

Welsh Secretary writes to businesses about EU Transition

News story

The letter to hundreds of Welsh businesses focusses on readiness for the end of the EU Transition period.



Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart has written to hundreds of businesses across Wales about their readiness for the end of the EU Transition period.

The UK left the European Union on 31 January 2020 and the end of the Transition Period – when new rules for people, businesses, travel and trade will come into effect – arrives on 31 December.

In the letter Mr Hart says:

We understand the impact Covid-19 has had on businesses' ability to prepare. We know it isn't always easy to plan ahead given the daily challenges you are facing. But more and more businesses in Wales are making the preparations they need in order to be ready and, with less than a month remaining until the Transition Period ends, our ask is that you take time now to get your business ready.

Both our governments are fully committed to supporting business in Wales to prepare, and some key UK government and Welsh Government links are enclosed with this letter.

The Welsh Secretary will be jointly hosting a webinar on Thursday (10 December), 11.30am – 12.15pm, where he will talk directly to businesses in Wales about the challenges and opportunities that the end of the Transition Period presents.

[Register for the event by using this link.](#)

[Letter to Welsh businesses on EU Readiness](#)

PDF, 295KB, 5 pages

This file may not be suitable for users of assistive technology.

Request an accessible format.

If you use assistive technology (such as a screen reader) and need a version of this document in a more accessible format, please email correspondence@ukgovwales.gov.uk. Please tell us what format you need. It will help us if you say what assistive technology you use.

Published 4 December 2020

[OSCE Ministerial Council: joint statement on UNSCR 1325](#)

I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the following 52 participating States: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Netherlands, Republic of North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States and Uzbekistan.

This year, we mark twenty years since the adoption of United Nations Security Council resolution (UNSCR) 1325 (2000). The resolution stresses the importance of women's full, equal and meaningful participation, including at all levels of decision-making and leadership, in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security as well as promoting the safety of women and girls from violence in conflict and crises. This landmark resolution and all its subsequent reviews, all in line with UN Sustainable Development Goal 5, are essential in furthering the critical role of women in matters of peace and security at all levels.

As the world's largest regional security organization, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) must lead the way. With its field missions, secretariat and autonomous institutions, the OSCE offers participating States a unique network. The OSCE's concept of comprehensive security covers all different elements of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. This provides a very suitable setting for full implementation of the Women, Peace and Security commitments on a range of levels, from the political to the very practical.

The implementation of the UNSCR 1325 and its subsequent resolutions has advanced within the OSCE, as several initiatives illustrate. Voluntary information exchange on Women, Peace and Security happens through the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security and through the inclusion of gender in discussions on Small Arms Light Weapons/Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition (SALW/SCA). Furthermore, the voluntary National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security have proven to be a useful tool to implement UNSCR 1325 for a majority of participating States.

Women mediators and the 2019 OSCE toolkit 'Inclusion of Women and Effective Peace Processes' demonstrate that inclusion is not only right; it is also the most effective way to achieve stability and peace. Including and empowering women not only to the armed forces but also to peace processes, including peace operations and mediation, is equally important and must become a standard practice. The full implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda requires everyone, including boys and men to be engaged as positive agents for change.

Achieving sustainable peace is not possible without the full, equal and meaningful participation of women'. However, women and their efforts remain too often invisible. For this to change, the Women Peace and Security agenda needs to be inclusive of young and diverse voices, and requires responsive approaches to evolving concepts of security and needs on the ground. The OSCE Scholarship for Peace and Security contributes hereto. Cooperation with civil society remains of utmost relevance in this regard and should be reinforced, as civil society drives the Women Peace and Security agenda implementation through their crucial contribution, important views and essential perspectives.

Nonetheless, Mr. Chairperson, obstacles and challenges still persist. The 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 is thus a moment to call for action in areas where the OSCE is both at the forefront and one of the best equipped organisations. We need to step up our efforts to empower women's equal, full and meaningful participation and leadership and women professionals in conflict prevention and crisis management, mediation, peace processes, policing, border management, arms control and disarmament, and in the security sector, including armed forces. To achieve this, we have to act upon our promises, which requires both political will and resources.

In order to do so, the OSCE needs to continue improving its existing commitments. Two decades after subscribing to UNSCR 1325, we should remain ambitious and make full use of the potential for further advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda, in particular within the FSC. We regret that the efforts for an FSC decision on UNSCR 1325 did not reach consensus. As the Women, Peace and Security agenda cuts across the FSC's work, the FSC has a key part to play in delivering the full implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions in the OSCE area. We already committed to this during the OSCE ministerial in 2011. These resolutions are highly relevant. Concrete additional efforts in the OSCE, including the FSC, could include the following:

- Set up a plan of action for the full, equal and meaningful participation

of women, in all aspects of the FSC's areas of work, including at all levels of decision-making and leadership;

- Consider establishing a directory of national focal points on gender equality in order to facilitate the development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review of the plan of action;
- Promote the information exchange on issues pertaining to Women, Peace and Security through the Code of Conduct on Politico-military Aspects of Security;
- Facilitate gender mainstreaming, also in SALW/SCA controls and in practical assistance work;
- Encourage and support the sharing of experiences and best practices as regards the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict rehabilitation;
- Compile national practices in the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and its subsequent resolutions, with a focus on participating States' promotion of the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in their armed and security forces.
- Encourage the active use of the 2019 toolkit 'Inclusion of Women and Effective Peace Processes' as practical tool for increasing the role of women in the security sector;
- Encourage the development of voluntary NAPs on Women, Peace and Security and, for those States who already have these Plans in place, continue to improve them, monitor and evaluate their implementation as well as provide sufficient budget to do so;

Although gaps remain to be bridged in order to meet the commitments we made in 2004 through the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality and all related commitments, we stand ready to live up to our promises to strive for full implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda that arose from UNSCR 1325 and thus to turning our words into action.

[Welsh Secretary holds events to prepare for end of EU Transition](#)

News story

Discussions take place with agriculture and business sectors with new rules set to apply from 1 January 2021.

Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart has held the latest in a series of events to help businesses and people in Wales prepare for the end of the EU Transition period.

The UK has left the European Union and new rules affecting businesses and travel to the EU will apply from 31 December.

The Welsh Secretary joined the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs George Eustice for a live virtual event on Tuesday (1 December) with representatives of Welsh agriculture and food and drink production to discuss impact the changes will have on their sector and how they can prepare for them.

Also this week Mr Hart hosted a webinar on Thursday (3 December), alongside CEO for Chambers Wales Heather Myers and Lynsay Neil from HMRC, where he spoke to more than 100 business representatives about preparations for the end of the Transition period and the support that UK Government can offer.

Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart said:

The UK government is aware of the challenges businesses face, especially during the pandemic, but it is essential that they prepare for the end of the Transition Period which is happening in less than 30 days.

This is an exciting moment, and one of great opportunity, but there are also significant changes to be made and challenges to be met. The UK Government is here to help and support businesses in Wales and right across the UK navigate their way successfully through this change.

UK Government support includes £705 million in new technology, infrastructure and jobs at the border and there will be £80 million in grants for organisations to recruit and train new customer agents.

New border controls on imports will be introduced in stages to ease the transition.

Further advice is available on the [gov.uk/transition](https://www.gov.uk/transition) page.

[Detailed guide: Importing and exporting waste from 1 January 2021](#)

What UK waste importers and exporters must do to notify about waste shipments from 1 January 2021.

[Housing Minister's speech at HOMES UK conference](#)

Thank you for that kind introduction.

And a warm welcome to everyone joining us virtually this afternoon to hear our announcing the winner of the government's Home of 2030 competition.

Clever, forward-thinking and innovative design will be at the forefront of the housing sector's recovery from COVID-19.

And there is therefore no place more fitting in which to announce the winner of our design competition than this year's Homes UK Conference.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have helped guide this competition to completion including Homes England, BEIS, DHSC as well as BRE, RIBA, the Design Council and of course MOBIE.

The Home of 2030 competition was born out of this government's ambition to tackle the grand challenges of our time, helping our country adapt for an ageing society whilst fighting climate change and boldly pursuing our 2050 Net Zero commitments.

It sought to bring together designers, architects, developers – the greatest minds from across the sector, with entrants each submitting their cutting-edge designs for new low carbon homes.

But this is not just about energy efficiency.

The COVID-19 pandemic has sharply brought into focus how vital our homes, our neighbourhoods, and our local green spaces are to our physical and mental well-being.

This was reinforced by the Design Council's "Public Vision for the Home of 2030" report, which was published earlier this year.

The report serves not only to inspire those who design and deliver housing, but also challenge long-held assumptions about what is important to us in our individual homes in a post-Covid world.

It recognises the need to create well-designed, spacious, generously equipped homes that meet the changing needs of residents.

That is what underpins our Home of 2030 competition, but it is also the guiding principle behind our planning reforms.

Our Planning for the future white paper encourages developers to not just build greener, more beautiful homes but also to create greener, more beautiful neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhoods which offer tree lined streets, parks, playing fields and open green spaces with a rich biodiversity.

And in return we are saying to builders who invest in this kind of place-making design which is in keeping with the local aesthetic and built to last, that we will create a fast-track for beauty which sees their development green lighted much more quickly than at present.

We also want to support the housing industry in building the more sustainable, energy-efficient and greener homes of tomorrow.

Housing accounts for around 15% of the country's greenhouse gas emissions.

It is clear that we need to significantly reduce the carbon footprint of both new and existing homes if we are serious about fulfilling our Net Zero commitments.

That is why we are implementing the Future Homes Standard.

And we expect that homes built to this new standard will have carbon dioxide emissions 75 to 80% lower than those built to current regulations. These homes will be future-proofed with low carbon heating and high levels of energy efficiency.

All homes built under the Future Homes Standard will be 'zero carbon ready'.

That means no costly retrofitting work will be necessary for them to become zero-carbon as the electricity grid continues to decarbonise.

Last month, the Prime Minister set out his 10 Point Plan on Climate Change, ensuring that when it comes to cutting carbon emissions, our country remains a trailblazer for other countries to follow.

Our Home of 2030 competition supports us in realising that vision for a cleaner, greener Britain – changing the way we heat our homes, improving insulation and adopting new technologies.

And the willingness of groups across all ages, young and old, to engage with this project, from the in-depth research carried out by the Design Council, to the young people's competition run by MOBIE, shows just how much industry support there is for making these homes of the future a reality.

Each of the 200+ entries have had to highlight how their designs would meet the challenges of the next decade.

They had to demonstrate how their proposed homes are deliverable and scalable but also:

How they are age friendly and inclusive...

How they are going to yield a low environmental impact and...

Supporting healthy living.

A panel of judges made up of industry experts, led by Peter Freeman, the new chair of Homes England, selected 6 outstanding finalists. And, since August, they have been hard at work developing their initial design concepts into detailed proposals.

I know that assembling their teams, engaging with cutting-edge ideas and applying their concepts to a real-world site hasn't been easy.

I would like to acknowledge the teams from HLM Architects, Igloo, Outpost, Openstudio, Positive Collective and Studio OPEN for their ingenuity and perseverance.

The overall standard of the finalists' entries was extremely high – making the selection of just one winner very difficult...

But two entries did really capture the judges' imagination.

One showed how good design can deliver the excellent performance and flexibility of scale demanded for the home of the future. This design also presented a visually and socially vibrant, inclusive community, ensuring the needs of all residents could be met.

The other showed the way forward for a fully digitalized manufacturing process for housing – delivering a bespoke appearance and diversity of aesthetic, based on a platform accessible to everyone.

In the end, after much deliberation, the judges decided that it was a fair tie.

And so I am pleased to announce that the joint winners of the Home of 2030 Professional Design Competition are Igloo with PlusHome and Openstudio with Connector Housing.

Their designs truly show the way housing in this country can be reimagined and, for that, I would like to sincerely congratulate both winners of these worthy awards.

The exciting journey for them is not yet over.

Each of our 6 fantastic finalists will now be introduced to a Homes England developer panel, giving them the opportunity to take forward and build their innovative, future designs.

In the 'Professional' element of the competition, we have seen some of the best and brightest of the industry come forward with their solutions to the biggest challenges faced by the sector today.

But, in the Young Person's challenge, we have also seen the imaginative, capable and inventive designs of those yet to enter the industry.

That is the Home of 2030's lasting legacy.

It has inspired a new generation to continue innovating and pushing the boundaries of what is possible in green design...

And it has brought us one step closer to building the homes of tomorrow.

Thank you, well done to the winners, and thank you to everyone for taking part.