

OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

Session 2: UK statement

Thank you, Madam Chair.

As G7 leaders said in England last year, corruption can threaten our stability and security.

In the UK, all companies are covered by the [UK Bribery Act](#). It incorporates liability for the actions of a UK company, a British national, and partners operating overseas. Since its creation in 2010, it has demonstrated that the UK will not tolerate companies engaged in corruption. Shortly after its enactment the Sweett Group were penalised 2 and a quarter million pounds, following prosecution under this act.

Good standards already exist. The OECD Anti-Bribery Convention provides a framework for governments to promote transparency in business, and the anti-bribery standard used in international trade, ISO 37001 – which is based on the work of the British Standards Institute – provides companies with training and a framework for prohibiting, preventing, detecting, reporting and dealing with any bribery.

We know that corrupted practices can help sustain organised crime, which can impact our security. There are measures states can take that are directly related to this security, and that can reflect modern threats. The [UK's new National Security and Investment Act](#) came into force just a few weeks ago and is the biggest shake-up of the UK's national security regime for 20 years.

As of last month, the UK government will be able to scrutinise and intervene in certain acquisitions made by anyone, including businesses and investors, that could harm the UK's national security. The government will be able to impose certain conditions on an acquisition or, if necessary, unwind or block it.

The new regime requires businesses and investors to notify the government of certain acquisitions across 17 sensitive areas of the economy, including Artificial Intelligence and Civil Nuclear.

Decisions on whether to exercise the call-in power will be made on a case-by-case basis, assessing the target, acquirer and the amount of control acquired.

Of course, the vast majority of acquisitions will require no intervention, and the government has published comprehensive guidance to help businesses and investors understand their new obligations under the new rules.

This new process is simple and quick, and it gives investors and firms the certainty they need to do business, and citizens the peace of mind that their security remains the government's number one priority.

I thank you.

[Next stage for Isle of Wight coastal defence scheme](#)

Scheme will reduce risk of flooding and coastal erosion to more than 3,700 homes and business on the island along with infrastructure and protected habitats.

The Environment Agency, in partnership with the Isle of Wight Council, is working alongside industry experts to reduce the risk of flooding and coastal erosion to more than 3,700 island homes and businesses, vital infrastructure and over 300 hectares of protected habitat.

The scheme will see 4 projects at Embankment Road (Bembridge), Yaverland, Shanklin and Ventnor being progressed thanks to the crucial government funding. The current coastal defences are ageing at these locations and the current work is investigating how these could be replaced.

Floods Minister Rebecca Pow said:

This vital £7 million in funding will bring the Isle of Wight coastal defence scheme one step closer to beginning construction, and once completed will see more than 3,700 island homes and businesses better protected from flooding and coastal erosion.

This funding is just one part of our record £5.2 billion investment to better protect hundreds of thousands of properties across England.

Nick Gray, the Environment Agency's Flood and Coastal Risk Manager for Solent and South Downs Area, said:

It's great news that we can now move to the next stage of this ambitious scheme.

Our teams will continue our work with the community to understand their priorities and concerns, and develop and design a preferred option for each location. It will also enable us to undertake the necessary technical, economic and environmental work and ground investigations to inform our decisions.

Once this phase is complete, we will be requesting further funding from central government to finalise the business case and construct

the schemes.

At this stage it is estimated that the 4 capital schemes have a total potential cost of £54.7 million, with partnership funding opportunities to supplement the available government funding.

Councillor Jonathan Bacon, Cabinet member responsible for the environment, said:

Flooding and coastal erosion can have a devastating and lasting impact on the lives of those affected, and this is why it remains a high priority for us and why we have agreed a significant investment in the programme. We are determined to support people who are most at risk as much as we can.

These long-term commitments in partnership with the Environment Agency and significant government funding will make homes, businesses and infrastructure more resilient to the accelerating impacts of the climate crisis. The views of the public are important to us as we continue to plan this important work – and we'll continue to consult them.

The investment will help these coastal communities to be more resilient to the increasing risk of tidal flooding and coastal erosion and help protect the designated habitat at Brading Marshes.

Nick Gray added:

This is a critical time for residents and businesses to get involved and have their say on the future of flood and coastal protection on the island. You can find out more by visiting [Citizen Space](#) and signing up to our newsletters to receive further information.

Further information

The government's investment in flooding has doubled to a record £5.2 billion between 2021 and 2027, creating around 2,000 new flood and coastal defences to better protect 336,000 properties across England.

Earlier this year we announced that over £860 million will be invested in more than 1,000 flood schemes between 2021 and 2022. This is record annual investment and an extra £250 million more than last year.

Environment Agency and its partners: Isle of Wight Council, JBA Consulting and VolkerStevin.

The programme includes seeking the necessary funds for:

- refurbishment and replacement of some of the existing coastal defences and additional slope stabilisation measures in Ventnor
- refurbishment of the sea wall and defences at Yaverland and Culver Parade in Sandown
- refurbishment of the sea wall and defences at Shanklin Esplanade
- repair work to the sea defences at Embankment Road, between St Helens and Bembridge.

Although the Ventnor and Shanklin defences are owned and maintained by the Isle of Wight Council, the Environment Agency is working on the council's behalf to develop a business case for future investment.

Different parts of the Yaverland defences are owned and maintained by either the Environment Agency or the Isle of Wight Council, but both organisations will work together to assess how best to refurbish or replace parts of the coastal defences which were first built by Victorian engineers over 100 years ago.

The defences at Embankment Road are privately owned and maintained, but as a competent authority under Habitat Regulations the Environment Agency is looking to protect the designated habitat of Brading Marshes.

To receive future newsletters for the schemes, please contact us at IOW_FDschemes@environment-agency.gov.uk.

[Yorkshire Water pays for environmental damage](#)

Yorkshire Water has agreed to pay £300,000 to Yorkshire Wildlife Trust after a sewage discharge led to pollution in Leeds in 2018.

The company breached its environmental permit due to an unauthorised sewage discharge from its Garforth Storm Tanks, which led to a pollution incident at Kippax Beck.

Yorkshire Water submitted an Enforcement Undertaking to the Environment Agency, which has now been accepted.

An Enforcement Undertaking is a voluntary offer made by companies and individuals to make amends for their offending.

Garforth Storm Tanks

Flows at Garforth Storm Tanks are managed by an automated valve, controlling and isolating the sewage. The tanks will fill during times of heavy rainfall.

If the valve fully closes, it means all sewage and rainfall are diverted to the storm tanks and an alarm alerts Yorkshire Water. Sewage levels in the storm tanks are then monitored using level sensors and alarms.

On 17 November 2018, the Environment Agency alerted Yorkshire Water to discoloured water in Kippax Beck. Enquiries by the company revealed the valve was fully closed. It meant the storm tanks had filled and were discharging into a nearby watercourse.

Neither the valve alarm or storm tank sewage level alarms had triggered, meaning the system had appeared to be operating as normal. The valve was manually opened to prevent any further discharge.

The impact was widespread and appeared to have affected the beck and its wildlife for 3.3km.

'Effective enforcement option'

Area Environment Manager, Ben Hocking, said:

When companies fail to meet their environmental obligations, it's a serious matter and we will take appropriate action, which may include civil sanctions.

Enforcement Undertakings are an effective enforcement option to allow companies to put things right and contribute to environmental improvements.

This payment of £300,000 to Yorkshire Wildlife Trust will bring great benefits to nature reserves in the local area.

The offer from Yorkshire Water details how it has also taken steps to make improvements, including replacing and repairing machinery and equipment, carrying out a review of alarms, and completing an environmental survey.

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust will use the donation to fund a series of projects at nature reserves in the Lower Aire valley.

Enforcement Undertakings are one of a number of enforcement options available to the Environment Agency.

Since 2015, the Environment Agency has secured water company court fines of over £137million. Most recently, Yorkshire Water was fined £233,000 at Leeds Crown Court on 28 January 2022 for a pollution incident at Tong Beck which happened in November 2017; and on 8 September 2021 they were fined £150,000 at Sheffield Magistrates' Court for a pollution incident at Potteric Carr

[Joint Expeditionary Force Military Chiefs Agree to 'Work Together on Shared Challenges' Amid Rising Tensions with Russia](#)

The meeting in Lulea, Sweden, came amid rising tensions over the Russian military build-up along the border of Ukraine and in illegally-annexed Crimea.

The group considered how the JEF can support European security during this difficult time, complementing the activity of NATO.

The JEF is a UK-led force, comprising 10 nations working together to deliver forces at high readiness, across a range of roles, complementing NATO and European security.

Admiral Sir Tony Radakin discussed a range of shared security challenges and defence objectives at the meeting with Defence Chiefs from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. This was the first meeting of JEF Chiefs of Defence staff. JEF Defence Ministers last met in July.

In a collective statement, the 10 Defence Chiefs said:

The Joint Expeditionary Force continues to demonstrate its effectiveness in contributing to European security in the High North, North Atlantic and Baltic Sea region. In a world defined by competition and confrontation, it is vital that like-minded nations like ours come together to protect our shared values and defend the rules and freedoms that underpin security and stability in Europe.

Admiral Sir Tony Radakin, UK Chief of the Defence Staff, added:

It was a pleasure to meet with my counterparts from the nine JEF partner nations today, and timely. The situation on Ukraine's border, and the unprecedented Russian military activity across the Euro-Atlantic, highlight why it is so important that Britain and our European allies and partners are able to come together in this way.

We held productive discussions about our plans for the future, and reiterated our shared commitment to the security and stability of northern Europe.

Following the success of Exercise Joint Protector 2021, which took place in Sweden last year, the Chiefs also discussed future opportunities for the JEF nations to collaborate.

A busy schedule of activity over the coming months and years will see the JEF operating across its core areas of the North Atlantic, High North and Baltic Sea Region, with a particular focus on the upcoming command and control Exercise Joint Protector later in 2022, followed by the Live Exercise JEF Warrior in 2023.

The meeting came as the UK continues to take a central role in attempts to resolve the unfolding crisis in Eastern Europe, leading diplomatic efforts to find a resolution while increasing our support to our allies and partners.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson last week travelled to Brussels to meet with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, offering to bolster the alliance's defences with additional troops, ships and aircraft.

The Defence Secretary Ben Wallace and Foreign Secretary Liz Truss also travelled to Russia to meet with their counterparts in an effort to find a diplomatic solution without compromising on Ukraine's sovereignty or NATO's open door policy.

OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum **Session 3: UK statement**

Mr chair,

The pandemic and countries' responses to the crisis led to border restrictions, lower or stalled manufacturing outputs, spikes in demand for some goods, like personal protective equipment (PPE), and drops in demand for others. This combination of impacts led to significant challenges for the global supply chains, such as delays, diversions, and capacity constraints, all increasing costs.

The UK's starting position when building resilience in critical supply chains is to choose the minimum intervention and take a market-first approach. To strengthen the resilience of the UK's critical global supply chains we trained up to 5,000 more HGV drivers in England and moved 29,000 additional lorry loads of freight to railways.

The transport industry was one of the hardest hit by the pandemic. International aviation passenger traffic was down 60% over 2020, bringing air travel totals back to 2003 levels. Transport facilitation can support economic recovery as this industry gets back on its feet. And states can intervene to mitigate the environmental effect. For example, airline slots that airlines are compelled to honour result in environmentally-damaging and expensive 'ghost' flights continuing to operate with few passengers. The UK government has just extended alleviation from these slot rules and widened the list of situations where airlines can claim justification for not using their slots. This balances the need for continued support for the aviation sector's finances, providing airlines with flexibility, while ensuring slots get used where demand allows.

And from the sky, to the road. We have committed to ending the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030, and ensuring that by 2035 all cars must be fully zero emissions capable. Industry figures show over 650,000 new plug-in cars registered in the UK since 2010, and over 1 in 7 cars sold in 2021 had a plug. And range is increasing as costs are falling: There are 20 electric vehicle models that now come with a range of over 200 miles, and battery prices are little more than a tenth of what they were in 2010.

The UK government is ensuring that our charging infrastructure network is reliable, accessible, and meets the demands of all motorists, with over 25,000 public charging points in the UK, and a particular focus on local on-street residential charging.

The car and van sector is relatively easier to decarbonise, through the combination of a proven low carbon technology and growing consumer demand; and the trend in this industry is positive. But governments still have a key role to play in making sure this heavily polluting sector is free to realise its green potential.

Thank you.