

Press release: Appointment of new Chair of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Karen Bradley MP today announced the appointment of Deirdre Blakely Toner as the new Chair of the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland.

The appointment will take effect on 1 June 2018.

Notes to Editors

The Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland

The Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland are independent of Government and the Northern Ireland Civil Service, and have a statutory responsibility to uphold selection on merit for appointments to the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS). The Commissioners also hear appeals under the NICS Code of Ethics. Commissioners work in partnership with the NICS and other stakeholders to uphold the merit principle and promote public confidence in recruitment.

Biography of Appointee

Deirdre Blakely Toner is currently Chief Executive Officer of Samaritans Ireland and serves as an independent member on the Northern Ireland Policing Board.

Deirdre has over 30 years' experience in governance, performance and risk management from working across the voluntary, community and public sectors in Northern Ireland and further afield. She is a graduate of Public Administration and Management, and Human Rights law with the University of Ulster and Transitional Justice Institute.

Terms of Appointment

Deidre Blakely Toner will take up appointment from 1 June 2018. Her appointment is for a five year term.

She will receive remuneration of £16,000 per annum for Chairing Civil Service Commissioner meetings and participating in Commissioner's business as required by the Civil Service Commissioners (NI) Order.

This is a Crown Appointment.

Political Activity

All appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in

the selection process. However, in accordance with the original Nolan recommendations, there is a requirement for appointees' political activity in defined categories within the last five years to be made public.

The appointee has declared no such political activity in the past five years.

News story: The Queen's Birthday was celebrated in Buenos Aires

More than 800 guests attended the reception, including high-ranking national and provincial government officials, legislators from different political parties, businessmen, diplomats, academics, artists, sportsmen, journalists, and members of the civil society.

British Ambassador Mark Kent gave a speech in which he highlighted that "the presence of so many leading figures from Argentina's political, economic, social and cultural life reflects the enormous progress achieved in bilateral relations in recent times".

At the end of the speech, he offered a toast to the President and the people of the Argentine Republic, and to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. A band of the Argentine Air Force played the Argentine and the British national anthems, and then offered a brief performance in the Residence's gardens.

The event was supported by UK companies, all of which had plenty of opportunity to display their products and services and offer various examples of British excellence.

The Queen celebrates her birthday twice a year: on the anniversary of the day she was born, 21 April, and then on the third Saturday in June which is the date of the official celebration, marked by the ceremony of "Trooping the Colour."

Photos available in the [Flickr gallery](#)

News story: AS Roma v Liverpool FC **Travel Advice**

The AS Roma vs Liverpool FC match will take place on Wednesday 2 May 2018 at the Stadio Olimpico in Rome. Kick off time is 8.45 (local time)

As well as this advice, check out our [travel advice for Italy](#)

Passports and visas

You do not need a visa to travel to Italy but you must hold a valid passport. Your passport must be valid for the proposed duration of your stay; you do not need any additional period of validity on your passport beyond this. However, it is always sensible to have a short period of extra validity on your passport in case of unforeseen delays to your departure.

Remember your [European Health Insurance Card \(EHIC\)](#) as well as ensuring you take out good [travel insurance](#) – it could save you a lot of money if you get into difficulties.

In Italy it is obligatory to carry ID with you at all times – you will also need your ID to enter the stadium.

Travel Arrangements

Rome has two airports, Fiumicino and Ciampino. It has been known for travellers to go to the wrong airport and subsequently miss their flight home. If you are taking a taxi to the airport, please make sure you specify which one to the taxi driver. There is an airport train which departs every 30 minutes from Fiumicino and arrives at the main train station in Rome (Termini station). From Ciampino airport you can take one of the regular bus shuttles into the city centre.

Ticket Collection Point

A ticket collection point will be established at the Grand Hotel Palatino (Via Cavour 213, 00184 Rome, Italy Tel: +39 06 481 4927) for a small number of international tickets. The ticket collection point will be open from 9am until 8.30pm on the day of the match.

Getting to the stadium

All fans will be required to take one of the free official shuttle buses to the Olympic stadium. This service will start at approximately 4pm and continue until required. To use the shuttle bus:

- take Metro Line A to Flaminio/Piazza del Popolo;
- take the entrance to Villa Borghese through the archway onto Viale Washington, then onto Viale F. La Guardia to reach Piazzale delle Canestre, from where the shuttle buses will depart.

Stewards wearing high visibility vests will be on hand to assist those using the shuttle bus. Be aware that there may be long waiting times so check the weather and dress appropriately.

Combined Metro and bus/tram tickets can be purchased from most tobacconists, bars, or vending machines at metro stations and major bus stops and cost

€1.50 each, lasting 100 minutes (includes one metro journey only).

It is strongly recommended that fans use the shuttle buses and not make their own way to the stadium thus avoiding the area south of the Olympic stadium, in particular Ponte Duca D'Aosta, where Roma fans normally gather before the match.

At the match

Visiting fans will enter the stadium via Sectors 50-51-52 of the Distinti North West part of the stadium. There will be ticket checks and some body searches at the entrance to the turnstiles as well as a requirement to remove shoes. To avoid a last minute bottleneck you should therefore get to the stadium early, arriving no later than 7.30pm. The stadium will open at approximately 5pm for visiting fans.

Entry tickets to the Stadium are holder specific, and cannot be passed to other parties. You will need to show ID to enter the stadium such as an original British passport or a UK driving licence plus a photocopy of a passport. The name on the ticket and the ID must match otherwise you will be refused entry. Spectators are not permitted to take the following items into the Stadium: alcohol, weapons, (or any item that could be used as a weapon), drums, megaphones, fireworks, plastic bottles with tops, glass bottles and cans containing liquid, belts with large buckles, large umbrellas, large flags. The Stadium is CCTV monitored, and pitch invasion is prohibited.

Visiting fans will be held back after the match for potentially up to 2 hours. There will be toilet and refreshment facilities during this time. Free shuttle buses will take fans back to the city centre and airport. It is strongly recommended that fans make use of the shuttle buses and do not attempt to leave the stadium independently as other transfer options will be limited (no taxi/bus or metro availability).

Tips

As in any other city beware of pickpockets and bag snatchers at airports, railway stations, around the town centre and when using public transport. Only carry what you need, leave spare cash and valuables in hotel safety deposits. Carry a photocopy of the personal details pages of your passport and keep it in a safe place separate from your passport.

Local Laws and Customs

While local authorities are keen that visiting fans enjoy the sites of Rome during their trip, be aware that it's an offence to eat or drink on the steps of main monuments (for example on the steps of Piazza di Spagna), as is entering any public fountain. Doing so risks receiving a high fine and possible arrest.

Check our Italy [travel advice for Italy](#) for more information on local laws and customs.

Lost or stolen passports

If your passport is stolen, report the loss to the local police as soon as possible and obtain a copy of the police report.

Please be aware that you cannot travel back to the UK without a valid travel document. You will need to apply to the Consular Section of the British Embassy, Rome during opening hours for an [Emergency Travel Document](#).

The Emergency Travel Document is a temporary one-way travel document which will allow you to return to the UK or back to your country of residence. You will need to produce the following:

- a copy of the police report reporting the passport stolen;
- an acceptable form of identification, if possible (e.g. driving licence and/or photocopy of your lost passport);
- one passport-size photograph. We are able to provide a photo at the Embassy for a cost of €5 paid only in cash;
- a fee of €119 or £100 (payable in cash or by credit card except American Express);
- any details you may have of your return travel arrangements;
- authorisation from both parents if you are under 16.

The Embassy will be open on Monday 30 April. However, due to a national Bank Holiday, the Embassy will be closed on Tuesday 1st May 2018. Therefore should you lose your passport, this will mean applying for an Emergency Travel Document at the British Embassy in Rome on the Monday before the game, on match day or the following day.

Lost wallets

If you lose your wallet please try to cancel your credit cards as soon as possible. British consular officials cannot give you money to help you return home. You can transfer money from relatives or friends in the UK using many of the reputable commercial money transfer agencies in Italy including Western Union and Moneygram and Consular staff can assist you in this. You can also use most major credit cards (and debit cards carrying the Maestro and EC logos) to obtain money from Italian cash machines if you have your PIN. Consular staff can provide you with telephone and internet facilities during opening hours.

If you are arrested

British consular officials can visit you in prison (if you request it) and can put you in touch with local lawyers if you need one. But they cannot get you out of prison, represent you in court or pay your bills. If you wish to see a consular official please make this request clear to the local police authorities.

Contact the British Embassy in Rome

The Consular Section of the British Embassy in Rome is open to the public from 9am to 12pm and 2pm to 3pm, Monday to Friday.

If you need emergency consular assistance during your trip, contact the Embassy on 0039 06 4220 0001.

The address for the British Embassy Rome is Via XX Settembre 80/a, 00187 Rome, Italy.

Emergency services numbers:

- (+39) 118 Medical Services
- (+39) 113 Police
- (+39) 112 Carabinieri
- (+39) 115 Fire services

We hope you enjoy the game and your visit to Rome!

British Embassy Rome, Via XX Settembre 80/a, 00187 Rome, Italy

Contact telephone number (0039) 06 4220 0001

<https://www.gov.uk/government/world/italy>

<http://www.facebook.com/ukinitaly> |

<http://twitter.com/ukinitaly> |

[News story: HiLight Semiconductor: new technology to increase broadband speed](#)

Global broadband networks are under increasing strain due to bandwidth-intensive applications such as cloud computing, video streaming and the Internet of Things. Experts fear this could lead to demand for data outpacing supply.

According to the [EU Fibre to the Home Council](#), “fast broadband infrastructure is now a determining factor in ensuring the economic fortunes of cities and regions”. Although modern fibre optic cable can provide almost unlimited bandwidth, the current interface technology is expensive and restricts speeds to 1 or 2.5Gbps, which is then often shared with at least 20 users.

[HiLight Semiconductor](#) has developed a new patented integrated circuit (IC) that provides an innovative solution to the problem – an approach that is simple yet flexible. HiLight provides software to control the IC but systems providers can change it if needed. HiLight believes the new IC offers the lowest operating power, at low cost, allowing speeds of up to 10Gbps, both upstream and downstream.

The company demonstrated the solution at 2 trade shows recently – in Shenzhen, China, and in San Diego, California.

Next-generation services is one of the challenges of the [Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund](#) – part of the government’s [Industrial Strategy](#). Part of the challenge asks companies like HiLight Semiconductor to apply for funding to ensure UK service sectors are at the forefront of developing and using innovation.

Find out more about the [next-generation services challenge](#).

Innovating ahead of market demand

So far, HiLight Semiconductor has exported more than 50 million integrated circuits worldwide. Independent analysts, [Ovum](#), expects the 10G ‘fibre to the home’ market to add over 50 million more units each year within the next 5 years.

Gary Steele, Executive Chairman of HiLight Semiconductor, explains his company’s approach:

Communications infrastructure can be a relatively slow-moving industry, but it has a very long lifetime too. We took our time to look at analyst reports and speak to customers and worked out ways we could speed up our customers’ production lines, for example, by maximising the number of components integrated on our IC. The telecoms industry wants low-power, robust designs that work totally reliably over the extremes of outside temperatures and over many years of continuous operation.

When we started out, very few people knew about the inner workings of broadband, but now you see optical fibre in TV adverts and people are more aware of the Internet of Things. They certainly know about 4G and perhaps 5G phones. Our integrated circuits help provide the backbones that can support all this data, video, cloud computing and all the new services that seem to arrive as soon as more – and lower cost – capacity becomes available.

A fast-growing business

HiLight Semiconductor recently came 6th in the [Syndicateroom’s Top 100 of Britain’s fastest-growing businesses](#).

In the last year, the company has created more than 15 new high-level engineering jobs and the total number of employees will soon reach 60.

[See how other businesses have benefited from Innovate UK funding and support.](#)

[Apply for innovation funding.](#)

Speech: Trade and tariffs: Brexit and beyond

Thank you. And thanks to DWF and Hume Brophy for hosting us this morning.

Trade policy is all about playing to your strengths – it's called comparative advantage for a reason. So I think it's particularly apt that we're being hosted by a purveyor of one of our finest exports – legal services. Especially one based in Manchester.

The work of the Department for International Trade

As you've heard, I'm the Minister for Trade Policy.

In crude terms, that makes me minister for trade agreements, as well as things like trade preferences for developing countries, agreeing WTO schedules, and establishing our own independent trade remedies regime, so we can protect industry against dumping and other unfair practices.

Today I've been asked to talk about our priorities in some of those areas.

But before I start I should emphasise that my department, the Department for International Trade, has a range of other priorities: things like encouraging small businesses to export, securing foreign direct investment from firms overseas, and providing export finance.

People often assume that DIT is a purely Brexit department, but this kind of bread-and-butter work is equally important and has been going on since long before the referendum: [UK Export Finance](#) is actually the world's oldest export credit agency.

What Brexit has done is give this work renewed emphasis, which is why we now have a dedicated Department for International Trade, so that all trade-related work is done under one roof, and so trade has its own voice at the Cabinet table for the first time in over 30 years.

To give one example: UK Export Finance can now give support in over 60 currencies. We'll also be launching a new Exports Strategy in the coming months.

A lot of that support is about helping us export more to the EU, and I've made numerous trips across Europe to promote UK exporters and the UK as an investment destination.

Our negotiations with the EU

I think that's an important reminder that we shouldn't see European trade purely through the prism of Brexit negotiations – trade isn't all about trade agreements.

Nonetheless, I will touch on those negotiations.

As the Prime Minister has said, the government wants a deep, comprehensive and unique free trade agreement with the EU.

We want that because we value EU trade.

When I talk about the opportunities that lie outside the Customs Union, people often accuse me of ignoring the opportunity right on our doorstep. But I can assure you that the government is fully cognisant of that.

The EU takes two fifths of our exports; they're a developed market of half a billion people starting 20 miles from Dover.

That will always be important – it's simply that I don't see this as an either/or choice.

As a British MP, born in New York with a German wife, I've always seen the choice between Britishness, globalism and Europeanism as a false trichotomy, and so it is here.

By leaving the Customs Union, we will have the ability to sign new trade agreements. But I believe we will also get a good deal with the EU.

By the Commission's own estimates, trade with the UK are worth over EUR 800 Billion to the EU27. On the day we leave, we will immediately become the EU's second-largest trading partner, only slightly behind the US, and well ahead of third-placed China. It is strongly in the EU's interests to sign a deal.

Yes, in relative terms the trading relationship is worth even more to us than it is to them. But it's not a zero-sum game.

And in technical terms this is more straightforward than most trade agreements: this will be the only trade agreement in history where the 2 sides start from a position of already being aligned.

Our priorities for non-EU trade

So I think we will get a strong, mutually-beneficial trade agreement with the EU. But what of trade agreements outside the EU – what of our priorities and our progress there?

We can split this out into our overall aims, how we're achieving those aims, and how we're prioritising them.

Our overall aim is to ensure continuity and certainty for UK businesses, by

transitioning the 40 or so trade agreements the EU has in place with third countries.

We will also take advantage of the great opportunities outside the Customs Union – the IMF has predicted that 90% of global growth will be outside the EU in the coming years – by agreeing new trade deals.

We're already making strong progress towards achieving these aims. Last month's draft text on the withdrawal agreement included the ability for the UK to negotiate and sign new trade agreements during the implementation period.

And although we can't do that yet – we're bound by the EU's principle of sincere cooperation – we're laying the groundwork.

We're laying the groundwork domestically. I am currently taking the [Trade Bill](#) through Parliament, which will, amongst other things, give us the power in domestic law to transition the EU's existing third-party trade agreements.

And we're laying the groundwork with our trading partners: we have set up trade working groups with 21 countries.

As for prioritising trade agreements: as you would expect, this is a holistic process; we look at things like the ease of achieving a deal and the size and compatibility of the other country's economy.

But there's no algorithm that will tell you what to do.

Our world-leading services

As you would expect, wherever we discuss trade with services are important.

Services make up 44% of our exports. That's equates to a higher-proportion of GDP than for any G7 country and makes us the world's second-largest services exporter; second only to the US.

And if anything that underestimates the importance of service exports: when you look at value-add – taking into account re-exports – services are worth around two-thirds.

That's led right here, by the financial, professional and business services of the City of London: a sector close to my heart, given the time I spent on trading floors here before I went into politics, and the number of my Chelsea and Fulham constituents who work here.

Given our hosts, I specifically want to mention our 'Legal Services are GREAT' campaign, launched in October in Singapore.

This is spreading the word worldwide about our legal system's predictability, commercial adaptability and certainty; our judges' integrity and experience; and the depth and breadth of expertise that has made to UK such an exceptional global legal hub.

We want to protect our services trade as we leave the EU. But we also want to do much more. Trade in services has historically resisted liberalisation much more than trade in goods.

The UK: a voice for free trade

So trade policy post-Brexit will be about much more than individual trade deals. It will also be about Britain becoming a voice for free trade, at the World Trade Organization and other international fora.

We are currently working to ensure we have our own WTO tariff schedules. We're already a member in our own right, but we're currently covered by the EU's schedules, so we've taken the decision to replicate these for the time being, partly so business has maximum certainty.

We're already a World Trade Organization member in our own right. But not one with our own voice, as the EU speaks for all member states.

The IMF estimated that we were the world's fifth largest economy at the end of last year, and in today's world, where there's so many forces in favour of protectionism, it is to everyone's benefit to have a nation of Britain's stature making the case for free trade.