

# Joint statement by the co-chairs of the EU-UK Joint Committee: 24 February 2021

News story

Joint statement following the meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee, 24 February 2021.



The European Union and the United Kingdom today held the first meeting of the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee following the end of the transition period.

The parties welcomed the progress made on citizens' rights in recent weeks in implementing the rights of UK nationals in the EU and EU citizens in the UK under the Withdrawal Agreement, and reiterated the importance of communication and support to the most vulnerable.

Further to the meeting of the Joint Committee co-chairs on 11 February 2021, the EU and the UK also took stock of the implementation of the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland and of work to find pragmatic solutions. The parties acknowledged the importance of joint action to make the Protocol work for the benefit of everyone in Northern Ireland. In that spirit, the EU and UK reiterated their full commitment to the Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement in all its dimensions, and to the proper implementation of the Protocol. Building on the recent outreach by the Joint Committee co-chairs, there would be further joint engagement with business groups and other stakeholders in Northern Ireland. The UK and the EU underlined their shared commitment to giving effect to those solutions agreed through the Joint Committee on 17 December 2020, without delay. The UK noted that it would provide a new operational plan with respect to supermarkets and their suppliers, alongside additional investment in digital solutions for traders in accordance with the Protocol.

Noting the need for ongoing engagement and the shared desire to act at pace, the UK and EU agreed that a further Joint Committee would be held to provide

further steers and where appropriate approvals, and would liaise on timings.

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## [PM call with Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala: 24 February 2021](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General of the World Trade Organisation, this afternoon.



The Prime Minister spoke to Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General of the World Trade Organisation, this afternoon.

He warmly congratulated Dr Okonjo-Iweala on her appointment, noting the importance of a strong WTO in today's globalised economy.

They discussed the international vaccine roll-out and the barriers to trade that risk impeding the global response to the pandemic.

They also spoke about the opportunities for driving a green economic recovery from Covid-19, and the Prime Minister welcomed her support for COP26.

The Prime Minister looked forward to working closely with Dr Okonjo-Iweala in the coming months and to welcoming her to Cornwall for the G7 Summit in June.

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# Surge testing to be deployed in targeted areas in Buckinghamshire and Lambeth

Press release

Further targeted areas will have additional testing made available to control and suppress the potential spread of a coronavirus (COVID-19) variant.



Working in partnership with the local authorities, additional testing and genomic sequencing is being deployed to targeted areas within the HP10 postcode in Buckinghamshire and SW8 and SW9 postcodes in Lambeth, where the COVID-19 variant first identified in South Africa has been found.

The increased testing is being introduced in addition to existing extensive testing and, in combination with the current lockdown rules and remembering 'hands, face, space' advice, will help to monitor and suppress the spread of the virus. Positive cases will be sequenced for genomic data to help understand COVID-19 variants and their spread within these areas.

People living within targeted areas in these postcodes are strongly encouraged to take a COVID-19 test when offered, whether they are showing symptoms or not.

People with symptoms should [book a test](#) in the usual way, and those without symptoms should [visit their local authority website](#) for more information.

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# Defence Secretary opens £70-million British Army facility in Kenya

Nyati Barracks, a £70-million facility, was built for the British Army Training Unit Kenya (BATUK) to replace their previous infrastructure.

Facilities at the new site include a new training headquarters, welfare facilities, 158 Single Living Accommodation and 1,400 transit accommodation bed spaces, a combined mess, a finance building, offices, stores and Joint Forces Enabling Exercise buildings which enable the Royal Engineers to undertake vital training in the construction of permanent infrastructure.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

Kenya is one of our leading defence partners in East Africa and this new facility will cement our partnership for decades to come, supporting stability and security in the region.

It is only right we provide our personnel stationed overseas with high-quality accommodation and I was delighted to attend the opening of Nyati Barracks.

The programme provided approximately 400 jobs for Locally Employed Civilians and local contractors and included around 30 women working in traditionally male dominated trades, including electrical and plastering work.

To ensure all employees were operating in a safe environment, DIO worked closely with local authorities and supply chains to introduce UK certified health and safety practices.

A major programme of upskilling for Kenyan staff at the base also took place enabling the transfer of skills into the local community and assisting workers with future employment.

David Graham, Deputy Head Major Programmes and Projects, said:

DIO supports our armed forces by providing what they need to live, work and train and we are proud to have been a part of delivering this superb new facility in Kenya.

The programme was a testing one with seasonal rains and other challenges. However, together with our Overseas and Training Region colleagues we overcame these issues and have delivered a first-class facility that will benefit the army.

Our training unit in Kenya is a vital facility where UK soldiers prepare for

operations around the globe. The UK currently has around 230 military personnel based permanently in Kenya, most of them at BATUK, with thousands more visiting the country every year to take part in joint exercises.

Aerial view of the new Nyati Barracks. MOD Crown Copyright 2021.

Over the past two years, the British Army and the Kenyan Defence Force have conducted 5 joint training exercises from BATUK, involving around 600 Kenyan troops and 4,500 British troops.

Lieutenant Colonel Finlay Bibby, Commander Kenya, Overseas and Training Region said:

BATUK delivers combined arms light role infantry battle group exercises in Kenya.

It is fantastic to have this new, purpose-built infrastructure that enables BATUK to deliver world class training to our battle groups here in Kenya. For many years we were renting land from the Nanyuki Agricultural Society, which had to be vacated every year for the agricultural show.

The new facilities at Nyati Barracks are permanent and will enable a significant increase in training capability and provide more secure facilities for the army to train.

The MOD has secured a substantial settlement of more than £24 billion over four years, allowing us to strengthen our investment into defence accommodation, training facilities and bases for our service personnel at home and across the globe.

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## [UN Human Rights Council 46: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Eritrea](#)

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