[Speech: Baroness Shields closing speech at the Global Counter Terrorism Forum](#)

On behalf of the GCTF co-chairs of the working group on countering violent extremism, I would like to thank the Swiss government and the UAE for making this experts meeting possible.

In particular I'd like to thank the Swiss government for their leadership and industry representatives for their constructive engagement and recognition of the benefits of GCTF and other such forums in providing a multi-national, multi-stakeholder platform for these important discussions.

And finally, my thanks goes to ISD, D-CAF and the GCTF administrative unit for organising the event and all participants for their insightful and thoughtful contributions.

Just over the last 3 days, whilst we have been at this conference, Daesh has continued its attempt to poison the minds of the young and vulnerable. On Monday the group produced a cartoon presented as a bedtime story for children, in which viewers are urged to join the group and fight the supposed tyranny of the West.

They followed this by producing a video showing child soldiers beheading and shooting to death Kurdish captives in Syria. Aside from the moral depravity these 2 examples evidence, they also illustrate the breadth and many nuances of the Daesh proposition.

Of course we cannot focus on Daesh in isolation. Just last night al-Qa'ida released perhaps the most polished version of their English-language magazine al-Risalah, which celebrated the cowardly murder of Russian Ambassador Andrei Karlov and provided instructions for using the TOR browser to discreetly access terrorist content online.

Since Monday, Jabhat Fateh al-Sham published a video of a suicide operation involving 15 terrorists in Homs. The Afghan Taliban claimed to have wounded 70 people in a twin suicide bombing in Kabul. And 2 terrorist groups released proof-of-life videos featuring hostages from Australia and Switzerland, their captors demanding ransoms for their release.

At the outset of this conference, I challenged us collectively to set our ambitions higher to respond to the evolving global threat of terrorist and violent extremist abuse of the internet. The reality, as these examples demonstrate, is that terrorism is destroying lives across the world every day.

As I previously acknowledged, a lot of good work has already been undertaken by civil society, governments and industry but we all recognise the need to

amplify the pace, scale and reach of our efforts to address the immediacy of the challenge we face.

We cannot be complacent. We must continue this dialogue to ensure our collective efforts have a true impact in tackling such heinous content. I am therefore encouraged to hear the innovative ideas and good practice that has been discussed at this forum.

It is clear to me that we have real will and expertise in this room to make a difference and ensure people around the world are not expose to the violent narratives terrorists seek to spread online.

In setting our ambitions high, it is vital to acknowledge the fundamental importance of partnership working and of continuous innovation.

As I set out previously, this is not a threat that can be tackled by one nation, company or group in isolation and this forum has provided an opportunity to bring together our knowledge, expertise and capabilities to improve our response.

This is an unrelenting challenge and we must continue to make progress. In light of this, I would like us all to consider the following emerging themes from this conference.

First, the need to develop and maintain effective partnerships across sectors to scale existing and new efforts, by drawing on unique capabilities of each.

Second, the importance of being agile and innovative, sharing best practice and data driven research and analysis to act as the foundation for effective policy making and counter-narrative communications.

And third, alongside developing national capacity, to continue engagement at international forums such as the GCTF to ensure we collectively amplify our response to this global threat.

Public private partnerships

So to my first point. A lot of the discussion at this forum has rightly centred on the value of effective public private partnerships. Collaboration between and across a wide range of actors is key to ensuring a holistic approach that draws on the best we all have to offer.

I welcome innovative thinking in casting the net wider on who we bring into our partnerships including collaborating with advertising agencies and other sectors like the cyber security industry to tackle this ever evolving threat from different perspectives.

As such I am encouraged by the model supported by D-CAF, for the International Code of Conduct Association, to deal with private security companies and the potential to apply that approach to this challenge.

Like the WeProtect model the UK set up to tackle online child sexual exploitation, we need to show that a global partnership can also make a

significant impact on tackling terrorist and extremist communications online.

These past 3 days have shown us that in terms of motivations and incentives, there is broad alignment between civil society, public and private sectors. We all want the same outcomes.

But what is needed is greater understanding of each other's positions and how best to approach collaboration. Going forward we need to consider how we can make more of existing partnerships to scale our response, working towards understanding the impact of promising existing initiatives. We also need to continue to build new partnerships, exploring innovative ways to tackle the threat. Following this conference I hope we can continue our dialogue on maximising effectiveness through partnership and learning from best practice globally.

Innovation, sharing best practice, research and analysis

To my second point, over the past few days it is clear that many of you have developed and are keen to share innovative ideas on tackling terrorist and violent extremist use of the internet. This is very encouraging.

The threat we face is unrelenting and constantly evolving. The terrorists and violent extremists do not rest — they are constantly innovating and adapting their methods to stay one step ahead. Together we must outmatch their efforts.

I am pleased that right here in this room we have the expertise and commitment to drive this innovating thinking in your respective sectors.

For civil society groups, this innovation could focus on the different mediums of messaging, be it counter, alternative or subtle messaging delivered through human-centric entertainment. For industry, this could mean innovative technical solutions including detecting and removing harmful content as soon as it is released. And for governments this means developing innovative polices and partnerships to tackle terrorist propaganda online to safeguard their citizens.

All of this needs to be underpinned by cutting edge research and analysis and innovative communications.

Whether that be the entertaining cartoons developed and presented here by Big Bad Boo, the counter narratives based on the lives of female defectors as promoted by Hedayah or the data driven approach to peacebuilding developed by PeaceTech Labs.

In the UK we have conducted research into the role that different channels play in the Daesh's propaganda ecosystem online which can be grouped into 3 broad categories:

- what we refer to as beacons, like Twitter and Telegram, are used to coordinate and disseminate propaganda to the wider public
- aggregators, like file hosting or pasting sites, WordPress and social networks like Facebook and Google+ fulfil the function of hosting

catalogues of vile propaganda
- content stores, like YouTube, archive.org or Google Drive, are sites on which propaganda can be stored

Daesh are acutely aware of the different roles that each platforms plays in the online propaganda ecosystem. And they are adept at maximising their exploitation of this ecosystem.

Our response needs to be mindful of this and we need to continue conducting ground breaking research and analysis to inform our response.

International forums and national capacity building

Moving to my final point, alongside building national capacity this conference has once again demonstrated the importance of international fora, like the UN PVE, the GCTF and the Global Coalition Strat Comms Cell. The internet has no borders and it is clear that international engagement is imperative in ensuring a holistic response to the online terrorist threat.

We need to ensure that our joint efforts complement each other, that international standards and conventions that we all hold dear including freedom of expression and human rights are upheld. And that that our global strategic discussions at forums like the GCTF drives effective local action.

I am deeply encouraged that this conference has led to calls for further discussions on specific topics and hope this will lead to further tangible, collaborative initiatives.

Conclusion

I'd like to conclude by returning to the threat we face once more. Terrorist groups rely on closed communities of supporters on social networks and messaging applications to increase support for their cause. These online echo chambers serve to normalise and more deeply entrench, dangerous extremist views, which, as we've seen, can have horrific consequences.

By working more closely with industry and community partners, we can loosen the stranglehold that terrorist radicalisers have on vulnerable people in these echo chambers, removing this vile terrorist propaganda and promoting positive alternatives.

It is clear to me that through the GCTF and other collaborative international fora, we can scale efforts to tackle terrorist and extremist abuse of the internet in all its forms. As you have rightly acknowledged, whilst Daesh are the current focus, there is a need to ensure we don't lose sight of other growing threats, like far-right extremism and the vicious cycle of islamophobia.

It is great to see the passion and appetite for collaboration, allowing each of us to benefit from the breadth of knowledge and expertise of all of the participants.

Specifically, I note the following key outcomes and points from the conference:

Firstly, the need to develop harmonised approaches across countries to understand and evaluate impact. Here I think governments have a role to play in setting objectives, building consensus on theories of change, and ensuring that strategic gaps are met.

Secondly, the need to build a comprehensive framework for communications beyond narrow counter speech efforts online. This could including offline engagement, educational initiatives and work across different forms of media.

I also note the appeal from yesterday's panel members for governments to involve youth in understanding the appeal of these narratives in policy-making and counter narrative response. This is valuable idea to gain better insight and understanding and something the UK government will continue to explore.

Finally, yesterday, discussions ended with you all agreeing that working towards a single, shared and clearly defined core objective, underpinned by a common theory of change is crucial. And I think the GCTF is an excellent forum to drive this through.

As co-chair of the GCTF working group on countering violent extremism, the UK is keen to continue this vital discussion and hear from all of you on how we best shape this initiative going forward.

We must ensure that the internet — which was built to create a more closely connected world and provide greater access to knowledge and information continues to empower people to shape their own futures.

We must ensure that the Internet does not become a battle ground where extreme views, hatred, division and intolerance are amplified and the vulnerable, victimised.

Collectively, through our shared expertise and drive we can innovate to reclaim the internet from the terrorists and violent extremists that seek to divide us.

Thank you.

[Press release: Burns Night boom for Scottish drinks](#)

Scots have another cause for celebration this Burns Night as new figures reveal gin and beer are following in the footsteps of exporting phenomenon

Scotch whisky, announced Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom today.

The celebration of poet Robert Burns is now marked around the world, with Burns suppers enjoyed as far afield as South Korea and the USA. While a wee dram is the traditional drink of choice for Burns Night – with 34 bottles shipped overseas every second – the UK's gin and ale industries are following suit, with nearly a billion pints of beer and 150 million bottles of gin exported around the world last year.

With two thirds of the UK's gin produced in Scotland – accounting for more than half the world's total exports – and a record 22 breweries opening last year – bringing the total number of breweries to over 100 for the first time in more than a century – the demand for traditional Scottish drinks shows no sign of slowing.

Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom said:

> Scotch whisky is a driving force of the UK food and drink industry, accounting for nearly one-quarter of all our food and drink exports each year. It's fantastic other businesses are following suit and exporting around the world.
>
> I want to build on the significant global opportunities for our food and drink businesses by giving companies the skills and confidence to start tapping into new international markets.
>
> This Burns Night I would encourage people around the world to celebrate with the very best the Scotland has to offer.

Demand for Scotch whisky, the UK's biggest food and drink export, continues to rise, with almost 900 million bottles exported between January and September last year – an increase of three per cent on 2015. This success is set to continue, with the Scotch Whisky Association expecting seven new whisky distilleries to open in Scotland this year.

Fuelled by a growing thirst for Scotland's craft ales, exports of beer were worth £479 million from January to October last year, a 16 per cent rise from the same period in 2015. Exports of gin were worth nearly £400 million between January and October, an 11 per cent increase on 2015, and total gin sales broke the £1 billion mark in 2016.

Julie Hesketh-Laird, acting chief executive of the Scotch Whisky Association, said:

> Burns and Scotch whisky are synonymous. The Scottish poet penned his love for our national drink in his verse 'O thou, my muse! guid auld Scotch' and around the globe a dram will be raised in his memory.
>
> Scotch exports are worth around £4 billion a year to almost 200

markets. Such demand is driving an unprecedented number of Scotch distilleries being opened. We're committed to working with Defra to maintain export growth, leading the way for other food and drink products overseas.

Beer, whisky and gin all form a key part of the Government's plans to boost food and drink exports over the next five years. The recently launched UK Food and Drink International Action Plan aims to forge stronger economic links with key countries around the world, opening up new markets and helping first-time and existing exporters to bring a £2.9 billion boost to the UK economy.

There is a growing thirst for whisky in both the USA and Canada, where Defra is targeting an extra £579 million in exports over the next five years. The Government is also aiming for a £215 million export boost in Mexico and Latin America through growing demand for a wide range of British products including gin.

Secretary of State for Scotland, David Mundell said:

> Whisky is one of Scotland's greatest success stories and tonight, like many Scots across the world on Burns Night, I'll be enjoying a wee dram.
>
> Whisky is a vital part of any Burns night celebration – and these statistics show the industry is going from strength to strength. They also show the growing thirst for other fantastic Scottish drinks such as gin and craft beer, which have seen business booming.

Through the Government's Food is GREAT campaign Defra is working to drive exports and increase global demand for the UK's top quality food and drink.

The Government recently launched a new online exporting hub, which provides a one-stop site for free advice as well as financial and regulatory support and over 1,300 live exporting opportunities. This includes over 200 current opportunities for food and drink companies in the UK.

News story: Over £9.2 billion released by pension freedoms

Over 1.5 million payments have been made using pension freedoms, with 162,000 people accessing £1.56 billion flexibly from their pension pots over the last 3 months, according to HMRC figures released today (25 January 2017).

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury, Simon Kirby, said:

> Giving people freedom over what they do with their hard-earned savings, whether it's buying an annuity or taking a cash lump sum, is the right thing to do. These figures show that people continue to take advantage of the choices on offer: choices ⬚only made available since the government's landmark pension freedoms were introduced in April 2015.
>
> We are working with our partners, including Pension Wise, the regulators and pension firms, so that savers have the support they need to understand the options available to them.

People accessing their pensions are also benefiting from the government's free and impartial pension's guidance service, [Pension Wise](#) which has had over 3.7 million visits to the website and over 100,000 appointments to date.

The government is committed to making pensions fairer, safer and more accessible for consumers. This includes plans to cap early exit fees, allow earlier access to Pension Wise guidance, and work with industry to build a Pensions Dashboard prototype by April 2017.

[Autumn Statement](#) launched a consultation on the government's proposed approach to crack-down on pensions scams. This included:

- banning pensions cold calling
- giving more powers to firms to block suspicious transfers, preventing people's lifesavings being transferred into scams without any checks
- making it harder for scammers to open fraudulent pension schemes, through stopping small self-administered schemes setting up using a dormant company as the sponsoring employer

---

[Speech: Baroness Shields opening speech at the Global Counter Terrorism Forum](#)

I would like to thank our Swiss counterparts who co-lead this crucial work alongside the UK and the UAE as co-chairs of the GCTF, who believe as we do that this forum has the potential to pave the way for a significant step change in how we as nations, working in partnership, can challenge this evolving global threat.

The next 3 days provide us with an opportunity to improve our understanding of the complex challenges we face. And to drive forward a collective agenda

to develop communications and co-governance approaches that tackle the exploitation and manipulation of the open internet by terrorists and violent extremists.

Sadly, we begin 2017 in the same way we began 2016, in the shadow of multiple deadly terrorist incidents. There were literally dozens of attacks inspired or promoted by Daesh throughout the world in 2016.

Over the past year, we have seen new developments of terrorists using social media during attacks to document their actions as they unfolded. Footage that has later been used in instructional videos released officially by Daesh to inspire and incite more violence.

We have seen perpetrators repeatedly updating their social media during attacks and others live broadcasting their actions before, during and after committing these unspeakable acts of violence.

The hatred of terrorists and violent extremists across the world does not differentiate between the market places of Baghdad and Berlin. Yesterday's deadly vehicle attack in Jerusalem, follows the now tragically familiar pattern we saw in Nice on Bastille Day, at Ohio State in November and in Berlin's Christmas market in December.

It is clear that the internet and social media platforms have become much more than simply a method to distribute information or to claim responsibility for attacks.

Whether directed, inspired or promoted by Daesh, these attacks, the sources and methods they use are coming part of the modus operandi for terrorists and extremists worldwide; weaponising the platforms and applications we all use in our everyday lives.

And whilst the physical presence of Daesh in Iraq and Syria is diminishing, the ability of Daesh and other extremist groups to inspire and incite followers to commit acts of terror has not.

Consequently, collectively addressing the 'strategic communications and social media dimension to preventing and countering violent extremism' remains an urgent and unrelenting challenge.

This Global Counter Terrorism Forum can enable a much needed change in how we combat terrorist use of the internet and how we develop the communications initiatives and internet governance that will deliver results.

But to be successful, we need to be coordinated.

We need new and innovative methods to more quickly identify and remove terrorist and violent extremist content and to deliver more effective strategic communications to counter these deadly narratives in all our countries.

Today we have the right people in the room to bring about this change. We can, and we must, act.

To focus our thinking, let me address a few key points:

- first, the specific nature of the global threat we face and how it is evolving and changing

- second, our collective response and our progress to date

- and third, what further preventative action needs to be taken

The threat

In terms of the threat, before we shape any response we must be sure we understand the threat we face.

I am sure we are all familiar now with the fact that social media platforms, and applications provide the opportunity to radicalise a global audience. An audience who would otherwise never have been reachable.

These platforms also provide the ability to normalise behaviours and attitudes that would be considered unacceptable or inappropriate offline.

These same platforms algorithmically connect like-minded individuals creating an illusion of strength in numbers.

Research by Paul Gill et al (2015) shows that 54% of convicted UK terrorists have used the internet to learn about some aspect of their intended terrorist activity.

This proportion increases to 74% when looking at terrorist actors since 2012. In 61% of cases, there is evidence that individuals had engaged in online activity that was directly related to their ultimate attacks or conviction.

But the threat we face continues to evolve and diversify, and significantly so over the past twelve months.

Let's be clear, physically Daesh is collapsing in Iraq and Syria.

But as military success draws down, their attention is focused on inspiring and inciting violence through online propaganda.

A powerful new brand is emerging, aiming for relevance in the global virtual space.

This brand is based on the appeal of a virtual borderless presence repeatedly calling on followers to carry out acts of terrorism across the world.

Following the claim by Daesh of responsibility for the atrocious attack on Berlin's Christmas market, Daesh released a statement on Telegram in Arabic, French and English encouraging their supporters to carry out lone actor attacks in the West and Europe during the Christmas and New Year period,

specifically advising supporters to target 'celebrations, clubs, hospitals, markets and movie theatres'. Tragically, foretelling the Reina nightclub attack in Istanbul on New Year's Eve. In the same message they encouraged further attacks on consulates and embassies.

We have seen this message before. Earlier this year Daesh published an audio message from its then spokesman, Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, in which he renewed calls for the group's supporters to carry out terrorist attacks during Ramadan. At the time, the speech did not precipitate international media scrutiny and even some terrorism analysts regarded it as less persuasive than his previous fatwas.

However, Adnani's words were linked to more than 400 deaths across the globe during the Islamic holy month.

It was the bloodiest Ramadan this century with attacks in Paris, Orlando, Baghdad, Medina and Dhaka.

This ability to inspire and incite attacks globally, exemplifies the new direction and shift in Daesh's own brand communications. As the following slides demonstrate

The one on the left is an original version of its Dabiq magazine encouraging its supporters to embrace the new caliphate and build a new state, the second its new magazine Rumiya calls on its followers to carry out acts of terrorism wherever they live and wherever they can.

The second edition of Rumiya reinforced support for lone actor attacks using knives with a full demonstration on a frightened hostage. This modus operandi was used in the heinous murder of the French priest in Normandy and attacks in the Minnesota shopping mall last year.

Daesh's third edition of Rumiya magazine, again released via Twitter and Telegram, specifically advised it supporters to carry out vehicle-based lone actor attacks targeting high profile events.

It praised the Bastille Day Nice attack and proposed that supporters mimic it with the use of large and heavy vehicles, all too familiar to us now.

Daesh continues to make prolific use of video and film to spread their propaganda online.

As I mentioned, in a recent video, a bound hostage is stabbed to death on camera to demonstrate to viewers the most efficient technique for murdering a civilian with a knife.

This was followed by a scene showing how to build a shrapnel-filled IED in a kitchen. More than 100 links to this video were posted to twenty-nine platforms. Dissemination was organised on Telegram, distributed on Twitter and the video was hosted on YouTube, Archive, Send Vid and Google Drive.

Twenty-four hours after the video's release, despite best efforts, half of these links were still active.

So, to be clear. Since 2013, Daesh's approach to online communications has been characterised by constant innovation in attempt to ensure its propaganda reaches the vulnerable people it is designed to influence.

As early as 2014, before the majority of the public were aware of the group's threat, Daesh were using bots to game Twitter and amplify their messaging.

Today this is complemented by the use of Telegram to coordinate thousands of messages promoting the latest Daesh film within hours of release.

Last year, we saw Daesh use drones to film propaganda, propaganda apps for children, and even attempt to develop their own social network.

And, as the heinous killing of the policeman in Paris has shown us, attackers have already begun to make use of live video streaming technology to promote attacks as they take place.

It is highly likely that the group will continue to expand into new technologies in the year to come, as it attempts to remain relevant whilst its physical presence collapses.

And, in addition to a shift in Daesh's own brand communications, with devastating consequences, we see a resurgent Al Qaida. Only last week, its leader issued a statement on Telegram and Twitter calling for attacks on the US as a 'top priority'.

And worldwide, extreme right wing groups are developing their own social media communications capabilities representing a new threat with an alarming rise in incidents of extreme, right-wing motivated violence.

So let's be clear about the threat today as we begin 2017.

We face an increasingly potent 'cycle of hate' across multiple extreme groups and ideologies with dynamic shifts in terrorist communications tactics.

Our response

And so to my second point, as the threat we face on these multiple vectors is delivering influence at a sustained pace and scale, then we must develop and rapidly deliver an ever stronger response at a greater pace and scale.

Research conducted by the UK government shows that the majority of links to Daesh content are shared within 2 hours of first release.

We know this is not a single platform issue.

We know that terrorists use different platforms for different purposes — to first distribute their propaganda as far and wide as possible, then to lure individuals into direct conversations.

And over the last 2 years we have all become acutely aware that no one country, company, organisation or individual can defeat this highly complex and evolving threat alone.

It must be a collective effort.

A new partnership is required where all parties – governments, civil society, industry, the media – work together to tackle terrorist and violent extremist use of the internet.

These durable partnerships, as represented by the GCTF, must generate a whole new scale of effective response.

So in addressing this 'cycle of hate' we must build new capacity – both national and international – that is holistic, targeted and dynamic.

The progress

Some progress has already been made.

Last year Australia set up a national capacity to remove terrorist and extremist propaganda and amplify counter narratives.

The Global Coalition Strategic Communications Cell have provided a core co-ordination function which has distributed counter narratives and campaign ideas to coalition members on a weekly basis.

Last year, Microsoft, Google, Facebook and Twitter signed the EU Commission's Code of Conduct, agreeing to take the lead in countering the spread of illegal hate speech online.

Facebook launched the online civil courage initiative in Germany and Google developed and initiated the 'redirect method' to deliver a curated counter narrative content response to search queries. YouTube has expanded its 'trusted flagger' scheme so problematic videos can be taken down quickly.

And Microsoft have strengthened their terms and conditions with zero tolerance language prohibiting violent extremist propaganda and hate speech and are developing new technologies to scan for terrorist and extremist images.

And Twitter has updated its terms and conditions to prohibit promoting violence against others and shut down 360,000 accounts for threatening or promoting terrorist acts.

At the EU Internet Forum in December, we saw the announcement of a proposal by industry to build a shared hash database.

This is a welcome and encouraging first step and we need industry to move quickly to implement this shared platform to improve our ability to clear caches of known terrorist content from the internet and to keep that content from being reposted.

But more still needs to be done.

We must understand the influence of terror groups online and deploy the use of strong data analytics to understand how terrorists amplify their messages

across all social media platforms and communication apps.

To curtain this viral influence, we need to understand how these messages are amplified and how their deadly influence is generated.

We should all play close attention to work of the GCTF on developing 2 work streams of co-governance and communications to challenge terrorist and violent extremist content online — not just on social media platforms, but also on the traditional news media platforms online.

The recommendation documents, which will be produced by the GCTF laying out the principles of engagement for governments to counter violent extremism and provide GCTF members with an invaluable toolkit, will be a potentially invaluable in our arsenal to respond effectively to terrorist use of the internet and the developing capabilities of more and more extremist groups.

This work will help to develop national capacity to deal with this issue.

In the UK, our response for tackling terrorist and violent extremist use of the internet focuses on two areas of work.

One, working with industry to voluntarily remove terrorist and violent extremist content online through the Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit, and 2, bringing communication experts and civil society groups together to develop and run targeted and more effective counter campaigns.

But while this is world leading in terms of volume of referrals and speed of takedowns, this is not enough. We need the whole of industry to come together to innovate and automate these processes to tackle terrorist and extremist content online.

Since February 2010, when the CTIRU was first set up, it has secured the removal of over 250,000 pieces of propaganda. Based on this model, the EU Internet Referral Unit, was launched to secure the removal of content in a wider range of languages. To date the unit has secured the removal of over 16,000 pieces of online propaganda.

Conclusion

So, in conclusion. The Global Counter Terrorism Forum can and should pave the way for a step change in how we respond as national governments, industry and as global partners.

We all have a shared interest in ensuring that the internet continues to be a safe, free and open space.

If we can come together and herald an era of shared responsibility we will defeat those that seek to divide us.

Thank you very much.

[Green Party: Climate change risk increasingly severe](#)

25 January 2017

The Green Party has responded to a report published today which reveals Europe is warming at a faster pace than the global average and faces multiple climate hazards [1].

The European Environment Agency report is the most comprehensive study of Europe's vulnerability to climate change available [2]. It predicts Atlantic-facing countries will face heavier rainfalls, increased flood risk and more severe storm damage.

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

"Our environment is being destroyed all around us – our oceans and mountains, our wildlife and our homes are all under direct threat from climate extremes. As the planet races towards the 2C warming limit, we have two options as country. We can drag our feet and watch our environment suffer or we can move decisively away from the dirty, dangerous technology of the past by keeping fossil fuels in the ground and investing in renewables.

"Standing up to climate deniers has never been more important – even if they hold some of the most powerful positions in the world. The actions Donald Trump takes in the US will directly impact our lives in Europe.

"The EEA report makes for terrifying reading, but it's also an opportunity for Europe to develop effective strategies for tackling greenhouse gas emissions and for Britain to step up and lead the way on transitioning to a zero carbon economy."

Notes:

1. https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/jan/25/europe-faces-droughts-floods-storms-climate-change-accelerates

2. http://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/climate-change-poses-increasingly-severe

[Tweet](#)

[Back to main news page](#)