

UK announces new Special Envoy to the Western Balkans

The Prime Minister has appointed a Special Envoy to the Western Balkans as part of the UK's ongoing commitment to stability and prosperity in the region.

[Sir Stuart Peach](#) will take on the role after stepping down as Chairman of the NATO Military Committee earlier this year, a role he held since 2018. He also formerly served as the UK Chief of the Defence Staff.

As the PM's Special Envoy, Sir Stuart will work with Western Balkans leaders, others across the region and our allies in the US and Europe to support and strengthen regional stability. His work will also involve promoting strong democratic institutions and open societies, helping to tackle serious and organised crime and other joint security challenges, and encouraging resolution of legacy issues such as War Crimes and Missing Persons. Linked to the latter, the UK will also continue to lead work to advance gender equality and implement the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sir Stuart's work will support that of the international High Representative, Christian Schmidt, who continues to have the full support of the UK. On Serbia and Kosovo, he will work with our partners in support of the EU-facilitated Serbia-Kosovo Dialogue.

The High Representative has warned that Bosnia and Herzegovina is currently facing the greatest existential threat in its post-war period, and that there is a real prospect of further division and conflict. Along with international partners, the UK is working to tackle any threats to stability in line with the Dayton Peace Agreement which has underpinned 26 years of hard-won progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The UK is also helping to address other regional challenges, including supporting the normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo, and combatting organised crime groups. The UK will play an important role, working closely with the governments of the region and its international partners.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

The UK is deeply committed to European security. The Western Balkans are experiencing the biggest threat to their stability and security in over two decades. We have a responsibility to do all we can to preserve the gains achieved through peace and dialogue – we cannot allow any return to the violence and division of the past. Sir Stuart's extensive experience and expertise will reinforce international efforts to protect peace and promote Euro-Atlantic integration in this crucial region.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

Sir Stuart's appointment is a clear demonstration of Britain's commitment to the Western Balkans and to the defence and promotion of freedom and democracy in the region. I look forward to deepening our economic and security ties with the Western Balkans and working together to deter malign actors. Sir Stuart will play a key role in that work.

The political situation in the Western Balkans was discussed at the NATO Foreign Ministers' meeting in Riga, and will be on the agenda at the G7 Foreign Ministers' meeting in Liverpool, which was announced earlier this week.

Background:

The countries in the Western Balkans are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. Sir Stuart will also work with wider regional stakeholders including neighbouring countries and relevant international organisations.