

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Part of:

Prime Minister May met with His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and they discussed regional security, defence and trade.

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

The Prime Minister welcomed His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, to Downing Street today for their first formal bilateral meeting.

They discussed a range of international defence and security matters, and agreed on the importance of efforts to combat terrorism and bring stability to the Middle East. The Prime Minister reiterated the message she gave to the Gulf Cooperation Council Heads of State in December, that Gulf security is fundamental to our security, and that we remain a committed partner on this agenda.

On regional issues, they agreed on the need to find solutions to the conflicts in Syria and Yemen, and stressed the importance of inclusive political settlements as the only way to deliver long-term stability.

The Prime Minister talked about the conference on Somalia that the UK will host this year, and welcomed the Crown Prince's commitment to work together to ensure Somalia's recent progress can continue.

They also committed to build on the close and historic bilateral relationship between the UK and United Arab Emirates, including by stepping up our already strong trade and investment ties.

News story: New electricity connection to France gets go-ahead

The new ElecLink electricity connection between Britain and France will provide greater access to the continental electricity market, and help to reduce consumer bills as electricity can be flexibly imported and exported to take advantage of cheaper prices.

The project will run through the Channel Tunnel between Sellindge in the UK and Les Mandarins in France. It will have the capacity to power up to 2 million homes and provide further resilience for Britain's electricity supply.

A combination of domestic electricity generation including new nuclear power, gas and renewables, as well as increased access for importing and exporting electricity supplies from Europe, means homes and businesses will have reliable power at the lowest possible price all year round.

Thanks to the Government's supportive regulatory framework, including allowing interconnectors to participate in the Capacity Market, and innovative solutions from the developer, this major new piece of infrastructure will be financed on a purely commercial basis, with no risk to British tax and bill payers.

UK Energy Minister Jesse Norman said:

As a government we are strongly supportive of greater electricity trading with our European partners in order to lower household bills and deliver energy security as part of our modern industrial strategy.

We've created the right environment for cooperative projects like ElecLink to attract investment and compete in the market without needing financial support from our tax and bill payers.

The ElecLink interconnector is one of the most advanced new interconnection projects across Europe and the first of its kind between Britain and France since 1986, when the existing IFA (Interconnexion France-Angleterre) interconnector was commissioned.

ElecLink has said that the new interconnector will:

- Provide a gigawatt (1000MW) of electricity connection between the UK and France, enough capacity to power up to 2 million homes
- Reduce carbon dioxide emissions by approximately 6 million tonnes over the period 2020-2030, by enabling electricity demand in Britain and France to be met by the most efficient generating plants
- Create approximately 300 new jobs during the construction phase

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Groupe Eurotunnel Jacques Gounon said:

ElecLink further underlines how important the Channel Tunnel is to Britain and France. Not only is it a vital transport link, it is set to play an instrumental part in the supply of electricity to the UK, France and continental Europe.

With the debate over the future of energy security brought into focus recently, ElecLink delivers a smart, low-cost and environmentally friendly way to secure the electricity supply. We are proud to be inaugurating ElecLink and delighted to mark the official start of this great project which will significantly benefit the economies and consumers in both France and the United Kingdom.

[News story: #WalesWeek / #WythnosCymru is live](#)

From:

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Join the campaign and spread the word about Wales.

The UK Government has launched its #WalesWeek / #WythnosCymru campaign.

The #WalesWeek / #WythnosCymru is a cross government social media campaign created to promote Wales to the world. As St David's Day approaches, #WalesWeek / #WythnosCymru will use the seven days leading up to the national day, and the day itself, as an opportunity to promote and celebrate Wales.

We want you to help us showcase Wales and share your views on what makes the country such a great place to visit, work and do business.

We have award winning beaches and towns, international businesses operating here and a culture and language to be proud of.

Using #WalesWeek / #WythnosCymru we would like you to get involved on social media by sharing, images, facts and stories about Wales to show the world what makes Wales great.

Keep up to date on the campaign and what others are saying about #WalesWeek / #WythnosCymru by following @UKGovWales and @LlywDUCymru on [Facebook](#) , [Twitter](#) / [Trydar](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

[Press release: Changes to Personal Independence Payment regulations](#)

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The government is committed to ensuring the welfare system is a strong safety net for those who need it.

The government spends around £50 billion a year to support people with disabilities and health conditions.

Part of that support comes through Personal Independence Payment (PIP). This was introduced to replace the outdated Disability Living Allowance and helps with the extra costs that can often come with being disabled, such as added transport costs or assistance with cooking.

The PIP assessment is designed to focus more support on those who are likely to have a higher level of need, and higher costs associated with their disability. For example, claimants who require therapy at home, like dialysis or oxygen, are likely to need more support than someone who needs help to take medication. Similarly, people who cannot carry out a journey because of a visual or cognitive impairment are likely to need more support than someone who experiences psychological distress when they undertake a journey, for example as a result of social phobia or anxiety.

Recent legal judgments have interpreted the assessment criteria for PIP in ways that are different to what was originally intended. The government is now making amendments to clarify the criteria, to restore the original aim of the policy and ensure support goes to those most in need.

This is not a policy change and will not result in any claimants seeing a reduction in the amount of PIP previously awarded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The purpose is to restore the original intention of the benefit which has been expanded by the legal judgments.

Spending on disability benefits has risen by more than £3 billion in real terms since 2010, and will remain higher in each year to 2020, than in 2010.

Failing to reinstate the original intention of the policy would have led to substantial unplanned increases to public expenditure totalling £3.7 billion (between 2016 to 2017 and 2021 to 2022).

Media enquiries for this press release – 0203 267 5125

Follow DWP on:

Press release: 5,000 refugees arrive since Syrian scheme expanded

Over 1,200 refugees arrived in the final 3 months of 2016, meaning 5,454 people have been given refuge since the government pledged to resettle 20,000 refugees by 2020.

Within this total, approximately half of those who arrived under the scheme were children.

Today's figures also show Syrian refugees are now being housed by more than 200 local authorities across the United Kingdom. The government continues to work with councils and devolved administrations to ensure placements are available as more vulnerable people arrive.

Immigration Minister Robert Goodwill said:

The humanitarian crisis in Syria is unprecedented, which is why this government is undertaking one of the largest resettlement schemes in the UK's history.

I'm delighted with the significant progress we have made with the VPR scheme so far and vulnerable refugees are arriving here every month.

The hard work will continue throughout this Parliament, as we work with local authorities to provide those who have been displaced by conflict with a safe environment and the opportunity to rebuild their lives.

In September 2015, the government pledged to resettle 20,000 vulnerable Syrians by the end of this Parliament in 2020. Additionally 3,000 children and adults will be resettled from the Middle East and North Africa through our Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme.

And in 2016, a total of more than 8,000 children were granted refuge or other forms of leave. This included more than 900 unaccompanied children from

Europe.

The government has already pledged an additional £10 million in English language funding in order to help the Syrian families improve their English language skills, which are vital to help them in finding work, gain independence and give back to the communities that have welcomed them.

These resettlement schemes are only one of the ways the government is supporting vulnerable children and adults who have fled danger and conflict. The UK government remains the second largest donor in humanitarian assistance and has pledged £2.3 billion in aid to Syria and the neighbouring countries, which has provided:

- over 21 million food rations that feed a person for a month
- over 6.5 million relief packages
- over 6.2 million vaccines
- over 4.8 million medical consultations

The UK has also provided humanitarian support in response to the Mediterranean migration crisis of more than £100 million since October 2015. This includes providing winter clothing, hygiene kits and emergency medical care for those rescued at sea as well as protection for women and girls at risk of being trafficked.