

[Press release: Minister for the Americas to visit the Midwestern United States](#)

In his first visit to the Midwest, Minister for the Americas, Sir Alan Duncan will travel to Illinois, Columbus and Indianapolis next week to meet key politicians from the States: the Governor of Illinois, Bruce Rauner, the Governor of Ohio, John Kasich, the Governor of Indiana, Eric Holcomb, and the Mayor of Chicago, Rahm Emmanuel. He will also meet UK businesses investing in the US and US companies investing in the UK. The Minister will deliver a keynote speech on Britain's global role at the Chicago Council of Global Affairs and address students at the Ohio State University and the University of Notre Dame.

Sir Alan will end his visit to the US with a stop in Washington DC, where he will meet senior political figures in the Senate, House of Representatives and the Trump Administration.

Speaking ahead of the visit, Sir Alan said:

I look forward to my first visit to the heartland of America. All three States have significant cultural, political and economic ties to the United Kingdom. Chicago, Columbus and Indianapolis are three of the largest cities in the US and contribute hugely, not just to the lifeblood of their respective states, but to America as a whole.

The relationship between the United Kingdom and the United States is one built around a common language, the common principles of freedom and democracy, and common interests. On security, defence, trade and investment, the United Kingdom and the United States are the closest of partners.

This visit is a chance for me to witness the ubiquity of the special relationship to the lives of all Americans, as well as to discuss ways to further enhance the special relationship as the UK leaves the EU.

[News story: Criminal law changes to](#)

online copyright infringement

The maximum sentence for online copyright infringement has changed from two years to ten years.

What's changed?

The criminal law provisions relating to online copyright infringement have changed. The maximum sentence that can be levied is now ten years. This change brings the law in line with what is already available for physical copyright infringement.

The changes affect sections 198 1(A) and 107 2(A) of the Copyright Designs and Patents Act. These sections outline criminal offences arising from infringement of a performers making available right, and their communication right.

An additional mens rea has also been introduced. It must now be proved that a person "knows, or has reason to believe that the act of infringement will cause loss to the owner of the right or expose the owner of the right to a risk of loss".

The facts

These offences do not criminalise the downloading of material, although civil action can be taken against any infringer in these circumstances.

In some circumstances the downloading of material can also involve the re-upload of the same material, which may mean the requirements of the offences are met.

To avoid the risk of any civil or criminal action being taken against you our advice is to access content legally. If you are unsure how to do this [Get it Right from a Genuine Site](#) can help you.

News story: IP (Unjustified Threats) Act comes into force

From 1 October 2017, changes will be made to the law on unjustified threats of infringement

The new law on threats is clearer, consistent across all relevant IP rights, and will help businesses to avoid expensive litigation.

An unjustified threat is made when someone unfairly threatens someone else with legal action for infringing their intellectual property, when no infringement has actually taken place. These threats are costly and disruptive, drive customers away and stop businesses trading legitimately in goods and services.

The IP (Unjustified Threats) Act 2017 will:

- help businesses negotiate fairly over IP disputes, and protect businesses who can be most harmed by unjustified threats
- make it clear what you can and can't say when approaching another business about an alleged infringement
- help IP owners and third parties understand when an approach is a threat
- encourage IP owners to approach the source of the alleged infringement, rather than customers or retailers
- encourage a culture of allowing businesses to "talk first", rather than head to court
- bring consistency and certainty across this complex area of IP law

Why did we make the changes?

The law was complex, unclear, and inconsistent between the various IP rights involved. It made IP owners, particularly SMEs, reluctant to try and enforce their IP. It also made it difficult for businesses to make legitimate attempts to settle an IP dispute before going to court. The changes follow from detailed proposals put forward by the Law Commission for reform in this area of law.

Read our business guidance to find out more information on [unjustified threats](#) and how they affect the actions you can take.

[News story: Use a website address instead a registered design number](#)

Designers can now use a website address to show their products are protected by registered designs.

What's changed?

From today registered design owners can mark their product with a website address to show the product is protected by a registered design. Previously the only way to do this was to put the registered design number on the product. The webpage must clearly set out the registered design number(s) relevant to that product.

Removing the need to mark the registered design numbers directly on the product will reduce burdens and costs for businesses and individuals who own registered designs.

Why is it important to show the design is registered?

Marking the product as protected by a registered design is optional, but it gives the design owner the best chance of being awarded financial remedies if their design is infringed. Using a website address will also make it easier for the public to access up-to-date registered design information in relation to a product.

Read our guidance on how to [display your rights](#).

Press release: Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Czech Republic

2014 – present UK Trade and Investment, Managing Director, Policy and Network Development
2012 – 2014 UK Trade & Investment, Director, Strategic Trade
2008 – 2012 Copenhagen, Her Majesty's Ambassador
2006 – 2008 Valetta, British High Commissioner
2002 – 2005 FC0, Head, Near East and North Africa Department
2001 – 2002 FC0, Head, North Asia and Pacific Department
2000 – 2001 FC0, Acting Head, North Africa Department
1997 – 2000 Assistant Private Secretary to HRH The Prince of Wales
1995 – 1997 Oslo, Head of Economic & Commercial Section
1992 – 1995 FC0, Assistant Private Secretary to Minister of State
1989 – 1992 FC0, Section Head, Near East & North Africa Department
1986 – 1989 Amman, Political Section
1985 – 1986 Language training (Arabic)
1983 – 1984 FC0, Desk Officer, Far Eastern Department
1983 Joined FC0