

# Western Balkans: Readout – Foreign Secretary hosts Western Balkans Foreign Ministers in London

Press release

The Foreign Secretary has hosted the Foreign Ministers of the Western Balkans in London for talks.



Foreign Secretary Liz Truss today (Monday 13 December) convened a meeting of the six Foreign Ministers of the Western Balkans in London to discuss strengthening economic and security ties and supporting freedom and stability in the region. The UK's new Special Envoy to the Western Balkans, Sir Stuart Peach, also attended as did the EU Special Representative Miroslav Lajčák and US Deputy Assistant Secretary Gabriel Escobar.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

The UK is stepping up its efforts to promote peace, stability and prosperity in the region. This is a critical moment for the Western Balkans and it is important that the peace, freedom and democracy that was hard won over 20 years ago is maintained.

I recently hosted the G7 Foreign Ministers' meeting in Liverpool where a discussion was held on the Western Balkans and Ministers welcomed the stepping up of the UK presence. I want the UK and our allies to build closer economic and security ties with the region, which will boost jobs and growth and help support a freer, wealthier, more secure Western Balkans.

I also welcomed representatives from the EU and the US to these discussions and emphasised the need to work together on stepping up our efforts to find lasting solutions to reduce tensions in the region.

As part of this effort, the UK has appointed Sir Stuart Peach as

Special Envoy to the Western Balkans. He has long experience in the region, as former UK Chief of the Defence Staff and Chair of NATO's military committee, and will visit the region tomorrow to take forward our engagement.

This is part of the FCDO's mission create a global network of liberty based around deeper economic, tech, security and development ties. As freedom-loving democracies, the UK will help the Western Balkans defend and advance the cause of liberty. They have our full support to not only survive, but thrive.

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