

News story: Programme: EU-UK Article 50 negotiations Brussels, 16-18 April 2018

Monday, 16 April 2018

- Meeting at technical level – Withdrawal Agreement – remaining issues

Tuesday, 17 April 2018

- Meeting at technical level – Withdrawal Agreement – remaining issues

Wednesday, 18 April 2018

- Coordinators' meeting – Ireland/Northern Ireland
- Coordinators' meeting – future relationship

Next meetings provisionally scheduled for w/c 30 April.

News story: Australian Air Force officer teams up with RAF to train Aerospace experts

Pete is a specialist in GPS and navigation – a subject that has its roots in aerospace but is used by every part of Modern Defence operations. He teaches people from all over Defence, both military and civilian, about the complex workings of Aerospace technology.

Still a member of the Australian RAAF, Pete works as part of a UK RAF team. Training is very hands-on, with just a third of time spent in the classroom learning the theory, a third on a written thesis, and the last third devoted to visiting the industry to see new products in action.

This course requires a thorough understanding of the science behind the technology, but we also emphasise the importance of its practical use, to help make sure that our equipment is functional and fit for purpose. We try to demonstrate the very latest practices and developments so that people can compare what's on offer in the market, and determine the best choice of supplies for

their organisation.

My students usually graduate into trials, procurement, test and evaluation jobs, so seeing what's in the pipeline and at the very cutting edge of modern technology helps prepare them for that.

Pete made his first trip to the UK with his wife in 2009 to study his Masters degree – an MSC in Aerospace Systems – in an exchange between his own service, the Royal Australian Air Force and their British counterparts.

I came to the UK because they're recognised as a top trainer around the world, so it was an easy choice.



Peter Mole with Staff, Students & Families at the Graduation of No. 48 Aerosystems Course, College Hall, RAF Cranwell

When he qualified, Pete returned to Australia, and spent the next four years on the frontline testing RAAF aircraft systems.

Among other things, I worked on a team developing countermeasures in aircraft – mechanisms that can be used to protect the aircraft and pilot against enemy attack whilst in flight. And I was deployed to Afghanistan to test how new equipment would function on the ground.

My job was to make sure that the equipment we wanted was fit for purpose. Creating useful equipment in a lab or a factory is only half the battle. If it doesn't work in the environments it's designed for, with all the extra challenges they bring, then it's not a useful tool for the men and women who are expected to use it day to day.

But Pete and his wife had loved their time in the UK. So when the opportunity arose for Pete to return in 2016 as an Aerospace trainer they both jumped at the chance.

I'm giving back to the course that shaped my career. I love being able to pass on my knowledge and front line experience – I've put my skills to use in Australia and around the world, so I know what it's like to do the job and now I'm teaching the next generation.

When my students graduate they are specialists who understand the inner workings and use of very complex equipment – so they're in high demand. Members of the Armed Forces find that when they become veterans, the Aerospace industry are snapping them up!

Pete loves being in England and teaching with the RAF – but he still works for the Royal Australian Air Force and keeps strong links with his Australian colleagues – part of his job to act as an interface between the Australian Air Force and the British Air Force.

Reflecting on his Commonwealth roots he said:

There's a large group of Australians on exchange here at and when I was working at the Air Warfare school recently it was completely normal to see one or two international students being trained by UK military.

My Aussie colleagues and I hosted an Australia day function earlier this year. It was great to see lots of people from the UK and from other nations getting into the spirit of it.

And the international links go much further than the Commonwealth, with Pete gaining extra benefits from the UK's reputation for first class training.

Working here as an adopted Brit and representing the RAAF opens a lot of doors with other European countries such as the Danish, French, Estonians and Latvia – who I wouldn't be able to build a relationship with if I were based in Australia. There's a huge amount of international co-operation when it comes to purchasing equipment and finding the best way to use them on operations, so every little helps.

My course only teaches 16 people a year so it's a close-knit

community. One of my former students is now testing Australian Navy equipment, and many are working out in the industry bodies they visited when they were qualifying. They're now feeding back to me from the other side of the fence!

Jennifer Jamieson-Ball MCIPR appointed as director of communications and external affairs

We are pleased to announce that Jennifer Jamieson-Ball MCIPR has been appointed to the newly created role of director of communications and external affairs. Jennifer will be joining us on 9 July 2018.

News story: PHE urges vigilance in spotting signs of scarlet fever

Updated: Added latest update.

Latest update

The latest [Health Protection Report](#) (13 April 2018) shows 20,372 cases of scarlet fever have been reported since mid-September 2017, compared to an average of 9,461 for the same period over the last 5 years. There were 1,180 cases reported for the most recent week (2 to 8 April 2018).

Dr Nick Phin, Deputy Director of National Infection Service at PHE, said:

We are urging parents to look out for the symptoms of scarlet fever such as a sore throat, fever and rash after seeing a significant upsurge in cases this year. The good news is that over the Easter holidays we have seen a slight decline in cases, which may indicate that activity has peaked.

Scarlet fever, which mainly affects young children, is not usually a serious illness and can be easily treated with the appropriate antibiotics. We encourage parents to contact their GP or NHS 111 if

they spot symptoms of scarlet fever or have concerns.

Previous updates

9 March 2018

Scarlet fever is a very contagious, seasonal bacterial illness that mainly affects children and is not uncommon for this time of year.

The latest [Health Protection Report](#) (9 March 2018) showed 11,982 cases of scarlet fever have been reported since mid-September 2017, compared to an average of 4,480 for the same period over the last 5 years. There were 1,267 cases reported for the most recent week (12 to 18 February 2018).

This increasing trend is in line with usual patterns although cases are currently higher than those reported at this point in the last 4 seasons. It is not possible at this point to determine what the final numbers will be for this season. Scarlet fever is a clinical diagnosis and not usually confirmed by laboratory testing so the activity we may be seeing could be due to increased awareness and reporting of scarlet fever, although the exact cause is still being investigated.

Scarlet fever is usually a mild illness; PHE is advising parents to be on the lookout for scarlet fever symptoms, which include a sore throat, headache and fever with a characteristic fine, pinkish or red rash with a sandpapery feel. If signs of scarlet fever are suspected, it is important to contact your local GP or NHS 111. Early treatment with antibiotics is important and can help reduce the risk of complications such as pneumonia and the spread of the infection. Children or adults diagnosed with scarlet fever are advised to stay at home until at least 24 hours after the start of antibiotic treatment to avoid spreading the infection to others.

Nick Phin, Deputy Director at Public Health England, said:

It's not uncommon to see a rise in cases of scarlet fever at this time of year. Scarlet fever is not usually a serious illness and can be treated with antibiotics to reduce the risk of complications and spread to others. We are monitoring the situation closely and remind parents to be aware of the symptoms of scarlet fever and to contact their GP for assessment if they think their child might have it.

Whilst there has been a notable increase in scarlet fever cases when compared to last season, greater awareness and improved reporting practices may have contributed to this increase.

Professor Helen Stokes-Lampard, Chair of the Royal College of GPs, said:

Scarlet fever is a bacterial infection that usually presents with a

sore throat, fever, headaches, and a rosy rash that generally starts on a patient's chest.

It is a very contagious disease and much more common in children under 10 than teenagers or adults, but it can be treated quickly and effectively with a full course of antibiotics and all GPs are trained to diagnose and treat it.

Scarlet fever used to be a lot more common than it is now, but GPs are noticing more cases than in previous years at the moment. If a patient thinks that they, or their child, might have symptoms, they should seek medical assistance.

PHE is also urging GPs, paediatricians, and other health practitioners to be mindful when assessing patients and promptly notify local health protection teams of cases and outbreaks.

For further information on scarlet fever visit the [NHS Choices website](#).

Guidelines for the [management of scarlet fever](#) are also available from the PHE website.

6 February 2018

The latest [Health Protection Report](#) showed 6,225 cases of scarlet fever had been reported since mid-September 2017, compared to 3,764 for the same period last season. There were 719 cases reported for the most recent week (22 to 28 January 2018).

Poland's investment outlook: time to shift the growth model towards skills and innovation, according to EIB research

- The annual EIB Survey on Investment and Investment Finance (EIBIS) finds that after 25 years of weak investment performance, Polish corporates are now increasing their capital stock
- Nevertheless, investment activities at corporate level are still below EU average and the lack of a labour force with adequate skills is currently the most important barrier to increased investment
- Maintaining the growth momentum requires a new focus on productivity and innovation, and strong public and private sector involvement is needed to create a knowledge-based economy

- Municipalities are also stepping up their investment plans and are set to prioritise infrastructure modernisation over maintenance

In Poland, the macroeconomic outlook remains stable and promising. Robust economic growth is likely to continue in 2018, thanks to strong private consumption and a recovery in investment after a lull induced by the cyclical nature of EU funds. Nevertheless, important structural issues have to be overcome to secure the country's long-term convergence towards the EU and the sustainability of its growth model.

The main findings of the Annual EIB Survey on Investment and Investment Finance (EIBIS) were discussed today at a conference in Warsaw organised jointly by the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the National Bank of Poland (NBP). The latest edition of the traditional EIB corporate survey was complemented by a one-off municipal survey, providing additional, valuable information about local authorities' investment needs and capital accumulation barriers at the local level.

"Poland's robust growth performance over the past 25 years went along with very low investment, and significant gaps in the capital stock remain", said **Debora Revoltella, Director of the Economic Department at the European Investment Bank (EIB)**. *"To maintain its economic momentum, Poland needs to shift its growth model. This will require a focus on productivity, with strong private and public investment into the foundations of a knowledge-based economy. In parallel, the financing side has to be supportive and EU financial instruments can play a role here"*.

"Despite the obvious and large improvements in the investment activity of the corporate sector, the business investment rate in Poland appears to be among the lowest in the EU", commented **Vazil Hudak, Vice-President of the European Investment Bank**. *"Investment in intangible assets is particularly low, even in comparison to other EU Member States that are in the catching-up process. The EIB is ready to step up and provide the necessary financing, so that Poland can shift its growth model through high-quality investment, and continue its successful economic convergence towards the EU."*

Link to the publication:

http://www.eib.org/attachments/efs/eibis_2017_poland_en.pdf

Main findings of the EIBIS in a nutshell:

At the corporate level, more Polish firms increased than decreased investment activity in the last financial year. This positive outlook continues into the current year, with all sectors expecting, on balance, to expand investment activity. However, around one-quarter of Polish firms (24%) feel they invested too little over the last three years, which is higher than the EU average (15%). While replacement is named as the main priority of firms' investment, companies are shifting towards building new capacities and developing new products. The top two perceived barriers to investment are skills shortages (89%) and general uncertainty about the future (87%). Both are more commonly cited in Poland than the EU average.

At the local authority level, over the last five years, slightly less than 60% of municipalities in Poland report an increase in investment activities in their jurisdictions and only 9% report a decrease. Yet, 38% of Polish municipalities believe investment activities in their jurisdiction have been below needs. The main obstacles to infrastructure investment activities for Polish municipalities is the length of the approval process. Access to external finance follows, weighing more than at the EU level. Municipalities mainly resort to their own resources and EU programmes to finance infrastructure.