

Press release: International Trade Secretary travels to Turkey to promote trade ties

The UK is already the second largest investor into the country and the Trade Secretary's visit will promote further opportunities for British companies in Turkey whilst also encouraging inward investment.

The visit will build on the strong foundations laid by the Prime Minister and President Erdoğan in January 2017 when they established the UK-Turkey Trade Working Group.

During Dr Fox's visit he is scheduled to meet President Erdoğan to discuss how to ensure the strong trade relationship continues to thrive post Brexit. Dr Fox will also attend a number of high level meetings with key members of the Turkish government including the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Ministers as well as Ministers for Economy and Defence.

Turkey is a key market for the UK with total trade in goods and services accounting for £14.5 billion in 2016. The UK is Turkey's second largest export market, receiving 5% of all Turkish exports, whilst some of the UK's biggest businesses including Vodafone, Rolls Royce and Diageo are all present in the country.

International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox said:

The UK and Turkey enjoy a strong trading relationship, but we must seek to build on this, deepening our partnership to boost prosperity and increase security throughout the region.

As an international economic department, we will continue to promote British companies all around the world, strengthening our trade and investment relationships and providing continuity and certainty for businesses and consumers alike as we leave the EU.

During the visit Dr Fox will also see how the partnership between BAE Systems and Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) is helping to deliver Turkey's TF-X indigenous fighter programme. The contract for the initial design phase of the fifth generation fighter aircraft was concluded in August 2017 and is worth around £100 million.

This partnership with TAI will involve significant technology and skills transfer, and is the first phase in a long term relationship between the UK and Turkish defence industries.

Notes to editors

UK trade and investment work in Turkey is growing, helped by the appointment of Lord Janvrin as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy.

The most recent UK-Turkey Trade Working Group meeting was held in London on 9 November 2017 with the second scheduled to take place in Ankara on 22 February 2018.

[Press release: Banks and building societies start immigration status checks on personal current account holders](#)

The checks will be done against the details of known illegal migrants which the Home Office is sharing with Cifas, an anti-fraud organisation.

Once a bank or building society has found a personal current account that is being operated by an illegal migrant, the Home Office will double check the details before instructing the bank or building society on action to take, which may include closing the account.

In cases where criminality is suspected, the Home Office may apply to the courts for an order instructing the bank or building society to freeze the individual's accounts.

We are only sharing details of illegal migrants who are liable for removal or deportation from the UK or who have absconded from immigration control. We consider these individuals should be denied access to banking services.

Minister for Immigration Caroline Nokes said:

These new measures are part of our commitment to make it more difficult for people with no right to live or work in the UK to remain here.

This will not affect those who are in the UK legally but we must be firm with those who break the rules as illegal immigration impacts the whole of society. Those living and working in the UK illegally can drive down the wages of lawful workers, allow rogue employers to undercut legitimate businesses and put pressure on taxpayer-funded public services.

By tackling abuse in this way, we can build an immigration system which works in the best interests of the country and prevents vulnerable people from finding themselves at risk of exploitation.

Powers to stop illegal migrants opening new current accounts were introduced 3 years ago and these new measures – which were agreed by Parliament – build on that.

They are part of wide-ranging legislative efforts to encourage those who are living and working in the UK illegally to leave. Other measures prevent illegal migrants from working in the UK, renting accommodation, obtaining driving licences and working as private hire vehicle and taxi drivers and operators.

[News story: More than 100 lorry operators caught deliberately damaging air quality](#)

In August 2017, DVSA started to include checks for emissions cheat devices in roadside checks of lorries at 5 locations across Great Britain.

By the end of November 2017, DVSA examiners had searched 3,735 lorries at these locations and found 293 lorries with a cheat device fitted.

The drivers and operators were given 10 days to fix the emissions system, or face a £300 fine and having the vehicle taken off the road.

Where a driver or operator repeatedly offends, DVSA can take the vehicle off the road immediately.

Where the vehicle was registered	Percentage of vehicles without a cheat device	Percentage of vehicles with a cheat device	Total
Great Britain registered	91.5%	8.5%	100%
Northern Ireland registered	79.6%	20.4%	100%
Registered outside the UK	95.1%	4.9%	100%
Total	92.2%	7.8%	100%

How cheat devices damage air quality

Cheat devices cut the cost of operating, but give false emissions readings which can result in the release of excessive emissions into the atmosphere.

Some of the way this is done include:

- using devices designed to stop emissions control systems from working
- removing the diesel particulate filter or trap
- using cheap, fake emission reduction devices or diesel exhaust fluid
- using illegal engine modifications which result in excessive emissions
- removing or bypassing the exhaust gas recirculation valve

Checking more than 100 operators' fleets

Following the roadside checks, DVSA examiners are inspecting more than 100 operators' vehicle fleets for emission cheat devices. Some of the companies being inspected operate up to 80 vehicles.

DVSA is passing its findings on to the Traffic Commissioners for Great Britain, who have the power to take away an operator's licence.

Working with EU agencies to deal with polluters

DVSA is also working with its counterpart agencies across Europe to make sure that all offences committed by hauliers from outside Great Britain are dealt with in the country they're based.

Following the success of this operation, DVSA will start checking for emissions cheat devices at more locations across Great Britain from Spring 2018.

Damaging air quality and risking public health

Poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK.

It's known to have more severe effects on vulnerable groups, for example, the elderly, children and people already suffering from pre-existing lung and heart conditions.

The government is committed to taking action against poor air quality. The checks support the government's [plan for reducing roadside nitrogen dioxide concentrations](#).

This includes looking at ways to reduce emissions produced by vehicles, including those used commercially.

Protecting you from unsafe drivers and vehicles

Gareth Llewellyn, DVSA Chief Executive, said:

DVSA's priority is to protect you from unsafe drivers and vehicles.

We are committed to taking dangerous lorries off Britain's roads. Stopping emissions fraud is a vital part of that.

Anyone who flouts the law is putting the quality of our air and the health of vulnerable people, at risk. We won't hesitate to take action against these drivers, operators and vehicles.

Richard Turfitt, Senior Traffic Commissioner, said:

Traffic Commissioners welcome the steps being taken by the enforcement agency to identify emissions cheats.

Use of these devices threatens to undercut responsible and compliant operators as well as damaging the environment and public health.

Traffic Commissioners will look to take action wherever an operator seeks an unfair and illegal advantage over the rest of industry.

[Press release: PM meeting with financial services firms](#)

This afternoon the Prime Minister chaired a meeting of the senior executives from some of the world's leading financial institutions to discuss the opportunities and challenges for the financial sector posed by Brexit.

The Prime Minister gave an overview of the UK's position and updated on Brexit negotiations – including the UK's aim to agree an implementation period by the end of March.

The Chancellor emphasised the need to make the interests of consumers and taxpayers central to the future regulatory relationship between the UK and EU.

The business leaders were united in emphasising the need for as much certainty as possible. The conclusion of phase one talks were deemed to have provided reassurance and the business leaders gave their views on how to maximise the benefits of an implementation period.

The Chancellor said that the UK's financial services sector was an enabler of the real economy across Europe and that any moves to undermine it risked undermining Europe's economies. There was agreement that fragmentation of the European market would likely benefit centres outside of Europe.

In her closing comments the Prime Minister asked that in their conversations in European capitals, the attendees emphasise the benefits for Europe as a whole of the UK's financial centre.

Press release: Minister for the Middle East statement on settlement plans across the West Bank

[unable to retrieve full-text content]Minister for the Middle East Alistair Burt condemns the advancement of plans by the Israeli Authorities (10 January) for 1,122 settlement units across the West Bank.