

# International treaty: [MS No.2/2018] Amendments to texts and various annexes to 1998 Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants and 1998 Protocol on Heavy Metals

Published title: Amendment of the text of and annexes I, II, III, IV, VI and VIII to the Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants [and] Amendment of the text of and annexes other than III and VII to the 1998 Protocol on Heavy Metals

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## Speech: British High Commissioner comments on media shutdown and opposition 'swearing in' in Kenya

I have made clear, as have many international friends of Kenya for some time, that what we would like to see is a full, transparent, open dialogue between politicians and between others – business leaders, religious leaders, civil society – designed to heal some of the very deep divisions that were clearly exposed during the election campaign.

I do not believe that any parallel inauguration helps to create such a dialogue, I think that the UK has been very clear that our support is for the constitution and for the law, and that those acting outside those things should not be doing so, but should be acting in the spirit of promoting dialogue.

I will continue to call on both sides, and indeed on Kenyans of good will from all parts of the country, to find ways of talking to each other about how the institutions of the country can be strengthened and about how everybody can feel included in the future of the country. That is an exercise for Kenyans to lead, but I stand ready to support that as I know do my international friends.

On the question of the media, I would just say that one of the strongest things about this country, one of the reasons that so many investors are headquartered here, that so many people come here, that this country's capital is seen as the hub of the region and one of the hubs of the continent, is because of the open, democratic, free media; that sense that

means people from country's like mine feel at home, that sense that people can have open debates in public.

I would urge the government, as I have done, to allow the media to operate freely, not simply because it's the right thing to do, but because it contributes very strongly to the positive image that Kenya has in the world.

[Watch the British High Commissioner speak to the Kenyan press](#)

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## **Press release: Welsh Secretary calls on Welsh Government to take further steps to drive up animal welfare standards**

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns is calling on Welsh Ministers in Cardiff Bay to follow Westminster's lead and explore the potential of implementing a ban on third party puppy sales in Wales.

It comes as the UK Government today (8 Feb) launches a call for evidence in England, seeking views on a possible ban on third party sales, which would mean anyone looking to buy or adopt a dog will either deal directly with the breeder or with one of the nation's many animal rehousing centres.

It forms part of a package of reforms implemented by the UK Government designed to drive up welfare standards.

### **Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns said:**

Wales is a nation of animal lovers and it is vital that we maintain the highest standards of animal welfare. The UK Government is serious about improving welfare in breeding establishments and at the point of sale to ensure our much loved pets get the right start in life.

The call for evidence launched today marks a further step in the UK Government's aim to raise the bar standards in England. I would encourage the Welsh Government to carefully consider the evidence that is submitted and to explore the potential of implementing the same measures in Wales.

Launching the call for evidence on a ban in England, UK Government Environment Secretary Michael Gove invited all interested parties to share

their views by 2 May 2018 on how this could best be introduced.

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## **News story: Enforcement Undertakings accepted from United Utilities**

United Utilities have paid £155,000 to environmental charities as part of two Enforcement Undertakings (EUs). The EUs were offered to the Environment Agency after the company admitted causing sewage to pollute two watercourses in the summer of 2016.

### **Benefit to environment**

EUs are a new kind of restorative enforcement sanction. Polluters can make an offer to the Environment Agency to pay for or carry out environmental improvements as an alternative to any other enforcement action and the Environment Agency decides whether this is acceptable.

In July 2016, a blockage in a sewage detention tank in Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire, caused sewage to overflow to the River Goyt, resulting in discoloration to the river downstream to New Mills, and sewage fungus being deposited on the river bed for at least a kilometre. Although no fish were found to have been killed, there was a short-term but significant impact on invertebrate life and the river habitat, in which fish such as trout and bullhead normally thrive.

In August 2016, a blockage in a sewer in Millbrook, Tameside, caused an overflow through a dislodged hatch cover, resulting in a similar impact on a shorter stretch of Swineshaw Brook which runs to the River Tame.

The EU offers were accepted by the Environment Agency in October 2017 and were completed in January 2018. United Utilities made a total of £155,000 in donations to the Wild Trout Trust, the Ramblers Association and the Healthy Rivers Trust. This money will be used to fund environmental improvements and research in the affected catchments and to restore endangered footpaths.

The company also spent a further £10,000 removing rubbish from Swineshaw Brook and also paid the Environment Agency's incident response and investigation costs in full. In response to both incidents United Utilities had acted quickly to stop the pollution and resolve the cause. As part of the EUs the company also committed to improving their infrastructure and asset maintenance schedules in order to reduce the likelihood of this happening again.

Mike Higgins, an Environment Officer with the Environment Agency, said:

Enforcement Undertakings allow polluters to positively address and restore the harm caused to the environment and prevent repeat incidents.

They offer quicker and more directly beneficial resolution than a court prosecution and help offenders who are prepared to take responsibility for their actions to voluntarily make things right. We will continue to seek prosecutions against those who cause severe pollution or who act deliberately or recklessly.

Please report any environmental issues to the Environment Agency's 24 hour Incident Hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

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