

# Speech: Strengthening collaboration and operational co-operation with Western Balkans Customs Administrations

It's a great pleasure to welcome you all to the third High-Level Informal Regional Meeting of General Directors of Customs Administration of the Western Balkans Six, and the first to be held in Montenegro.

The British Government thanks all six of the Western Balkans Customs Administrations for supporting and participating in this format which has evolved to encourage closer working between the Customs Administrations in order to assist greater facilitation of trade in the region. In particular I'd like to recognise the support of our hosts, Director General Joković and his team.

I'm conscious that we are meeting three days after International Customs Day on 26 January, which recognizes the contribution and achievements of Customs officers around the world, including colleagues working at borders and ensuring connectivity, often in difficult conditions, and is an opportunity to consolidate and enhance co-operation amongst Customs Administrations. This event is a great example of the sort of co-operation which International Customs Day seeks to highlight.

As we celebrate the work that Customs officers do to facilitate security and inter-connectivity, it is important to remember that the inter-connected nature of the modern world is itself an excellent enabler for today's criminal networks.

High-Level Informal Regional Meeting of General Directors of Customs Administration of the Western Balkans Six

The British Government has been committed to working with Customs Administrations across the region for several years with a particular focus on tackling the common threat posed by serious organised crime. The British Government values the collaboration and co-operation our HMRC officers share with you and your staff on a daily basis.

The 2018 Western Balkans London Summit has provided an important opportunity to recognise these relationships, and to further strengthen these links.

- The British Government will double the number of British diplomats working on shared security issues in the region, including the deployment of further HMRC officers.
- Funding for customs-related activity in the Western Balkans will increase to over €1 million in the coming financial year, and HMRC will continue to support this initiative in the most effective ways possible.

- The UK will also work with all relevant stakeholders to implement the Joint Declaration on the Principles of Information Sharing, which was signed by the Ministers of Interior and Security from across the region after the London Summit.
- Podgorica hosted the first Berlin Process Security Commitments Steering Group in November 2018. The Steering Group recognised the work of this Customs Group and it was agreed that the Customs platform should be used as a template for further future exchanges, and to form an illicit finances group to look at improved sharing of spontaneous information / intelligence. The UK is a strong supporter of the Joint Declaration on the Principles of Information Sharing. We recognise that in itself it does not provide all the answers, however it is an important commitment from the Western Balkans and provides a good framework for further co-operation and information and intelligence sharing.

There will no doubt be issues of policy and legislation that may have to be reviewed back at our respective capitals. This should not deter you, indeed it they may create fresh opportunities for providing dialogue between policy and operational staff. There is a duty upon those responsible for either operations or policy, to ensure that we work together to the best of our abilities to arm front-line officers, intelligence and investigation staff with timely data, information and intelligence, enabling them to best utilise our resources and inform operational decision making.

Since your first meeting in June 2018 in Tirana, good progress has been made after you mandated your Operational Assistant Directors to discuss ways of for Customs Administrations in the region to better share spontaneous information and intelligence to help combat customs fraud. The recommendations your Assistant Directors agreed in Veles in October 2018, will be presented to you today for discussion.

I wish you every success with your discussions and look forward to hearing the results. Thank you.

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## **Press release: Jailed fraudster ordered to repay more than £1.3 million**

Terry Soloman Dugbo, 48, is currently serving a record seven years and six months in prison after defrauding the electrical waste recycling industry out of £2.2million.

The sentence handed down at Leeds Crown Court in July 2016 remains the longest ever for an environmental crime.

Dugbo was back at Leeds Crown Court again today where he was told he must pay back some £1.3 million which had been acquired through his illegal activity.

He was given three months to pay and faces a further eight years in prison on top of the sentence he is serving if he fails to do so.

The confiscation was brought by the Environment Agency under the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) following a financial investigation into the profit Dugbo made from his crimes.

It followed a seven-week trial, concluding in July 2016 where Dugbo had denied charges of conspiracy to defraud, acting as a company director while disqualified and breaching an environmental permitting condition, but was found guilty on all counts.

He was convicted of falsifying paperwork to illegitimately claim that his Leeds based firm, TLC Recycling Ltd, had collected and recycled more than 19,500 tonnes of household electrical waste during 2011.

In reality, his company had never handled the amounts of waste described and he was not entitled to the substantial fees he was paid from two waste recycling schemes.

Dugbo had contested the POCA proceedings since 2016, which is why it can only be reported now. He had also tried to reduce previous benefit totalling more than £96,000 for convictions for VAT fraud in 2014 at Leeds Crown Court and exporting hazardous waste to Nigeria in 2011 at Basildon Crown Court.

During the current proceedings, the court heard how Dugbo had misled both courts by claiming that his assets had already been used to satisfy both of these earlier courts orders when in fact they had not.

During the course of the investigations, Environment Agency officers worked closely with HMRC. They uncovered bank accounts in Nigeria, Senegal and Spain. Further documents revealed that Dugbo led a lavish lifestyle with five-star holidays in Ibiza and mainland Europe, luxury vehicles, including a Bentley and tailor-made suits.

Judge Jameson QC ruled that Dugbo had claimed to have gambled away much of the assets he had acquired during the fraud, which the court rejected and concluded that he would say anything he believed would answer an immediate difficulty without regard to the truth, or even logic or realism of what he was saying.

Environment Agency's Dr Paul Salter said:

Dugbo was unable to provide any credible evidence to show what happened to the proceeds of his fraud. He has a history of dishonesty in court proceedings and non-disclosure of assets and bank accounts at home and abroad. Our financial investigation into his realisable assets suggest he had benefitted from his crimes to the tune of £1,373,060.09.

He has now been ordered to repay more than £1.3 million, which is a significant confiscation order on top of the custodial sentence already handed out. It sends out a clear message to others who flout the law that waste crime does not pay.

Not only do we use environmental law to prosecute those who abuse the environment but we also use the Proceeds of Crime legislation to ensure that criminals are deprived of the benefits of their illegal activity.

Waste crime undermines legitimate businesses and can have significant detrimental impacts on communities and the environment.

This hearing demonstrates how seriously we take waste crime and we'll continue to take action against those operating outside of the law and the regulations.

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## [News story: This is Me Cumbria](#)

The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) and Sellafield Ltd joined other big businesses to back the 'This is Me' campaign, which has launched in Cumbria.

More than 120 business leaders attended the 'This is Me' event in Penrith today.

The new video features people from employers across the county to show people that anyone can suffer from mental health issues and that it's okay to talk.

['This is Me'](#)

Adrian Simper, NDA's director of strategy and technology, said:

For years we have had a relentless focus on people's physical safety and well-being at work. But we have yet to give the same attention to people's minds.

The opportunity to make the workplace a more productive, safer and fulfilling place is too great to miss.

The 'This is Me' in Cumbria event is testament to the drive to continue raising awareness at a local level. We need to continue the momentum and work towards breaking the stigma around mental ill health.

Sellafield Ltd's equality, diversity and inclusion lead Alan Rankin, said:

We were delighted to help launch this campaign in Cumbria. This follows the [North West](#) launch last year.

We know that mental health at work is one of the biggest challenges faced by employers. This campaign creates a powerful way of allowing employees to share personal stories and experiences that enables colleagues to talk more openly about mental health.

The Cumbrian launch builds upon our year of activity to promote mental health and well-being and coincides with 'Time to Talk' day, which is an annual event to encourage people to speak about their mental well-being.

Rob Johnston, chief executive of the Cumbria Chamber of Commerce, hosted the launch event. He said:

Mental ill health is the leading cause of sickness absence, costing employers an average of £1,035 per employee per year.

It's in businesses' interests to tackle this issue and that's a message the chamber has been pushing by offering toolkits, advice and a podcast for employers.

We hope that, through 'This is Me', we can reinforce this message and confront the stigma around mental ill health.

Employees are invited to join events this week and raise money for mental health charities.

The 'This is Me' campaign challenges the stigma around mental health at work and aims to break the culture of silence by supporting people to tell their own stories.

The campaign was started by the Lord Mayor's Appeal in the City of London, in association with Barclays, and is being rolled out across the country.

Barclays is backing the Cumbrian launch alongside the NDA, Sellafield Ltd, BAE Systems, Cumbria Police and Cumbria Chamber of Commerce.

Alan Rankin added:

Around 1 in 4 people in the UK experience a mental health problem each year, and by 2030 the estimated cost of staff mental health related issues nationally is set to rise to £32.7 billion.

As responsible businesses we all have an obligation to get involved and take an active interest in the wellbeing of our staff whilst

creating environments where those in need can get the help and support required both now and in the future.

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## **Press release: A chance to find out more about the Leeds flood defence plans**

People who live and work in west Leeds are being invited to come along to a couple of drop-in events this month to find out more about proposals for the next phase of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme.

They will have the opportunity to have a look at plans and talk to members of the project team responsible for developing the second phase of the flood defences being proposed to protect communities upstream of the city centre.

The events will be held between 2pm and 8pm on Wednesday 13 February and Tuesday 26 February at Milford Sports Club, Beecroft St, Leeds LS5 3AS. Visitors will have the chance to ask questions and get more information about the proposed defences and accessibility works such as new pedestrian bridges.

The Environment Agency has worked alongside Leeds City Council to submit a planning application which will invest £112.1 million in flood prevention measures along the River Aire catchment.

A range of measures have been put forward to reduce the risk of flooding along a 14-kilometre stretch, including the A65 Kirkstall Corridor which was badly hit by the impact of Storm Eva at Christmas 2015 and ending at Apperley Bridge, Bradford. In addition to this a natural flood management programme is proposed across the catchment, with pilot projects already underway.

The plans feature measures such as new defence walls, embankments and a large flood storage area. They include four key areas of Leeds Industrial Museum at Armley Mills, Kirkstall Abbey and Kirkstall Meadows, Apperley Bridge and Calverley.

Councillor Richard Lewis, Leeds City Council executive member for regeneration, transport and planning said:

Offering protection and reassurance to people in Kirkstall and surrounding areas that were so badly affected by the Christmas floods of 2015 is a key element of the next phase of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme. These plans for a range of measures have been drawn up not just to reduce the risk of flooding, but very

much with the environment in mind.

It is very important that local residents and businesses are aware of what we are planning to do and how it will work, so I'd encourage as many as possible to come to these drop-in sessions to ask questions and discuss it with us.

Adrian Gill, flood risk manager at the Environment Agency said:

These drop in sessions are a great opportunity for people to get a good understanding of what is being planned to protect their local community.

During this event, the joint Leeds City Council and Environment Agency team managing the construction of the next phase of the Leeds flood defence will be available to talk to visitors about any concerns they may have and provide clarification about anything that they are uncertain about.

Although Leeds City Council has submitted the proposals for approval by planning officers, the detailed design of the scheme has not yet been decided and we will be seeking valuable feedback from both residents and businesses at these events and at further stages of the process.

These events follow on from a series of drop-in sessions held in Kirkstall, Horsforth, Rodley and Apperley Bridge areas of Leeds in October 2017.

The plans which will be on display include both parts of the two-step process that has been developed to give a one-in-200-year level of enhanced protection against flooding for Leeds, helping to better protect 1,485 homes and 370 businesses. If approved, work to deliver the first step, a one-in-100 year level of protection, is expected to start this summer.

The scheme also incorporates a flagship catchment-wide natural flood management programme. Leeds City Council and the Environment Agency will work with partners and landowners across the catchment to deliver a range of measures, such as the creation of new woodland and other natural features. These will help reduce and mitigate the flow of rainwater into the river and help reduce the impacts of climate change.

Members of the planning committee are expected to meet to discuss the application at the end of March.

[For more details](#)

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## [News story: OISC's CPD scheme](#)

The OISC CPD Scheme is not prescriptive as to how much or little CPD activity is undertaken by authorised advisers, but a principle based scheme which focuses on the outcomes of learning and development. It places the responsibility on advisers and organisations to demonstrate to the OISC that they are taking action to remain fit and competent in the areas they are authorised to operate in.

### **Compliance with CPD**

All authorised immigration advisers are expected to demonstrate that they comply with the Commissioner's CPD requirements. This includes advisers registered at all levels and categories.

CPD is training you take to keep your skills and knowledge up to date – you and the registered organisation you work with decide how you do it . CPD is essential in maintaining your fitness and competence and improving the service that you provide to your clients.

As an authorised adviser, you can take CPD in different ways. For example, you can:

- update your listening and advising skills
- go to local or national meetings or seminars
- research developments in immigration and asylum law or practice
- spend time developing your business skills
- go on formal courses
- spend time on the internet carrying out research; or
- network with other immigration advisers

### **Plan your CPD**

CPD is an ongoing process for all advisers. Registered organisations should work with advisers to [plan](#) what their CPD should be. Each organisation can decide what works best for them and should review their CPD activity; an annual review is recommended.

### **Record your CPD**

The CPD you take should relate to the immigration advice or services that your organisation provides or intends to provide. In order to plan and keep track of your CPD activities we advise that you keep a [record](#), with supporting material/evidence.

Your organisation is responsible for keeping track of your CPD compliance in order to make an annual CPD declaration.

### **Annual Declaration**

Organisations apply to the OISC for registration and for continued registration and as part of this process they sign a declaration confirming that their advisers will comply with the CPD requirements.

## Help with CPD requirements

We have produced a booklet that offers guidance on how advisers can carry out CPD activity. This [booklet](#) helps in showing how advisers can comply with CPD requirements and show they are fit and competent. A CPD Learning Development Plan and a [CPD Learning and Development Record](#) can also be downloaded to help plan and keep a track of your activities.

## Monitoring

OISC caseworkers will review registered organisations' compliance with the CPD requirements:

- during a premises audit
- as part of a complaint investigation; or
- by dip sampling

## Failing to show compliance with CPD

You or your organisation will fail to show compliance with the CPD requirements if:

- there is no evidence that CPD was planned;
- there is no evidence that the CPD plan was followed; or the planned CPD activity was not relevant to the adviser or their organisation in terms of providing immigration advice or services.

If your organisation fails to show compliance with the CPD requirements, we will discuss this with them. We may also make specific recommendations about future CPD activity.

Where you or your organisation's failure to comply with the CPD requirements has resulted in you failing to provide fit and competent advice or services we may:

- require you to immediately take specific training or development
- ask you to retake a competence assessment
- reduce your registered advice Level or restrict the categories of advice you can give (this may affect the registration of your organisation too); or
- withdraw you or your organisations registration

## Exceptions

If you have any questions please read this [booklet](#) for further guidance or contact your caseworker.