

News story: Foreign Secretary hosts talks with European foreign ministers

The Foreign Secretary today (Sunday 15 October) held talks with foreign ministers from eight European allies.

Boris Johnson was joined by the foreign ministers of Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia at Chevening House to discuss shared challenges and the UK's continued commitment to European security.

The Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

Our departure from the EU will make no difference to Britain's unconditional and immovable commitment to the security and defence of Europe.

This meeting was a further demonstration that the UK is a vital partner in the security of our continent.

The Foreign Secretary will tomorrow (Monday 16 October) travel to Luxembourg for the EU Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) where he will continue his discussions with European counterparts on the implications of the US announcement on the Iran nuclear deal.

The UK will continue to work closely with the international community to preserve the deal. In parallel with efforts to keep the nuclear deal, collective concerns about Iran's ballistic missile programme and regional activities must be addressed.

NOTES

The Foreign Secretary hosted the following European foreign ministers at Chevening today:

- Bulgarian Foreign Minister Ekaterina Zaharieva
 - Croatian Foreign Minister Marija Pejčinović Burić
 - Czech Deputy Foreign Minister Ivo Sramek
 - Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjártó
 - Polish Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski
 - Romanian Foreign Minister Teodor Melescanu
 - Slovakian State Secretary Ivan Korčok
 - Slovenian State Secretary Andrej Logar
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Press release: Life sentences for killer drivers

- life sentences will be introduced for those who cause death by dangerous driving, and for careless drivers who kill while under the influence of drink or drugs
- new offence of causing serious injury through careless driving to be created
- part of government action to make roads safer for all and stop devastation caused by dangerous drivers and cyclists

Killer drivers face life behind bars after plans to increase maximum sentences received resounding support from families and campaigners.

Ministers today confirmed that drivers who cause death by speeding, racing, or using a mobile phone could face sentences equivalent to manslaughter, with maximum penalties raised from 14 years to life.

Offenders who cause death by careless driving while under the influence of drink or drugs will also face life sentences, and a new offence of causing serious injury by careless driving will be created.

The move comes after an overwhelming response to a government consultation which revealed substantial backing for the plans from a wide range of people including victims, bereaved families and road safety experts.

Today Ministers are announcing the outcome and confirmed the introduction of much tougher penalties as part of wider action across government to clamp down on dangerous, criminal behaviour on our roads.

Justice Minister Dominic Raab said:

We've taken a long hard look at driving sentences, and we received 9,000 submissions to our consultation. Based on the seriousness of the worst cases, the anguish of the victims' families, and maximum penalties for other serious offences such as manslaughter, we intend to introduce life sentences of imprisonment for those who wreck lives by driving dangerously, drunk or high on drugs.

On the new offence of causing serious injury by careless driving, Dominic Raab said:

We will introduce a new offence of causing serious injury by careless driving, punishable by imprisonment, to fill a gap in the law and reflect the seriousness of some of the injuries suffered by victims in this category of case.

The measures were confirmed in a government response to a consultation which will be published tomorrow (Monday 16 October 2017). The consultation sought views on whether current maximum penalties available to the courts should be increased, and received over 1,000 replies in just three days when launched in December 2016 – reaching more than 9,000 when it closed in February 2017.

The proposals confirmed today include:

- increasing the maximum penalty for causing death by dangerous driving from 14 years to life
- increasing the maximum penalty for causing death by careless driving whilst under the influence of drink or drugs from 14 years to life
- creating a new offence of causing serious injury by careless driving

In 2016, 157 people were sentenced for causing death by dangerous driving, with a further 32 convicted of causing death by careless driving whilst under the influence.

Today's announcement delivers on the government's pledge to consider the sentencing powers available to the courts for the most serious driving offences – making sure that punishment reflects the harm caused to victims and their families.

The move forms part of government wide action to improve safety for all road users, following recent devastation caused by irresponsible motorists and dangerous cyclists.

Last month the Department for Transport (DFT) launched an urgent review to consider whether a new offence equivalent to causing death by careless or dangerous driving should be introduced for cyclists.

Notes to editors

- The consultation closed in February and sought views on the most serious road offences. It did not cover other driving or regulatory offences such as speeding, the setting of drink drive limits, the basic offences of careless or dangerous driving and driving whilst using a mobile phone.
- This follows further action in 2015, when the government increased the maximum custodial sentence for causing death whilst driving when disqualified from 2 to 10 years. A new offence of causing serious injury when driving whilst disqualified was also created, with a maximum penalty of four years imprisonment. It also brought into force the statutory requirement to extend a driving ban to take account of any time spent in custody.
- 90% of respondents to the consultation thought there should be a new offence of causing serious injury by careless driving. They noted that without a specific offence which reflects the harm caused, offenders could only be convicted of a careless driving offence that has a maximum penalty of a fine.
- 70% of responses thought that the maximum penalty for the offence of causing death by dangerous driving should be increased to life

imprisonment. Vast majority of respondents also agreed that the maximum penalty for causing death by careless driving whilst under the influence of drink and drugs should also be life.

- The government will give further consideration to increasing minimum driving bans for those convicted of causing serious death.
- DFT is separately reviewing cycling safety and seeking views on whether a new offence of causing death by dangerous cycling is needed, further details are due shortly.
- Legislation required for the measures announced today is expected to be brought forward as soon as parliamentary time allows and will take account of, and incorporate, the review of cycle safety.
- Sentencing remains a matter for independent judges, with decisions based on the full facts of each case.
- For more information call the MOJ press office on 020 3334 3529 or 020 3334 3503.

Press release: Industry-led review details plans to supercharge UK Artificial Intelligence (AI) industry

The Government has been urged to help the UK become the clear world leader in the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) – to boost productivity, advance health care, improve services for customers and unlock £630bn for the UK economy.

Experts from industry and academia today (Sunday 15 October 2017) unveiled new proposals for how Government can work with industry to stay ahead of the competition and grow the UK's use of AI right across the economy – from smarter scheduling of operations in health care, to hiring on-demand self-driving cars.

The Industrial Strategy Green Paper, published in January, identified AI as a major, high-potential opportunity for the UK to build a world-leading future sector of our economy.

The independent review, 'Growing the Artificial Intelligence Industry in the UK', was announced as part of the Digital Strategy in March, and led by Dame Wendy Hall, Professor of Computer Science at the University of Southampton, and Jérôme Pesenti, Chief Executive of BenevolentTech. The reviewers were asked to report on how this pioneering technology can best thrive and grow in the UK and will inform BEIS and DCMS policy making relevant to this exciting new sector.

Culture Secretary Karen Bradley said:

I want the UK to lead the way in Artificial Intelligence. It has the potential to improve our everyday lives – from healthcare to robots that perform dangerous tasks.

We already have some of the best minds in the world working on Artificial Intelligence, and the challenge now is to build a strong partnership with industry and academia to cement our position as the best place in the world to start and grow a digital business.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

Artificial intelligence presents us with a unique opportunity to build on our strengths and track record of research excellence by leading the development and deployment of this transformational technology.

This important review exemplifies the world-class expertise the UK already has in AI, demonstrating the huge social and economic benefits its use can bring.

We will continue to work with the sector in the coming months to secure a comprehensive Sector Deal that make the UK the go to place for AI and helps us grasp the opportunities that lie ahead.

Many sectors across the UK economy are already embracing innovation through AI and benefitting from its use in how they do their business day-to-day including:

- Health: Using the most advanced Artificial Intelligence, Your.MD has built the world's first AI Personal Health Guide that provides users immediate trustworthy healthcare advice from the NHS to anyone with access to a mobile phone;
- Banking: To help verify customer identity and increase security for HSBC customers, the bank has created an AI chatbot, Olivia, who can assist customers 24 hours a day, 365 days a year with their enquiries;
- Education: With technology that records patterns of behaviour, including what learning style works for each student, CENTURY, an AI platform, is helping children learn and teachers provide more personalised education programmes, with feedback and suggestions to help fill knowledge gaps;
- Legal services: AI is helping lawyers to do legal searches and to draft the best standard documents, the law firm Pinsent Masons has developed its own team of computer scientists and legal engineers to put AI into practical context for its lawyers; and

- Cars: Driverless cars are set to make the roads safer for pedestrians and car drivers alike, with companies like Oxbotica developing fully autonomous operating systems that diagnose vehicle issues and identify the best, most logical route on the move.

AI is also being deployed in a variety of different ways to assist businesses and consumers such as:

- protecting consumers and shoppers against spam and bank fraud;
- computer vision that monitors CCTV to improve safety;
- managing and monitoring supply chains to reduce loss and waste;
- improving electricity grid management to save costs and reduce CO2 emissions; and
- using data to provide personal shopping recommendations.

Professor Dame Wendy Hall, Regius Professor of Computer Science at the University of Southampton said:

I was very honoured to be asked to co-chair this review at a time when AI is set to make major changes to the way we live and work. I'm particularly keen to ensure that we use it to inform the establishment of initiatives and programmes to help us extract the most value from artificial intelligence for the country; that includes an emphasis on increasing and improving our skill levels to prepare the workforce for the number of jobs the industry will need for the future.

AI has been around for a very long time as a concept and this latest surge of technological development is likely to see automation continue to escalate and accelerate in every walk of life. Now is the time for us all – scientists, researchers, entrepreneurs and the government – to come together and address the issues about how AI is going to impact society and seek ways to ensure that we're able to deliver the great breakthroughs the technology has the potential to deliver.

Jérôme Pesenti, CEO of BenevolentTech, the technology division of BenevolentAI said:

In our AI review, we focused on recommendations that are both

practicable and deliverable. By following these recommendations, Government, Academia and Industry can help strengthen the UK's position in the global AI market. Our proposals are deliberately specific and boil down to three fundamentals – enable better access to data, create a greater supply of AI skills and promote the uptake of AI. I am looking forward to working with Government, Academia and Industry to drive these changes.

The report makes 18 recommendations for how to make the UK the best place in the world for businesses developing AI to start, grow, and thrive including:

- Skills: increasing the UK's AI expertise through new initiatives including an industry-funded Masters programme, and conversion courses to bring a broader range of people into the field;
- Increasing uptake: helping organisations and workers understand how AI can boost their productivity and make better products and services, including public services;
- Data: ensuring that people and organisations can be confident that use of data for AI is safe, secure and fair by making more data available, including from publicly-funded research; and
- Research: building on the UK's strong record in cutting-edge AI research, including making the Alan Turing Institute a national institute for AI.

These recommendations will now be carefully considered in discussions towards a potential Industrial Strategy sector deal between Government and the AI industry.

As part of the Industrial Strategy, the Government has increased investment in research and development over the next 4 years by £4.7 billion to create jobs and raise living standards, including through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund.

The Business Secretary announced in April that the first £1 billion of investment is being made in six key areas in 2017/18, driving progress and innovation that will create opportunities for businesses and sectors across the UK.

Press release: International Development Secretary sets out UK commitment to jobs and prosperity in the world's poorest countries

The International Development Secretary Priti Patel has today provided detail on how the UK will create millions of jobs and help accelerate the economic growth that can lift countries out of poverty, through a continued commitment to the UK's Development Finance Institution.

At the World Bank Annual Meetings in Washington, Ms Patel set out the next step in DFID's commitment to the growth of CDC, following the passing of the CDC Act earlier this year which increased the total limit of capital which the UK could invest in CDC. This capital increase will average up to £703 million per year for the next five years, enabling CDC to make pioneering investments that create millions of jobs in the hardest to reach markets.

CDC invests in the poorest and most fragile countries in Africa and South Asia. It introduces much-needed capital, expertise and support to thousands of businesses – including power stations, farms and factories – in 74 countries, creating millions of jobs, generating essential taxes, and strengthening transformational sectors such as infrastructure, manufacturing and agriculture.

Over the last 3 years companies backed by CDC in Africa and South Asia have created over 3 million new direct and indirect jobs, and paid taxes to national governments worth over \$9 billion. This new capital will enable CDC to build on these excellent development results, sustain the increased investment pace reached over the last 5 years, respond to growing demand from businesses, and achieve the ambitious development impact set out in their 5 year strategy.

CDC's successful investments demonstrate to private investors the opportunities that exist, even in the most difficult places. This leads the way for other investors to follow, mobilising capital from a much larger pool of private investors.

International Development Secretary Priti Patel said:

The international private sector must rise to the challenge of investing in and powering the growth that helps people to work and earn money, to transform economies and end aid dependency.

Advancing economic development in the world's poorest countries is a hallmark of a Global Britain and with this commitment to CDC the UK is leading by example, creating the vital jobs and economic

stability that enable countries to leave poverty behind and stand on their own two feet.

Capital invested in CDC is invested and reinvested time and again, to ensure that every penny of taxpayers' money is having maximum development impact.

As set out in the Department for International Development's Economic Development Strategy in January 2017, the UK is committed to supporting countries to defeat poverty and leave aid dependency behind through sustainable economic growth, jobs, trade and investment.

Notes to editors:

- CDC is wholly owned by the UK government. It is the UK's Development Finance Institution and a world leader in its field. It is central to the UK's approach to promoting inclusive growth and economic development in Africa and South Asia.
- This capital increase will be invested and drawn down gradually to meet market demand over a 5 year period from 2017-2021.
- In July 2017, CDC launched its new [5 year Strategic Framework \(2017-2021\)](#). The strategy was developed and agreed with DFID. It maintains CDC's focus on investing in the poorest and most fragile countries in Africa and South Asia, set out innovative approaches to maximise the transformational impact of CDCs investments and commits CDC to increased levels of transparency and reporting.
- The CDC Act 2017 enjoyed cross party support and received Royal Assent on 28 February 2017. It increased the cap on the cumulative level of financial support that DFID can provide to CDC by up to £4.5bn from £1.5bn to £6.0bn. [Further details on the CDC Act are available here.](#)

[News story: Mini drones set to investigate hazardous scenes, announces Defence Secretary](#)

As part of a collaboration between the Ministry of Defence and the Home Office, the Defence Secretary has awarded funding to a range of small-and-medium-sized-enterprises (SMEs) with high-tech concepts to assess potentially

hazardous scenes.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

With intensifying threats abroad and the risk of accidents at home, we need the very latest technology to respond to any incident. Competitions like this with our £800 million Innovation Fund will ensure Britain has the latest in cutting-edge technology needed help keep us safe.

The Defence Secretary made the announcement on the back of chairing the quarterly Defence Suppliers Forum last week, which brings together prime contractors, international companies and SMEs.

The Minister for Security Ben Wallace said:

This competition has the potential to see world-class equipment created to support the emergency services when they arrive on the scene of an incident.

Through this funding, the Government is able to collaborate with academics and the private sector to turn these innovative ideas into front-line tools.

Amongst the winners were:

- Snake Eyes, produced by Autonomous Devices Limited in Milton Keynes, which is small enough to be posted through a letter box and relay 3D images of a space and can detect chemical agents.
- Bath-based BMT Defence Services, who have designed an unmanned aerial vehicle with high-tech gas-sensing technology.
- Horiba Mira, based in Nuneaton, which has a robot with its own neural networks which can deploy on decontamination missions.
- Loughborough University, with a pocket-sized drone which can search for chemicals.

The awards, worth over £1.6m, came as part of the Autonomy in Hazardous Scene Assessment competition, aiming to bring designs into being, and eventually use, in a much shorter space of time than is usually possible.

Through the Defence and Security Accelerator, working with the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), the competition –to be named Minerva – is set to meet some of the challenges of assessing potentially hazardous scenes.

Peter Stockel, from Dstl, said:

After a fast-paced first phase, we are now delighted to rapidly move the project forward into phase 2 with four highly innovative

and technically exciting system propositions to tackle this priority challenge we're for UK Defence and Security.

With continued involvement and demonstration with the user community, we aim to mature this emergent capability over the next 12 months to test the 'art of the possible' and accelerate this into the hands of the prospective users for further operational evaluation, both for MOD and the Home Office.

The first round of the competition saw 18 companies selected for funding. This, the second round, chooses four of those initial winning companies to further develop their concepts.

For more information on AHSA, or Minerva, visit:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/defence-science-and-technology-laboratory>