

9 New Laws proposed for International Women's Day

In the House of Commons, nine of the Liberal Democrats' thirteen MPs are women. This year for International Women's Day, our MPs are proposing nine new Bills which embody the principles at the heart of our party.

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The importance of liberal internationalism

It was a shocking and sobering sight just a few days ago to wake up and see a photo of Kira Rudyk, the leader of a sister liberal party of ours in Ukraine holding a gun and preparing to fight.

It was also a reminder of the importance of our liberal values – and the need for internationalism to support fellow humans, rather than to try to hide away within our own borders as if the rest of the world doesn't exist. **Viruses, climate change and dictators don't stop at borders, and nor should our compassion for other people.**

The wave of sanctions, both mandatory from governments and voluntary as others too have ceased trade, cancelled events and ended Russian participation, is a reminder of just how much integration there was – economically, socially and culturally – between Russia and the rest of the world.

A frequent hope of liberals is that such extensive links can bring people together and reduce the risk of conflict. What the invasion of Ukraine has shown, however, is that such hope is not enough. We also **need strong multinational institutions with the necessary powers to enforce their decisions when required.**

Getting that right will help avoid future Ukraines, but we also have to work with where we are in the present. Which is why **we're pressing the government so hard to take effective action against the Russian oligarchs** who have secreted so much wealth in London and spent so heavily on British politics, British legal services and British financial services.

Events in Ukraine will come up in multiple ways at our online federal spring

conference 11-13 March. You can still [register for the event here](#) (and it only costs £5 if you have not come to conference before).

In the light of both the tragedy in Ukraine and the controversies over the Chinese use of money to influence British politics, we've been reviewing our rules for checking the international aspects of potential donations to confirm that they have the right safeguards in them.

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Author:

['The Battle for Liberal Britain' – Available now](#)

Around the world, populism and nationalism are on the rise. There is a battle for Liberal Britain and to win it, Liberal Democrats must offer a clear vision for the future of our country.

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[We can't turn our back on those fleeing Ukraine.](#)

These are families desperately fleeing war with their children. Let them in.

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[Rebuilding Trade and Cooperation with](#)

Europe

Hardly a week goes by without some new evidence of the damage done by Brexit to the British economy. From rising food prices, to empty supermarket shelves, to shortages of HGV drivers and of staff in the healthcare, farming and hospitality sectors, to musicians being unable to perform abroad, to British firms, farmers and fishers facing such higher charges and bureaucracy that they give up exporting their products altogether, to scientists losing chances of collaborative projects, Brexit is affecting more and more parts of everyday life. The coronavirus pandemic has caused the biggest shock to the British economy since the war, but, as the independent Office for Budget Responsibility has predicted, the impact of Brexit will be twice as large – and, unlike the pandemic, it will not stop.

The damage is not only to the economy. Brexit has removed British citizens' opportunities to work, to be together with their loved ones, to study and retire anywhere in the EU. Britain now has less clout in international negotiations, whether on climate change or biodiversity or trade. The existence of the UK itself is now under threat, as Brexit has weakened the arguments for Scotland and Northern Ireland – which both voted to Remain – to stay part of the union. The slogan 'take back control' was a lie; in reality Britain now exercises less control over the forces that determine its future than it did inside the EU.

Increasingly the electorate shares our view that Brexit is damaging Britain, and recognises that a new approach would bring benefits. The Liberal Democrat position, as agreed by conference in autumn 2020 and spring 2021, is to back the ultimate goal of the UK joining the EU once more. But support for a campaign to join the EU as soon as possible is by no means certain, and has no guarantee of success. In any case, there is no indication that the EU would want the UK back, in its current state; the Conservatives have gone out of their way to turn down offers of cooperation, to destroy the trust that is necessary to effective international relations and to diverge as much as possible from European standards and systems. The EU no longer sees Britain as a good neighbour, and it will take time to convince EU member states that the UK is serious about forging stronger links and rebuilding the relationship.

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