

Press release: Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Serbia: Sian MacLeod

Ms Sian MacLeod OBE has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Serbia.

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2015 to present Vienna, Ambassador/Head of UK Delegation to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe 2014 to 2015 FC0, Additional Director, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Directorate 2013 to 2014 FC0, Director, British Council Triennial Review 2009 to 2013 Prague, Her Majesty's Ambassador 2007 to 2008 FC0, Head, Whitehall Liaison Department 2005 to 2007 Moscow, Minister and Deputy Head of Mission 2004 to 2005 Moscow, Head of Political Section 2002 to 2004 Cabinet Office, Deputy Chief of the Assessments Staff 2000 to 2001 FC0, Deputy Head, Counter-Terrorism Policy Department 1996 to 2000 The Hague, Head of Political Section 1995 to 1996 FC0, Grade Manager, Personnel Management Department 1993 to 1994 FC0, Head, Biological and Chemical Weapons Section, Arms Control and Disarmament/Non-Proliferation Department 1992 FC0, Head, Russia Section, Joint Assistance Unit 1992 Vilnius, Deputy Head of Mission 1988 to 1992 Moscow, Second Secretary, Chancery 1987 to 1988 Full-time Russian language training 1986 to 1987 FC0, Desk Officer, South African Department 1985 to 1986 British Council, Programme Officer

Press release: Coarse fishing river close season – Public consultation

A public consultation will be conducted on the future of the coarse fishing close season on rivers in England. The consultation is open for 8 weeks, starting on 14 January 2019 and ending on 11 March 2019.

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The decision to consult the angling community and others on the close season follows a preliminary survey of 20,000 anglers conducted last year.

As part of the consultation, the Environment Agency has [published a paper](#) setting out the results of its close season evidence review and options for future regulation. The options comprise retaining the current statutory close season; retaining a close season, but starting on 15 April and ending on 30 June; and removing it altogether.

Kevin Austin, Deputy Director of Fisheries at the Environment Agency said:

We want to hear the views of anybody with an interest in coarse fisheries, their preferred way forward and the reasons and evidence to support that. This will help us decide whether there is a case for change.

Our priority is to find the right balance between angling and protecting the fish stocks on which angling relies.

Martin Salter from the Angling Trust said:

Whilst the Angling Trust will not take any formal position for or against any changes in the river close season we welcome the detailed examination of the available evidence and strongly believe that the views of all anglers should be taken into account before any decision is made.

We are pleased that this important issue is now going out to full consultation. It will doubtless arouse some strong feelings on all sides but as an angling community we shouldn't be frightened to debate, scrutinise and consider the evidence for the laws that affect and govern our sport.

Steve Axford from the Institute of Fisheries Management (IFM) said:

The Institute of Fisheries Management is pleased to see that there will be wider public consultation on the closed season for coarse fish in rivers. We wish to help with assessment of the arguments and any further evidence that may come from the consultation and in the development of any proposed changes to byelaws that may result.

The consultation will be managed by the Environment Agency.

The current coarse fishing close season runs from 15 March to 15 June and aims to reduce risks to spawning fish caused by angling. The close season period covers most spawning by most coarse fish species. The close season on most still waters was removed in 1995 and on most canals in 2000.

The results of the [preliminary survey of anglers](#) are available online.

Notes to editors

- The report that accompanies the consultation includes a summary of the evidence around the close season and of the strengths and weaknesses of each option. We would encourage anyone participating in the consultation to read this. The complete evidence documents can be accessed from the consultation webpage.
- In our latest (2018) poll, 43% of anglers want retain the close season; 17% want to retain a close season, but change to start/finish dates; and 33% support removing it (the remainder were undecided).
- Depending on the outcome of the consultation, we may develop proposals for a change in the close season byelaw. Any proposed change must be advertised, to give everyone the opportunity to object (or support). We will respond to these objections, before applying to government for confirmation. The final decision rests with Government.
- The reasons we have chosen the 15 April and 30 June start and end dates for the “change option” are that a) delaying the start of the close season will most likely only affect three early spawning species and b) changing to 30 June provides additional protection to later or repeat spawning fish, in particular while they recover from spawning, which may increase in importance to mitigate for the effects of climate change.
- Any future change to the close season byelaw will involve a Habitats Regulation Assessment of the risks to designated species, specifically salmon, lamprey and shad.

[News story: New taskforce to tackle economic crime](#)

The Home Secretary and Chancellor will today (14 January 2019) jointly chair a new government taskforce which will work with senior figures from the UK financial sector to tackle economic crime.

The scale of this type of crime – which includes fraud, bribery, corruption and money laundering – is estimated to be at least £14.4 billion per year.

The new Economic Crime Strategic Board, which will meet twice a year, will set priorities, direct resources and scrutinise performance against the economic crime threat, which is set out in the Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) Strategy.

The board includes CEOs and chief executives from the banking institutions Barclays, Lloyds and Santander as well as senior representatives from UK Finance, the National Crime Agency (NCA) and the Solicitors Regulation Authority, Accountants Affinity Group and National Association of Estate Agents.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

We need to take action on all fronts to target the corrupt fraudsters who are lining their pockets with dirty money and living luxury lifestyles at the expense of law-abiding citizens.

The Government is already investing millions in the fight against economic crime, but it is crucial we work closely with our financial sector partners to win this battle.

These criminals threaten the UK's reputation as a world-leading place to do business and we have a joint responsibility to stop them.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond, said:

The UK is leading the world in the fight against illicit finance, preventing fraudsters from stealing billions from the public each year. We know more can be done which is why the Home Secretary and I are launching the first ever cross-departmental board to prevent more people from becoming victims of economic crime.

By bringing together specialists across the public and private sector, we can use the best of our expertise to maintain our status as a global financial centre.

At the board meeting, the Home Secretary will confirm that the Home Office will commit £3.5 million in 2019/20 to support work to reform the suspicious activity reports regime (SARs).

With the private sector, law enforcement and regulators, the Home Office is co-designing a new system which is more efficient and effective, and which will benefit business and the public sector.

SARs are the mechanism used by members of the regulated sectors, including the banking, accountancy, legal and property sectors to flag up suspicions about potential money laundering and terrorist financing to the NCA.

The NCA received a record number of reports last year. The number of SARs reports rose by about 10% to 463,938 during 2017-18, compared with the previous year, including a 20% rise to 22,196 in requests for a defence against money laundering.

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SARs reform is one of the commitments in the SOC Strategy, launched in November, which is backed by Government investment of at least £48 million in 2019 and 2020 to further ramp up law enforcement capabilities to specifically tackle illicit finance.

The Home Secretary will thank UK Finance for its commitment to SARs reform. The government is discussing with the private sector the best way to ensure this has the funding it needs. Since late 2018 the financial sector has already committed over £1 million in funding for the project.

Bob Wigley, Chair of UK Finance, said:

We want to ensure the UK is the safest and most transparent financial centre in the world. Banks already spend over £5 billion a year fighting economic crime, but the private sector can't tackle it alone. That's why the finance industry works closely with law enforcement and Government agencies to stop the threat and protect customers. The new Economic Crime Strategic Board will strengthen these vital partnerships.

As part of this, it's vital that we have the best anti-money laundering reporting system possible. The industry is committed to supporting the Government in reforming the existing regime and UK Finance is currently hosting a team of industry and Home Office experts to achieve just that.

Other measures in the SOC Strategy include additional investment in the multi-agency National Economic Crime Centre (NECC) which is now operational and includes officers from the NCA, HM Revenue and Customs, City of London Police, Serious Fraud Office, Financial Conduct Authority Crown Prosecution Service and the Home Office.