

Press release: PM call with US President Trump: 10 April 2017

Theresa May tonight spoke with US President Trump to discuss last week's chemical weapons attack in Syria and the US response.

The President thanked the Prime Minister for her support in the wake of last week's US military action against the Assad regime.

The Prime Minister and the President agreed that a window of opportunity now exists in which to persuade Russia that its alliance with Assad is no longer in its strategic interest.

They agreed that US Secretary of State Tillerson's visit to Moscow this week provides an opportunity to make progress towards a solution which will deliver a lasting political settlement.

They also discussed the broader Middle East, including the threat posed by Iran throughout the region.

The Prime Minister and President also stressed the importance of the international community, including China, putting pressure on North Korea to constrain the threat it poses.

Speech: Science and Innovation – Impact of the Newton-Picarte Fund in Chile

Thank you for joining us today to celebrate the impact of the Newton-Picarte fund in Chile and the contribution of the British Council.

The Newton Fund was created by the UK Government in 2014. A total of £735m has been invested by the Government to work with 15 countries up until 2021. In South America our partner countries are Chile, Brazil, Mexico and Colombia. The objective of the fund is to encourage science and innovation collaboration between the UK and developing economies, supporting their socio-economic development. The Newton Fund is part of the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA). A key characteristic of the fund, which distinguishes it from other UK Government ODA funding, is that partner countries provide match funding, thereby creating a partnership in which both countries are investing equal resources.

Since its official in-country launch in August 2014, through the signing of the MOU between Minister Cespedes and myself, representing the Ministry of Economy and the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy respectively, I am pleased to say that the Newton-Picarte Fund has helped to firmly position the UK as one of Chile's leading science and innovation partners.

Through the Newton-Picarte fund in Chile we have been able to finance collaboration across the scientific spectrum with programmes in key sectors such as agriculture, engineering, natural and social sciences and medical and health research – in total more than 200 initiatives. More importantly the fund has been the vehicle through which UK and Chilean researchers and universities have been able to establish partnerships, which we hope will continue for the long term.

The great success of the Newton fund can largely be attributed to the excellent work carried out by the British and Chilean Delivery Partners, who jointly have been in charge of designing, implementing and managing the programmes. The British Council, due to its presence in Chile, has been one of our closest allies in strengthening Chile's scientific and innovative excellence, developing advanced human capital, mobility and networking, through programmes such as Institutional Skills Development and the Communication Skills Workshop.

Chile is expected to graduate from the OECD DAC list of ODA recipient countries this year, with retrospective effect from 1 January 2017, after exceeding the high income country threshold in 2012 and 2013. Consequently the priorities and objectives of the UK-Chile Newton partnership will change to focus on global development challenges and those facing other developing countries, as opposed to Chile's own development challenges.

This year we will launch four activities which reflect this new focus – broadening the impact of joint British and Chilean research to benefit developing countries. These will be the final bilateral Newton programmes, which we will launch in Chile. In future years Chile will continue to be involved in regional Newton fund programmes, one of which we hope to launch this year on biodiversity. Please do ask our Embassy science team, Francisco and Alvaro, as well as British Council colleagues, if you would like more information.

Chile is a part of the Science and Innovation Network (UK SINet) of the UK Government. UKSINet is a network of around 90 officers in more than 30 countries in the world, that build links and collaborations in science and innovation in each country. Francisco is in charge of leading this work here in Chile, which reflects the importance that the UK Government places on our relations with Chile in science and innovation.

The Newton Picarte fund has enabled the UK to develop a relationship with Chile which is delivering significant impact. We are grateful to the British Council and to all of you for your help in making the fund such a success and we look forward to building on that success with you in the future. Because science and innovation is important for our economies, our societies and for

the world.

News story: Minister Hopkins urges politics students to have their say

Down High School pupils welcomed UK Government Minister Kris Hopkins to a meeting of the school's current affairs society.

Down High School pupils welcomed UK Government Minister Kris Hopkins to a meeting of the school's current affairs society today.

The Northern Ireland Office Minister gave the pupils a first-hand account of life in central and local government, drawing on his experience as a minister in central Whitehall departments and as leader of Bradford City Council.

The minister's visit was an opportunity to hear the views of Northern Ireland's young people about the current political impasse. Mr Hopkins was also keen to emphasise the vital role that politics and public service has played in making Northern Ireland a peaceful and prosperous place.

Mr Hopkins said:

"My message to the pupils today is simple: you can shape the future so get involved and have your say! Their energy was fantastic and it is good to see them engaged in the Northern Ireland political debate and showing a great interest in current affairs.

"With significant challenges facing Northern Ireland politicians it was instructive to hear the students' desire for a stronger society and a politics that works.

"It is vital we listen to their views. They are the next generation who will make a difference to the lives of people here and help build a brighter future for Northern Ireland."

News story: Industrial innovation in Jiangsu and the UK: apply for funding

Up to £5 million is available for UK businesses to work with partners in

Jiangsu province on industrial challenges and opportunities.

Innovate UK has up to £5 million to invest in UK businesses working on collaborative research and development projects with partners in Jiangsu province, People's Republic of China.

This programme is being delivered according to the memorandum of understanding for Cooperation in Regional Technology and Innovation signed in 2014. [Jiangsu Science and Technology Department](#) will allocate funding for partners in China.

Funding opportunities

We are seeking projects that:

- address the challenges faced by infrastructure owners, cities, towns and users through innovation in infrastructure systems
- use transformational or disruptive innovation to create new products, processes or services drawn from any technology, engineering or industrial area. There should be a significant return on investment and a clear, anticipated impact on business growth

Projects may focus on industrial research or experimental development.

International innovation to stimulate growth

Companies that internationalise are known to have strong growth. UK entrepreneurs need to access global knowledge, markets, skills and partners to build on capabilities, grow successful businesses and address the industrial opportunities and challenges that will shape the markets of the future.

Jiangsu is one of the provinces in China with the most abundant scientific resources and innovation activities.

In this competition there should be demonstrable benefits of cooperation between the UK and China for the participants from both countries.

Competition information

- this competition is open, and the deadline for registration is 21 June 2017
- projects must be business-led and involve at least one partner from the UK and one from Jiangsu province. Academic and research entities in the UK are eligible to join as partners
- projects should last up to 24 months and range in size up to £500,000
- businesses could attract up to 70% of their project costs
- a webinar briefing event will be held for potential applicants on Friday 21 April 2017

Press release: Updated measures to protect poultry against Avian Flu

All poultry in England are to be allowed outside from Thursday 13 April 2017 following updated evidence on the risk posed by wild birds, the UK's Chief Veterinary Officer has announced.

The requirement to keep poultry in Higher Risk Areas of England housed or completely enclosed in netting, introduced to minimise the risk of them catching avian flu from wild birds, will be lifted. However, all keepers in England will continue to be required to comply with strict biosecurity measures. A ban on poultry gatherings also remains in force until further notice.

The decision to lift the additional requirements in the Higher Risk areas is based on the latest scientific evidence and veterinary advice, which concludes that the level of risk to poultry in the Higher Risk Areas has now reduced to the same level as that across the rest of England. This is because of changes in the wild bird population: the majority of over-wintering migratory birds have now left the UK, and resident wild waterfowl are at their lowest levels and entering the breeding season when they become less likely to move long distances to forage for food.

The risk of poultry becoming infected from H5N8 remains heightened and countries across Europe continue to experience outbreaks and observe cases in wild birds. Defra is stepping up surveillance of wild birds across the UK to inform our risk assessments.

All poultry keepers must continue to take steps to reduce the risk to their birds, including minimising movement in and out of bird enclosures, cleaning footwear, keeping areas where birds live clean and tidy and feeding birds indoors.

Chief Veterinary Officer Nigel Gibbens said:

We continually review our disease control measures in light of new scientific evidence and veterinary advice. Based on the latest evidence on reduced numbers of migratory and resident aquatic wild birds we believe that kept birds in the areas we previously designated as Higher Risk are now at the same level of risk as the rest of England and may now be let outside.

However, all keepers must still observe strict disease prevention measures to reduce the risk of contamination from the environment, where the virus can survive for several weeks in bird droppings.

This does not mean business as usual: the risk from avian flu has not gone away and a Prevention Zone remains in place, requiring keepers across England to take steps to prevent disease spreading. We continue to keep measures under review and keepers should check GOV.UK for regular updates.

Lifting the housing requirement in Higher Risk Areas means free range birds across every part of England can now be allowed outside again.

[H5N8 avian flu has been found in wild and farmed birds in the UK since December 2016](#), including chickens, turkeys, ducks and geese. Where avian flu has been confirmed, we have taken swift action to limit the spread of disease with restrictions around affected premises and full investigations to determine the source of infection.

H5N8 can be spread indirectly via the contaminated environment, for example in wild bird droppings, contaminated feed or bedding, as well as being passed from wild birds to poultry directly from bird to bird. All disease control measures continue to be kept under review depending on the latest scientific advice and disease outbreak situation.

Further information

1. Read [guidance on how to continue to comply with the Prevention Zone](#) currently in place across England.
2. Read the [latest veterinary risk assessment for Avian Influenza H5N8 in the UK and Europe](#).
3. Read more [information about the ban on gatherings](#), which remains in place.