

UK statement on UNSCR 1325

Thank you Mr Chair. As Chair of the Security Committee, Men Engage Network and as Ambassador for my country – I would like to thank both the Ukrainian FSC and Albanian PC Chairs for making the Women, Peace and Security agenda one of its key priorities and for dedicating today's Joint Security Dialogue to this important topic. Doing so reinforces the importance of gender equality in the achievement of peace and security efforts.

I'd like to extend my sincere gratitude to the distinguished speakers – the Minister of Defence from Albania, the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs from Ukraine, and the Special Representative on Gender – for their invaluable time today. Their excellent insights serve to demonstrate both the great progress but also the complex challenges that still surround the Women, Peace and Security agenda in the OSCE region.

Mr Chair, we last had the opportunity to discuss the WPS agenda in March under the Turkish Chair, since then we have, and are, enduring an unprecedented crisis which has affected all our lives. Despite the physical restrictions, COVID-19 has brought many of us closer together as we seek out new ways to socialise, work and engage with each other. We have seen the brave response from those who are fighting this pandemic in medical centres and hospitals around the world and we recognise the sacrifices so many have already made. Two-thirds of the global healthcare workforce is female, placing women at the frontline of the pandemic. However, the conditions in which we now operate and live in during this crisis also present wider risks and threats. We must not let COVID-19 erode our progress on – and the importance of – the WPS agenda.

Over the past two decades – since the adoption of UNSCR 1325 in October 2000 – a lot has been done to promote the importance of the Resolution and to implement its agenda. But significant challenges still remain. At the security dialogue in March, I highlighted that 20 years on – less than two-thirds of OSCE participating States had a National Action Plan. And we again encourage all participating States yet to adopt a Plan to do so as soon as possible.

On the Security Committee – for the transnational threats that the Committee covers – we need to deepen our understanding of gender dynamics. This is to better inform how we respond to these threats. For example, at our 2nd of March meeting, the Committee considered the importance of a whole of society approach to counter-terrorism and violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism. During that meeting, we heard about a project in the Western Balkans that highlighted the specific issues around female radicalisation. We want to continue to focus on specific, tangible examples and illustrations of gender dynamics and their importance for tackling transnational threats within the Committee.

In March, we welcomed the Women in the First Dimension group and with it, the List of Female Experts and welcome today the launch of the mentoring network.

We must capitalise on this initiative, ensuring whenever possible, those experts are represented at OSCE conferences and dialogues. We will do precisely this for the Security Committee this. And it is great to hear that this is exactly the intention of the ASRC.

Mr Chair, we heard earlier about the significant and valuable role women play in both Albania and Ukraine. In Albania we recognise its National Action Plan and tangible results in country. This includes the statistic that 35.4% of officers who joined the army last year were women. In Ukraine, we value the role women play in civil society, including as human rights defenders, and by ensuring access to humanitarian assistance, education, and healthcare on both sides of the contact line. We also routinely hear about the outstanding work being done by the SMM throughout Ukraine, including by women monitors.

Women's participation is key to the success and longevity of peace processes. This is important not only in Ukraine, but in all parts of the OSCE region affected by conflict, and at all stages of the conflict cycle. As an organisation, we must do better in ensuring that women are represented among OSCE mediators at all levels in the relevant formats related to protracted conflicts. It is incumbent on us to take full advantage of tools – such as the OSCE's "Inclusion of Women and Effective Peace Processes". And bring more women mediators to the table. This is also the case for female monitors.

As Chair of the OSCE MenEngage network, we will continue to raise awareness of the role and influence all of us can play in speaking out against inequality and ending gender based violence. Gender parity at all job levels in the OSCE; robust action against gender discrimination; and a zero tolerance approach on sexual harassment must happen – supported by tangible measures and actions from all of us. And we must end – collectively – sexual exploitation and abuse wherever and whenever it occurs. Representatives from the Men Engage Network are pleased to join the Female Ambassadors in their statement later today.

Mr Chair – in concluding – we have recently commemorated the 75 year Anniversary of VE day. It would be an oversight not to recognise the important role women played in that victory, including on the frontlines, and their fundamental role in rebuilding our societies and countries after the conflict. World War II provided a stimulus for social change and the fight for what we now recognise as gender equality. Yet, three quarters of a century later that inequality and discrimination still persist in the OSCE region. We need to continue to promote change and tackle it head on.

UNSCR 1325 affects every single one of us. It is about inclusive peace and security, where we take account of varied perspectives and ways of thinking. It is about ensuring that efforts to prevent, respond to, and resolve conflict take into account the needs of all of society. At its core – it is essential to achieve a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic OSCE region.

Thank you once again for putting a spotlight on this important topic. And I request that this statement be attached to the Journal of the Day.

Clocking up cycle miles by pumping funding into coastal scheme

Since 2015, the Government company has invested more than £85 million towards the creation of 160 new and upgraded cycle ways across England, providing safe, attractive and accessible facilities for people to cycle for work, shopping and leisure.

Cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders will see more benefits over the next five years, with £169 million set aside in Highways England's new Users and Communities fund. The company is using the fund to improve services for users and neighbours of England's motorways and major A-roads, including increasing the options people have for sustainable travel.

In the latest initiative announced today, £1.3 million of funding will help create a path between Weston-super-Mare and Clevedon and complete the final part of the cycle route between Brean and Portishead in the South West.

Anyone currently wishing to cycle between the two towns has to negotiate a motorway junction and a busy A road. But the new section will remove those challenges and add to the mix of quiet lanes, dedicated cycle facilities and a crossing of the River Yeo on the route. It will also reduce the distance to travel between the towns by about four miles for people not in vehicles, and provide a vital link between existing routes.

Funding from Highways England has also realised safer journeys for cyclists around the A540 near Ellesmere Port in Cheshire, the A64 near Musley Bank and Tadcaster Bar and the M11 near London Stansted Airport, where cyclists commuting to the airport previously faced navigating the hazardous junction 8.

Up to 55,000 trips per year are forecast on the new coastal route and a significant number of those will be commuters who can leave their cars at home.

Chris Heaton-Harris, Cycling and Walking Minister, said:

Across the country there has been a surge in the numbers of people getting on their bikes or walking as part of their daily exercise, and I want to build on this with our recently announced £2 billion investment to create a green legacy.

This 24-mile coastal cycleway will provide a great space for cyclists, walkers and horse riders and help them boost their physical and mental health. Cutting the journey between Weston-super-Mare and Clevedon by four miles will also make this journey

more accessible and help cut road traffic.

Steven Wright, Highways England's Users and Communities Fund lead, said:

We're committed to significantly improving safety across our road network, and the new and improved cycle and footpaths will make it much easier and safer for cyclists and pedestrians.

At Highways England, our work goes beyond operating, maintaining and improving roads. We're investing in the environment and communities surrounding our network, as well as the people travelling and working on it. We aim to address social and environmental issues and add real value to society.

We're delighted to be partnering with North Somerset Council to realise this project – a glowing example of how this funding can make life better for communities living and working near our roads.

Highways England manages four designated funds, allocated by the Government, to deliver benefits above and beyond building, maintaining and operating England's strategic roads.

From protecting the environment and enhancing the landscape around roads, to improving safety, reducing congestion, and supporting communities, the aim is to make a positive difference to people's lives.

Highways England has invested £1.3 million into North Somerset Council's £2.09 million project to create a new mile-long walking and cycling path between Weston-super-Mare and Clevedon, to the west of the M5.

The benefits will not only reduce traffic around M5 junction 21 and on the motorway, but also bring about a growth in the use of sustainable transport, improved air quality and a healthier society in general.

North Somerset Council executive member for transport Cllr James Tonkin said:

This funding from Highways England is fantastic news. Building a Weston to Clevedon cycleway is a long-held aspiration for the council, first proposed back in 1979.

It will give a quiet, safer route for cyclists, avoiding the busy A370 and M5 junction 21. It will be designed to accommodate disabled people and will have health and environmental benefits by encouraging an active lifestyle and reducing travel by car.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Transport update: Manston Airport, extension of planning decision](#)

I have been asked by my Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State, to make this written ministerial statement. This statement concerns the application of 17 July 2018 made by RiverOak Strategic Partners Ltd (“the Applicant”) under the [Planning Act 2008](#) for the proposed reopening and development of Manston Airport in Kent.

Under [sub-section 107\(1\) of the Planning Act 2008](#), the Secretary of State must make his decision within 3 months of receipt of the examining authority’s report unless exercising the power under sub-section 107(3) to extend the deadline and make a statement to the House of Parliament announcing the new deadline.

The Secretary of State received the examining authority’s report on the Manston Airport development consent order application on 18 October 2019 and, following an [earlier extension of 4 months](#), the current deadline for a decision is 18 May 2020.

The deadline for the decision is now to be extended to 10 July 2020 to enable further work to be carried out before determination of the application.

The decision to set a new deadline is without prejudice to the decision on whether to grant development consent.

[Sellafield Ltd helps County Council develop app to support the ‘most vulnerable’](#)

Sellafield Ltd’s Geospatial and Strategic Spatial Planning Team have used their skills to help support the most vulnerable in the community as part of Cumbria’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Richard McGrath, who heads up the team at Sellafield Ltd said:

Three colleagues worked closely with Cumbria County Council since the beginning of lockdown, to help them develop a web-based interactive 'app' to help triage and coordinate support to the most vulnerable in the community.

The application provides information, in a web-map, on where vulnerable people in the community live and matches this with the geographical spread of local community support groups, such as the nearest foodbanks, supermarkets, pharmacies and other services helping the most vulnerable in our communities through the lockdown.

The information is kept live and retrieves details logged in the Cumbria County Council Call Centre after people contact the county council helpline to access support.

Richard added:

This app is now used in all the local area hubs throughout Cumbria and the application has been recognised nationally as the standard to aspire to for managing this task.

Matt Pearson from Cumbria County Council said:

Sellafield Ltd's support has been absolutely invaluable, with the team working extremely hard to map, layer and develop a system that works for our Community Hub Teams.

The mapping is allowing us to reduce the number of officers supporting the hub works across the county which at its peak was around 120 personnel.

This Cumbria wide approach will now allow for Carlisle Hub Teams to start managing cases in Barrow, because the local knowledge they need is now available to them in an accessible format.

The Sellafield team have been a pleasure to work with, especially as additional requirements have been identified and different approaches taken.

Jamie Reed, Sellafield Ltd Head of Corporate Affairs said:

Since lockdown began we've been assisting the community response in as many ways as we can.

Hundreds of Sellafield employees are volunteering in the community,

we've provided £200,000 for the provision of 20,000 gowns for the NHS, we've made PPE available to the NHS from our own supplies and we've spent tens of thousands on providing hot meals for delivery across the community for those most in need.

We're working with schools to ensure that the most disadvantaged pupils don't fall behind in their education and much more. In Cumbria and in Warrington, we're doing all we can to help our communities deal with the pandemic and, crucially, to prepare for the recovery.

[UK House Price Index for March 2020](#)

Following the publication of this index, the UK HPI will be suspended until further notice. Further information can be found on the [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\) website](#).

The March data shows:

- on average, house prices have fallen by 0.2% since February 2020
- there has been an annual price rise of 2.1%, which makes the average property in the UK valued at £231,855

England

In England the March data shows, on average, house prices have fallen by 0.1% since February 2020. The annual price rise of 2.2% takes the average property value to £248,271.

The regional data for England indicates that:

- the South West experienced the greatest monthly price rise, up by 2.0%
- Yorkshire and the Humber saw the most significant monthly price fall, down by 3.6%
- London experienced the greatest annual price rise, up by 4.7%
- Yorkshire and the Humber saw the lowest annual price growth, down by 1.0%

Price change by region for England

Region	Average price March 2020	Monthly change % since February 2020
East Midlands	£194,664	0.4
East of England	£291,254	0.0

Region	Average price March 2020	Monthly change % since February 2020
London	£485,794	1.2
North East	£126,945	-0.6
North West	£166,202	0.2
South East	£323,353	0.6
South West	£263,360	2.0
West Midlands	£195,917	-2.3
Yorkshire and the Humber	£159,208	-3.6

Repossession sales by volume for England

The lowest number of repossession sales in January 2020 was in the East of England.

The highest number of repossession sales in January 2020 was in the North West.

Repossession sales	January 2020
East Midlands	55
East of England	12
London	53
North East	105
North West	143
South East	60
South West	35
West Midlands	62
Yorkshire and the Humber	107
England	632

Average price by property type for England

Property type	March 2020	March 2019	Difference %
Detached	£379,050	£369,683	2.5
Semi-detached	£232,901	£228,288	2.0
Terraced	£199,959	£195,955	2.0
Flat/maisonette	£226,383	£221,555	2.2
All	£248,271	£242,982	2.2

Funding and buyer status for England

Transaction type	Average price March 2020	Annual price change % since March 2019	Monthly price change % since February 2020
Cash	£233,590	2.3	0.1
Mortgage	£255,688	2.1	-0.2
First-time buyer	£207,917	2.0	-0.2

Transaction type	Average price March 2020	Annual price change % since March 2019	Monthly price change % since February 2020
Former owner occupier	£282,247	2.4	-0.1

Building status for England

Building status*	Average price January 2020	Annual price change % since January 2019	Monthly price change % since December 2019
New build	£323,532	7.1	8.1
Existing resold property	£243,890	1.2	-0.5

*Figures for the two most recent months are not being published because there are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

London

London shows, on average, house prices have risen by 1.2% since February 2020. An annual price rise of 4.7% takes the average property value to £485,794.

Average price by property type for London

Property type	March 2020	March 2019	Difference %
Detached	£889,309	£879,600	1.1
Semi-detached	£581,358	£566,491	2.6
Terraced	£506,179	£483,203	4.8
Flat/maisonette	£429,401	£406,906	5.5
All	£485,794	£464,162	4.7

Funding and buyer status for London

Transaction type	Average price March 2020	Annual price change % since March 2019	Monthly price change % since February 2020
Cash	£514,310	5.8	1.9
Mortgage	£477,501	4.4	1.1
First-time buyer	£425,911	4.8	1.6
Former owner occupier	£546,525	4.5	0.7

Building status for London

Building status*	Average price January 2020	Annual price change % since January 2019	Monthly price change % since December 2019
New build	£521,136	7.6	8.5
Existing resold property	£474,660	1.2	-1.0

*Figures for the two most recent months are not being published because there are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

Wales

Wales shows, on average, house prices have fallen by 2.8% since February 2020. An annual price rise of 1.1% takes the average property value to £161,684.

There were 52 repossession sales for Wales in January 2020.

Average price by property type for Wales

Property type	March 2020	March 2019	Difference %
Detached	£246,051	£241,228	2.0
Semi-detached	£156,492	£154,908	1.0
Terraced	£123,624	£123,345	0.2
Flat/maisonette	£116,071	£113,873	1.9
All	£161,684	£159,904	1.1

Funding and buyer status for Wales

Transaction type	Average price March 2020	Annual price change % since March 2019	Monthly price change % since February 2020
Cash	£157,693	1.6	-2.3
Mortgage	£164,150	0.9	-2.9
First-time buyer	£139,180	0.7	-3.0
Former owner occupier	£188,090	1.5	-2.5

Building status for Wales

Building status*	Average price January 2020	Annual price change % since January 2019	Monthly price change % since December 2019
New build	£230,600	9.7	7.7
Existing resold property	£159,380	2.5	-2.5

*Figures for the two most recent months are not being published because there are not enough new build transactions to give a meaningful result.

[Access the full UK HPI*](#)

Please note: The heatmaps that are usually published in the full report will be unavailable this month due to the impact the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has had on operational services.

The UK HPI is based on completed housing transactions. Typically, a house

purchase can take 6 to 8 weeks to reach completion. Therefore, the price data feeding into the March 2020 UK HPI will reflect those completions that occurred before the government measures to reduce the spread of coronavirus took hold.

UK house prices

UK house prices increased by 2.1% in the year to March 2020, up from 2.0% in February 2020. On a non-seasonally adjusted basis, average house prices in the UK fell by 0.2% between February 2020 and March 2020, compared with a fall of 0.3% during the same period a year earlier (February 2019 and March 2019).

The [UK Property Transactions Statistics](#) for March 2020 showed that on a seasonally adjusted basis, the estimated number of transactions of residential properties with a value of £40,000 or greater was 99,440. This is 0.3% higher than a year ago. Between February 2020 and March 2020, transactions fell by 0.2%.

House price growth was strongest in Northern Ireland where prices increased by 3.8% over the year to Quarter 1 2020 (January – March 2020). The highest annual growth within the English regions was in London, where average house prices grew by 4.7%. The lowest, and only negative, annual growth was in Yorkshire and the Humber, where prices fell by 1.0% over the year to March 2020.

Background

1. The UK House Price Index (HPI) is now suspended until further notice. See the [Office for National Statistics \(ONS\) website](#) for more information.
2. We have made some changes to improve the accuracy of the UK HPI. We are not publishing average price and percentage change for new builds and existing resold property as done previously because there are not currently enough new build transactions to provide a reliable result. This means that in this month's UK HPI reports, new builds and existing resold property are reported in line with the sales volumes currently available.
3. The UK HPI revision period has been extended to 13 months, following a review of the revision policy (see [calculating the UK HPI](#) section 4.4). This ensures the data used is more comprehensive.
4. Sales volume data is also available by property status (new build and existing property) and funding status (cash and mortgage) in our [downloadable data tables](#). Transactions involving the creation of a new register, such as new builds, are more complex and require more time to

process. Read [revisions to the UK HPI data](#).

5. Revision tables have been introduced for England and Wales within the downloadable data. Tables will be available in csv format. See [about the UK HPI](#) for more information.
6. Data for the UK HPI is provided by HM Land Registry, Registers of Scotland, Land & Property Services/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and the Valuation Office Agency.
7. The UK HPI is calculated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Land & Property Services/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. It applies a hedonic regression model that uses the various sources of data on property price, in particular HM Land Registry's Price Paid Dataset, and attributes to produce estimates of the change in house prices each month. Find out more about the methodology used from the [ONS](#) and [Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency](#).
8. The [UK Property Transaction statistics](#) are taken from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) monthly estimates of the number of residential and non-residential property transactions in the UK and its constituent countries. The number of property transactions in the UK is highly seasonal, with more activity in the summer months and less in the winter. This regular annual pattern can sometimes mask the underlying movements and trends in the data series so HMRC also presents the UK aggregate transaction figures on a seasonally adjusted basis. Adjustments are made for both the time of year and the construction of the calendar, including corrections for the position of Easter and the number of trading days in a particular month.
9. UK HPI seasonally adjusted series are calculated at regional and national levels only. See [data tables](#).
10. The first estimate for new build average price (April 2016 report) was based on a small sample which can cause volatility. A three-month moving average has been applied to the latest estimate to remove some of this volatility.
11. Work has been taking place since 2014 to develop a single, official HPI that reflects the final transaction price for sales of residential property in the UK. Using the geometric mean, it covers purchases at market value for owner-occupation and buy-to-let, excluding those purchases not at market value (such as re-mortgages), where the 'price' represents a valuation.

12. Information on residential property transactions for England and Wales, collected as part of the official registration process, is provided by HM Land Registry for properties that are sold for full market value.
13. The HM Land Registry dataset contains the sale price of the property, the date when the sale was completed, full address details, the type of property (detached, semi-detached, terraced or flat), if it is a newly built property or an established residential building and a variable to indicate if the property has been purchased as a financed transaction (using a mortgage) or as a non-financed transaction (cash purchase).
14. Repossession sales data is based on the number of transactions lodged with HM Land Registry by lenders exercising their power of sale.
15. For England, this is shown as volumes of repossession sales recorded by Government Office Region. For Wales, there is a headline figure for the number of repossession sales recorded in Wales.
16. The data can be downloaded as a .csv file. Repossession sales data prior to April 2016 is not available. Find out more information about [repossession sales](#).
17. Background tables of the raw and cleansed aggregated data, in Excel and CSV formats, are also published monthly although Northern Ireland is on a quarterly basis. They are available for free use and re-use under the Open Government Licence.
18. HM Land Registry's mission is to guarantee and protect property rights in England and Wales.
19. HM Land Registry is a government department created in 1862. It operates as an executive agency and a trading fund and its running costs are covered by the fees paid by the users of its services. Its ambition is to become the world's leading land registry for speed, simplicity and an open approach to data.
20. HM Land Registry safeguards land and property ownership worth in excess of £7 trillion, including over £1 trillion of mortgages. The Land Register contains more than 25 million titles showing evidence of ownership for some 87% of the land mass of England and Wales.
21. For further information about HM Land Registry visit www.gov.uk/land-registry.

22. Follow us on [Twitter](#), our [blog](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).