

Report by Head of OSCE Mission to Moldova: UK response, November 2022

Thank you, Mr Chair, and welcome Ambassador Keiderling to the Permanent Council. Thank you for your report.

Russia's unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine has had a significant impact on Moldova, the region and globally. Moldovans have shown generosity and hospitality to more than half a million refugees, including around 90,000 who remain in the country. To echo President Sandu's words, Moldova is living the reality of a devastating war at its borders. A war that is killing innocent people in Ukraine and endangering regional stability and European Security. Russian missiles targeting Ukrainian infrastructure have infringed Moldovan airspace and territory and, because of the war, Moldova is going through a major energy crisis with winter looming. Gazprom's decision to reduce supply of gas to Moldova is unjustified and appears to be designed to cause hardship to citizens on both banks of the Nistru river.

Ambassador, we thank the OSCE Mission for your continued efforts in monitoring the Security Zone and we underline the importance of freedom of movement of Mission members in order to carry out this important function.

We agree with your assessment of the importance of ongoing talks between Chisinau and Tiraspol and thank the Mission for its support to, and facilitation of, 1+1 meetings. With citizens on both sides of the Nistru united in their desire for peace and security, the current situation provides grounds for optimism that we might soon see movement towards a settlement of the conflict which respects Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, and with a special status for Transnistria.

The Mission's 'Conflict Prevention and Resolution programme' remains vitally important, including on confidence building measures and preventing and reducing tensions, as well as monitoring and investigating efforts. We regret that there have been, again, no developments in the withdrawal of illegally deployed Russian troops and ammunition. We once again call on Russia to remove its forces stationed in the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova without host nation consent, in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolutions. And we call on Russia to urgently formulate a proposal for resumption of the process of removal and destruction of ammunition from the Cobasna site. The continued presence of the ammunition at the site is a concern and is due to Russia's refusal to engage over many years. Russia would bear the responsibility for the human and environmental tragedy that would ensue in the event of an accident.

Ambassador, we echo your call for the sides to work towards full implementation of the "Berlin-plus package", including on number plates, telecommunications and access to farmlands. We are pleased by the Mission's continued efforts on Women Peace and Security including through skills

enhancing workshops with members of the Joint Expert Working Groups. We encourage a continued focus on the human rights situation on both sides of the Nistru, particularly with regards to freedom of expression on the left bank. We echo your concerns about the amendments introducing criminal liability for complaints made against Transnistrian authorities, which will discourage the filing of complaints, not only to the Moldovan authorities but also to international institutions. We support your ongoing work to ensure access to justice for victims of gender-based violence, including human trafficking and other serious and organised crime.

The United Kingdom remains committed to supporting Moldova in its reform agenda. We welcome OSCE's participation in the Anti-corruption Working Group of the Moldova Support Platform, which the UK is pleased to co-chair with our Romanian colleagues under strategic direction of the Moldovan authorities.

Finally, Ambassador Keiderling, I would like to thank you for your strong leadership during your initial few months. I also thank the Mission staff, as well as Special Representative Mayr-Harting, for their dedication and professionalism during a difficult year. The United Kingdom will continue to support you and the Mission in fulfilling your mandate and to support peace and stability for the people of Moldova over the coming year and beyond.

Natural flood management work resumes to increase flood resilience in Leeds

Natural flood management work to increase flood resilience across the Aire catchment in Leeds continues as the next tree planting season is set to begin.

The Environment Agency, working alongside Leeds City Council and other partners, will be implementing a range of nature-based solutions across the Upper Aire catchment to reduce flood risk in the area as part of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme's Natural Flood Management project. Natural flood management can help to reduce flood risk by mimicking natural processes and slowing the flow of water.

At the end of the last planting season, £3.7m had been invested in the scheme so far with a further £1.1m forecast for this year.

Two major interventions for the project are soil aeration and tree planting, delivered by landowners and strategic partners on behalf of the Environment Agency, and the White Rose Forest respectively.

Soil aeration helps increase the storage capacity of water in the ground by using a machine to poke holes into compacted soil and allow air, water and nutrients to penetrate through. This reduces surface water run-off that could

contribute to peak flows in rivers and their connected streams, therefore reducing flood risk. This technique is also beneficial as it makes soil rich and fertile for growing crops.

So far 288 hectares of soil aeration has been successfully carried out, with a further 218 hectares currently being delivered, or in the pipeline.

Meanwhile, over 410,000 trees have been planted in the catchment and, as the next tree planting season begins, the Environment Agency and partners have set an ambitious target of over 100,000 trees to be planted between October 2022 and March 2023. This equates to approximately 55 hectares or 77 football pitches.

Jenny Longley, Area flood risk manager at the Environment Agency, said:

The Environment Agency is committed to providing the highest protection against flooding in Leeds.

Alongside our traditional flood defences, nature-based solutions can reduce flood risks and have a range of positive benefits for the city such as increased biodiversity, and improved habitat and water quality.

We're excited to be working with our partners to deliver this work as part of the Leeds scheme, which will ensure the area is more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Councillor Helen Hayden, Leeds City Council's executive member for infrastructure and climate, said:

Increasing the flood resilience of Leeds is an important part of our response to the climate emergency.

When complete in 2023, the engineering works on Leeds FAS2 will provide significant flood protection to thousands of residents and hundreds of businesses in Leeds. These sustainable, nature-based solutions will complement our engineered defences, and ensure that the FAS2 scheme is even more resilient to the effects of climate change.

We are proud to be working with the Environment Agency on a natural flood management scheme of this scale and delighted that we are on track to have planted over half a million trees by March 2023, as well as completing vast areas of soil aeration and other Natural Flood Management techniques.

This work allows us to slow the flow of water and considerably reduce flood risk, and also capture huge amounts of carbon, create a range of habitats for wildlife, increase the efficiency of farmland in our region, and create areas of natural beauty for

residents to enjoy for generations to come.

Other natural flood risk measures are also being delivered through an innovative platform known as NatureBid. The NatureBid project is an auction that provides the opportunity for landowners and farmers to bid for funding to conduct targeted natural flood management measures onto their land. The auction was carried out last year; successful bids began being implemented across the catchment over the summer and will continue through this planting season up to March 2023.

Some of the measures that will be carried out from the NatureBid 2 project include tree planting, soil aeration, creating new hedgerows and buffer strips, and installing leaky dams, which all help to slow the flow of water in the catchment and reduce peak flows downstream and in doing so decrease the risk of flooding.

Natural Flood Management also offers wider benefits including improving soil health, improving habitats and providing greater biodiversity for wildlife and increasing carbon sequestration.

Read more about natural flood management in the Upper Aire catchment on [Leeds City Council's Commonplace website](#).

If you have land and are interested in tree planting, visit the White Rose Forest's website on www.whiteroseforest.org/aireriver.

[UK convenes Joint Expeditionary Force ministers in Edinburgh](#)

Defence Ministers and senior representatives from the ten participating nations of the [Joint Expeditionary Force \(JEF\)](#) met in Edinburgh, Scotland, today to discuss shared challenges and commitments as a group of like-minded nations.

The UK convened the meeting as the framework nation, and it comes eight months after the group [last met in the UK](#) – at Belvoir Castle on the eve of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine.

The meeting today took place in the Cabinet Room of Queen Elizabeth House, the headquarters of the UK Government in Scotland. The group agreed to deepen cooperation on hybrid threats and to protect Critical National Infrastructure, including underwater cables and pipelines.

The Joint Expeditionary Force partners also discussed Russia's persistent aggression which seeks to weaken western societies and poses a challenge to

the security of Northern Europe.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

Our nations remain steadfast in our support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. The Joint Expeditionary Force has been at the forefront of providing diplomatic, financial, humanitarian and military support, something we will continue to do to until Russia has withdrawn their forces.

Over the past eight months, our contribution through the JEF has been steady and committed, seeing vital military provision achieved through the International Fund for Ukraine – and our work will continue as we remain determined to bolster the security of Northern Europe and Ukraine.

The meeting was held as the Netherlands and Norway announced further commitments to the [International Fund for Ukraine \(IFU\)](#). The fund was initiated by the UK and the money pledged to the fund is used to purchase equipment directly from manufacturers meaning it will Ukraine at pace.

Participants in the fund are drafting a framework with Ukraine which sets out who has responsibility for what. The UK has contributed £250 million to date and the fund totals over half a billion pounds.

The Joint Expeditionary Force comprises of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The nations share the same purpose, values and a common focus on security and stability in the JEF core regions of the High North, North Atlantic and Baltic Sea region.

The group provides a responsive, capable, and ready military force that undertakes integrated activities at sea, on land and in the air, across northern Europe. These activities are preventative and proportionate and demonstrate solidarity, capability, and resolve to stand together for security and stability in the JEF core regions.

The meeting followed a [visit by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg](#) yesterday to see some of the 10,000 Ukrainian recruits being trained by the UK this year. The UK has led training of over 7,400 Ukrainian personnel so far, with 1,900 currently going through training. Representatives from the JEF nations also visited the training yesterday.

The UK-led programme is being supported by Canada, Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Norway, New Zealand the Netherlands, and Latvia. Australia will support from 2023.

UK convenes Joint Expeditionary Force ministers in Edinburgh

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace hosted counterparts from the ten Joint Expeditionary Force nations in Edinburgh.

Government accepts recommendations on import measures for Biodiesel and Wire Rod

The government has today [10 November 2022] agreed with the Trade Remedies Authority's recommendation on anti-dumping and countervailing measures on imports of Biodiesel from the USA and Canada. It has also accepted the recommendation on anti-dumping measures on imports of Wire Rod from China.

Biodiesel

After reviewing the measures on biodiesel imports, which were transitioned from the European Union system when the UK left the EU, the TRA recommended that existing tariffs on imports of fatty-acid mono-alkyl esters (FAME) Biodiesel be kept at their current levels for five years from 30 January 2021, but that tariffs on imports of hydrotreated vegetable oils (HVO) Biodiesel be [removed](#). The UK has an established FAME production industry but no domestic HVO production. This means that the UK's FAME production industry will continue to be protected from dumped and subsidised Biodiesel which is exported from the USA (and in some cases consigned from Canada), but that HVO from these countries can be imported, which will benefit the UK's agricultural and transport industries as well as users of oil-fired heating.

Green fuels offer alternative to diesel

FAME and HVO are created using a wide variety of oils and animal fats, including used cooking oils, animal fats/tallow, soya oil, rapeseed oil and sunflower oil. FAME is produced through esterification while HVO, also known as renewable Biodiesel, is made by hydrotreating used vegetable oils. Both types of Biodiesel are added to diesel to produce a blended road fuel which is sold at petrol stations. HVO performs better in this use and is also suitable for a range of other uses.

The TRA's investigations found that Government-subsidised producers in the US would be likely to dump FAME Biodiesel in the UK in the future and cause harm to UK industry if the measures no longer applied. Although the TRA found that

dumping of HVO would also be likely to occur if the duty were no longer applied, there would be no injury to domestic manufacturers/businesses as there is no HVO industry in the UK. In addition, HVO is more expensive than FAME so the imports are unlikely to compete with domestically produced FAME. The TRA also established that there is demand for HVO in the UK for use in heating buildings as it offers a cost-effective and more environmentally friendly alternative to existing heating fuels.

Wire Rod

Wire Rod in the UK is predominantly used in construction, tyre reinforcement and steel springs in vehicles. The UK market for Wire Rod is estimated to be worth more than £740 million per year.

Historically, the UK was an attractive market for Chinese exporters of Wire Rod before the existing measure was imposed. Since the measure was imposed by the European Union in 2008, the volume of imports dropped significantly. The TRA's investigation found evidence of high production and significant inventories of Wire Rod in China suggesting that dumping would be likely to occur again if the measures were removed.

The TRA recommended that the measures on Wire Rod be maintained [at their current levels](#) until 30 January 2026 – that is five years subsequent to the date when the measure would have expired (30 January 2021) had no transition review been initiated.

Background information

About the TRA

- The Trade Remedies Authority is the UK body that investigates whether trade remedies measures are needed on imports. Trade remedy investigations were carried out by the EU Commission on the UK's behalf until the UK left the EU.
- Anti-dumping measures counter goods being 'dumped' into countries at prices below their normal price in their country of origin and are one of the three types of trade remedies – along with countervailing measures against countervailable subsidies and safeguard measures– that are allowed under World Trade Organization (WTO) rules.
- Forty-four EU trade remedies measures that were of interest to UK producers were carried across into UK law when the UK left the EU and the TRA is reviewing each one to check if it is suitable for UK needs. The biodiesel measure is the latest to be completed.

About the products

- HVO and FAME Biodiesel have different production processes: HVO Biodiesel is produced through hydrotreatment (which uses hydrogen as the catalyst to remove oxygen from the vegetable oils), whereas traditional FAME Biodiesel is produced through esterification (the reaction of an alcohol with acid). FAME Biodiesel production requires other reagents such as methanol and produces glycerol as a by-product. FAME is seen as

a transitional alternative to fossil fuels as, while it does offer some environmental benefits, it is not without its drawbacks. Some of the problems of high fame content include: Relatively short shelf life, water contamination due to higher water content, encourages diesel bug growth, increased chance of injector fouling, higher fuel consumption rate due to the fuel being less powerful, gradual degradation of fuel due to oxidation and hydrolysis, which can damage machinery.

- HVO Biodiesel is considered a type of “drop-in fuel” which, theoretically, can be used in its pure form in diesel-powered vehicles/machinery without any modification to engines.
- Wire Rod includes bars and rods, hot-rolled, in irregularly wound coils of iron, non-alloy steel or alloy steel other than of stainless-steel.