

Welsh Secretary holds events to prepare for end of EU Transition

News story

Discussions take place with agriculture and business sectors with new rules set to apply from 1 January 2021.



Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart has held the latest in a series of events to help businesses and people in Wales prepare for the end of the EU Transition period.

The UK has left the European Union and new rules affecting businesses and travel to the EU will apply from 31 December.

The Welsh Secretary joined the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs George Eustice for a live virtual event on Tuesday (1 December) with representatives of Welsh agriculture and food and drink production to discuss impact the changes will have on their sector and how they can prepare for them.

Also this week Mr Hart hosted a webinar on Thursday (3 December), alongside CEO for Chambers Wales Heather Myers and Lynsay Neil from HMRC, where he spoke to more than 100 business representatives about preparations for the end of the Transition period and the support that UK Government can offer.

Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart said:

The UK government is aware of the challenges businesses face, especially during the pandemic, but it is essential that they prepare for the end of the Transition Period which is happening in less than 30 days.

This is an exciting moment, and one of great opportunity, but there are also significant changes to be made and challenges to be met. The UK Government is here to help and support businesses in Wales and right across the UK navigate their way successfully through

this change.

UK Government support includes £705 million in new technology, infrastructure and jobs at the border and there will be £80 million in grants for organisations to recruit and train new customer agents.

New border controls on imports will be introduced in stages to ease the transition.

Further advice is available on the [gov.uk/transition](https://www.gov.uk/transition) page.

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[Housing Minister's speech at HOMES UK conference](#)

Thank you for that kind introduction.

And a warm welcome to everyone joining us virtually this afternoon to hear our announcing the winner of the government's Home of 2030 competition.

Clever, forward-thinking and innovative design will be at the forefront of the housing sector's recovery from COVID-19.

And there is therefore no place more fitting in which to announce the winner of our design competition than this year's Homes UK Conference.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have helped guide this competition to completion including Homes England, BEIS, DHSC as well as BRE, RIBA, the Design Council and of course MOBIE.

The Home of 2030 competition was born out of this government's ambition to tackle the grand challenges of our time, helping our country adapt for an ageing society whilst fighting climate change and boldly pursuing our 2050 Net Zero commitments.

It sought to bring together designers, architects, developers – the greatest minds from across the sector, with entrants each submitting their cutting-edge designs for new low carbon homes.

But this is not just about energy efficiency.

The COVID-19 pandemic has sharply brought into focus how vital our homes, our neighbourhoods, and our local green spaces are to our physical and mental well-being.

This was reinforced by the Design Council's "Public Vision for the Home of 2030" report, which was published earlier this year.

The report serves not only to inspire those who design and deliver housing, but also challenge long-held assumptions about what is important to us in our individual homes in a post-Covid world.

It recognises the need to create well-designed, spacious, generously equipped homes that meet the changing needs of residents.

That is what underpins our Home of 2030 competition, but it is also the guiding principle behind our planning reforms.

Our Planning for the future white paper encourages developers to not just build greener, more beautiful homes but also to create greener, more beautiful neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhoods which offer tree lined streets, parks, playing fields and open green spaces with a rich biodiversity.

And in return we are saying to builders who invest in this kind of place-making design which is in keeping with the local aesthetic and built to last, that we will create a fast-track for beauty which sees their development green lighted much more quickly than at present.

We also want to support the housing industry in building the more sustainable, energy-efficient and greener homes of tomorrow.

Housing accounts for around 15% of the country's greenhouse gas emissions.

It is clear that we need to significantly reduce the carbon footprint of both new and existing homes if we are serious about fulfilling our Net Zero commitments.

That is why we are implementing the Future Homes Standard.

And we expect that homes built to this new standard will have carbon dioxide emissions 75 to 80% lower than those built to current regulations. These homes will be future-proofed with low carbon heating and high levels of energy efficiency.

All homes built under the Future Homes Standard will be 'zero carbon ready'.

That means no costly retrofitting work will be necessary for them to become zero-carbon as the electricity grid continues to decarbonise.

Last month, the Prime Minister set out his 10 Point Plan on Climate Change, ensuring that when it comes to cutting carbon emissions, our country remains a trailblazer for other countries to follow.

Our Home of 2030 competition supports us in realising that vision for a cleaner, greener Britain – changing the way we heat our homes, improving insulation and adopting new technologies.

And the willingness of groups across all ages, young and old, to engage with this project, from the in-depth research carried out by the Design Council, to the young people's competition run by MOBIE, shows just how much industry support there is for making these homes of the future a reality.

Each of the 200+ entries have had to highlight how their designs would meet the challenges of the next decade.

They had to demonstrate how their proposed homes are deliverable and scalable but also:

How they are age friendly and inclusive...

How they are going to yield a low environmental impact and...

Supporting healthy living.

A panel of judges made up of industry experts, led by Peter Freeman, the new chair of Homes England, selected 6 outstanding finalists. And, since August, they have been hard at work developing their initial design concepts into detailed proposals.

I know that assembling their teams, engaging with cutting-edge ideas and applying their concepts to a real-world site hasn't been easy.

I would like to acknowledge the teams from HLM Architects, Igloo, Outpost, Openstudio, Positive Collective and Studio OPEN for their ingenuity and perseverance.

The overall standard of the finalists' entries was extremely high – making the selection of just one winner very difficult...

But two entries did really capture the judges' imagination.

One showed how good design can deliver the excellent performance and flexibility of scale demanded for the home of the future. This design also presented a visually and socially vibrant, inclusive community, ensuring the needs of all residents could be met.

The other showed the way forward for a fully digitalized manufacturing process for housing – delivering a bespoke appearance and diversity of aesthetic, based on a platform accessible to everyone.

In the end, after much deliberation, the judges decided that it was a fair tie.

And so I am pleased to announce that the joint winners of the Home of 2030 Professional Design Competition are Igloo with PlusHome and Openstudio with Connector Housing.

Their designs truly show the way housing in this country can be reimagined and, for that, I would like to sincerely congratulate both winners of these worthy awards.

The exciting journey for them is not yet over.

Each of our 6 fantastic finalists will now be introduced to a Homes England developer panel, giving them the opportunity to take forward and build their innovative, future designs.

In the 'Professional' element of the competition, we have seen some of the best and brightest of the industry come forward with their solutions to the biggest challenges faced by the sector today.

But, in the Young Person's challenge, we have also seen the imaginative, capable and inventive designs of those yet to enter the industry.

That is the Home of 2030's lasting legacy.

It has inspired a new generation to continue innovating and pushing the boundaries of what is possible in green design...

And it has brought us one step closer to building the homes of tomorrow.

Thank you, well done to the winners, and thank you to everyone for taking part.

[OSCE Ministerial Council: joint statement on Belarus](#)

I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the following 37 participating States: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Iceland, Malta, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, as well as my own country Finland.

For the past several months, we have witnessed serious and ongoing violations and abuses of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Belarus since the fraudulent Presidential election of 9 August 2020. Moscow Mechanism Rapporteur Professor Wolfgang Benedek's report provided us with a large number of evidence-based accounts of peaceful protesters who were violently attacked and tortured by the authorities, simply for insisting on free and fair elections and a better, democratic future for their country.

According to credible reports, the number of arrests of peaceful protesters, journalists and human rights defenders is estimated at 30,000 since the Presidential election. The number of politically motivated criminal cases is reaching 900. The list of political prisoners continues to grow and contains

more than 100 names. There is no indication that the authorities are investigating the thousands of well-documented reports of police brutality and torture filed since mid-August or the killings of protesters. We condemn the use of force against Belarusians exercising their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

As the report by the OSCE Rapporteur states, it appears that no professional or social group in Belarus has been spared by the Belarusian authorities' efforts to suppress peaceful dissent. Pressure on the medical, academic, and media communities has been especially harsh. Critics of the government and opposition figures have faced forced expulsion.

Respect for human rights and human dignity have been at the heart of this organization since the Helsinki Final Act was signed forty-five years ago. At this meeting, many Ministers have addressed the situation in Belarus, which is in clear violation of OSCE principles and commitments on respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and democratic principles of government. The OSCE's comprehensive concept of security recognizes that respect for human rights within States is essential to lasting peace, prosperity and cooperation among States. Upholding respect for human rights in the OSCE area is the responsibility of all participating States. As reaffirmed at the 2010 Astana Summit, commitments undertaken in the field of the human dimension are matters of direct and legitimate concern to all participating States and do not belong exclusively to the internal affairs of the State concerned.

For the sake of the people of Belarus, we highlight as particularly noteworthy the following recommendations from the Moscow Mechanism report. The report recommends that Belarusian authorities should:

- Cancel the results of the presidential elections of 9 August 2020 due to irregularities at all stages of the process
- Organize new genuine presidential elections based on international standards, inviting OSCE/ODIHR observation as well as other international and domestic observers
- Bring the electoral law into conformity with international standards as recommended by OSCE/ODIHR and the United Nations
- Immediately cease all violence, in particular torture and ill-treatment against peaceful protestors and opponents
- Immediately and unconditionally release all prisoners held for political reasons
- Ensure that the standards of fair trial are respected
- Ensure the freedom of peaceful assembly in line with international standards
- Ensure the safety of all journalists and provide an enabling environment for the work of journalists and the media
- Refrain from interference with the access to the Internet, and terminate censorship and blocking of webpages
- Ensure that an independent and impartial body promptly investigates all allegations of torture, ill-treatment, sexual violence, disappearance and killing by security forces.

We urge Belarus to engage in dialogue within the OSCE and lend our full

support to the current and incoming OSCE Chairs and their efforts to facilitate a national dialogue in Belarus. We stand ready to support and facilitate an inclusive national dialogue in order to resolve the present crisis in a sustainable way, safeguarding Belarus's sovereignty and independence, as well as its safe, democratic and prosperous future.

Mr. Chairperson, I would be grateful if you could attach this statement to the journal of today's meeting.

UK response to the release of three human rights workers in Egypt

Press release

The UK welcomes the release of three staff members from the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights: Gasser Abdel Razek, Karim Ennarah and Mohamed Basheer.



A Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office spokesperson said:

"The release of Gasser Abdel Razek, Karim Ennarah and Mohamed Basheer is a welcome step.

"We will continue to monitor their situation closely and stand up for human rights defenders across the world."

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Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Argentina: Kirsty Hayes

Press release

Mrs Kirsty Hayes has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Argentine Republic in succession to Mr Mark Kent CMG.



Mrs Kirsty Hayes has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Argentine Republic in succession to Mr Mark Kent CMG. Mrs Hayes will take up her appointment in September 2021.

Full name: Kirsty Isobel Hayes

Marriage status: Married

Children: One daughter, one son

Dates	Role
2018 to present	Home Office, International Director
2014 to 2018	Lisbon, Her Majesty's Ambassador
2014	Full-time language training (Portuguese)
2011 to 2013	FCO, Head, International Organisations Department
2011	FCO, Head, Corporate Communications Department
2009 to 2010	Special Unpaid Leave
2008 to 2009	Colombo, International Contractor to UN Development Programme Regional Centre
2007 to 2008	FCO, Deputy Head, Human Resources, Training, Recruitment and Development Section
2006 to 2007	FCO, Head, Human Resources, Diversity and Development Team
2006	Maternity Leave
2005 to 2006	FCO, Head, Institutions/France Team, Common Foreign and Security Policy Group
2004 to 2005	Maternity Leave then Special Unpaid Leave
2002 to 2004	Washington DC, Private Secretary to Her Majesty's Ambassador

Dates	Role
2001 to 2002	Washington DC, Temporary Second Secretary – Economic
2000 to 2001	Hong Kong, Vice-Consul – Political/Economic
1999 to 2000	FCO, Desk Officer, Environment Policy Department
1999	Joined FCO

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