

# PM meeting with President Niinistö of Finland: 11 May 2022

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson met with President of Finland, Sauli Niinistö, in Helsinki.



The Prime Minister met the President of Finland, Sauli Niinistö in Helsinki this evening ahead of signing a security agreement with the nation on behalf of the UK.

Both leaders discussed the barbaric invasion of Ukraine, which they agreed had changed the equation of European security.

The Prime Minister set out the United Kingdom's staunch support of Finland's sovereign right to make decisions about its future without fear or influence. He made clear that Finland could depend on the United Kingdom's unequivocal and steadfast support.

As two democratic, northern European nations, the UK and Finland shared common challenges, and would stand shoulder-to-shoulder in the face of traditional and hybrid threats, the Prime Minister added.

The leaders also discussed the importance of energy security and how both nations could boost trade ties.

The Prime Minister and President Niinistö said they looked forward to even closer military collaboration and agreed to stay in close touch.

Published 11 May 2022

---

# Addressing the political gridlock and instability in Bosnia and Herzegovina: UK Statement at the UN Security Council

Thank you, Madam President.

And I start by welcoming the participation, in this meeting, of the High Representative. It remains vital for the Security Council to have a full, open and informed dialogue with Mr Schmidt on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I also welcome the Chair of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, His Excellency Mr Sefik Dzaferovic, and thank him for travelling to New York to take part in this meeting.

Unfortunately, Mr Schmidt's briefing and report, yet again, paint a worrying picture of the situation in the country.

Political gridlock and instability continue at many levels. We are concerned by the actions of some members of the Republika Srpska leadership, particularly Mr Milorad Dodik, whose threat to re-establish a Republika Srpska army and to pull out of other state-level institutions – attempts to engineer de facto secession – are dangerous and risk conflict. This could lead to the undoing of 26 years of hard-won peace and progress.

So, it is more important than ever that the Security Council maintains its support for the implementation of the Dayton Agreement, including the role of the High Representative and EUFOR. The Council should refrain from undermining or destabilising the situation. We should promote collaborative and constructive politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The UK welcomes the increased presence of the EUFOR mission to reassure the population during this challenging time.

The UK takes its role under the Dayton Agreement extremely seriously. We commit to remaining an active member of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board, and fully support the territorial integrity and fundamental structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a single, sovereign state, comprising two entities. We have recently used our own sanctions regime to send a clear message to those threatening the country's future.

We firmly support the work and the role of the High Representative, including the judicious use of his executive powers – as he did recently to suspend unconstitutional and divisive legislation. We condemn attempts to undermine the High Representative and to close his office prematurely. These are not motivated by the interests of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but by a desire to undermine regional security for geopolitical objectives.

Politics of division and hatred are dangerous distractions from the issues of

importance in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We urge all parties to focus on working together, to improve the quality of life for all citizens, and to make progress on the agreed aim of Euro-Atlantic integration. October's elections, which can and must go ahead as scheduled, offer an opportunity to rebuild citizens' confidence in a brighter future for all.

I thank you, Madam President.

---

## [New Bill to level up the nation](#)

- Levelling Up Missions, such as eradicating child illiteracy and closing gaps in life expectancy and living standards, to be enshrined in law
- Local communities get extra powers to tackle scourge of boarded up shops and empty homes
- Legislation to underpin biggest shift of power from Whitehall in modern times

The government has today (11 May 2022) introduced plans to transform struggling towns and cities, supporting local leaders to take back control of regeneration, ending the blight of empty shops on their high streets and delivering the quality homes that communities need.

The [Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill](#) will enshrine in law the government's commitment to long-term missions to spread opportunity, drive productivity and boost local pride in every corner of the country.

Levelling Up Secretary Rt Hon Michael Gove MP said:

As a country, we need to be firing on all cylinders. That is why we must level up the UK; spread prosperity and opportunity, and make sure everyone can share in our nation's success.

This Bill puts in place the reforms we need to level up. It enshrines our levelling up missions in law, which will shift resources and focus throughout this decade to the parts and people of the country who need it most. It enables every part of England which wants a London-style mayor to have one. It empowers local people, not the big developers, to take back control of regeneration in their community.

It shifts power out of Whitehall by giving local leaders the powers they need to tackle the blight of empty shops on high streets and to regenerate their communities. This is underpinned by a firm belief that by far the best placed people to level up communities are the people who live there.

We want everyone to be given the opportunity to stay local but go far.

## Levelling Up

The government's defining mission is to level up the UK; to increase and spread prosperity and opportunity across the UK, and break the link between geography and destiny. The Bill puts the legal foundations needed to deliver this mission in place, so that all parts of the country will be able to share equally in our nation's success.

Measures include:

- Creating a legal duty for the government to set and report on a number of missions for levelling up the country.
- These missions will include: closing the gap in pay and productivity between the richest and poorest areas, effectively eradicating child illiteracy and innumeracy, closing gaps in healthy life expectancy, getting the rest of the country's transport connectivity much closer to the standards of London's, and making sure everyone has a local community they can be proud of.
- The deadline for each mission is 2030, but the Levelling Up Bill will create a duty for the government to report on progress annually.
- The legislation needed so that every part of England that wants a strong devolution deal can have one.
- Enabling more areas to have the kinds of devolved powers which currently only the largest cities enjoy, helping drive improvements on local priorities such as transport and skills.
- New provisions on council borrowing to protect taxpayers' money while enabling local areas to make much needed investment.

## Regeneration

The Bill will also directly give local leaders the powers they need to regenerate their communities, and transform their high streets and town centres. A new infrastructure levy will see the big developers contribute more towards better local roads, schools, hospitals, and genuinely affordable housing. Communities will also receive a share of the Levy revenue raised – as long as they have a parish or town council – and we are exploring how this could be expanded.

Measures include:

- New powers for local leaders to run High Street Rental Auctions, where they can auction off tenancies in shops that have been vacant for over a year. This will help to end the plague of empty shops that blight so many high streets.
- Councils will also be able to double council tax on empty and second homes, ensuring everyone pays their fair share towards local services and boost levelling up.

- The 'al-fresco dining revolution' will be made permanent, injecting new life into the high street through creating a sustainable process for communities, business and local authorities, making it permanently cheaper and quicker to get a licence for outdoor dining.
- A new, locally set infrastructure levy, charged on the final value of property when its sold, will replace much of the broken S106 payments system. This will see the big developers contribute far more of the money they make from development towards building better local roads, rail, schools, hospitals, and more affordable housing.
- Legislation to make it easier for councils to regenerate their town centres through Compulsory Purchase Orders, making the process quicker and easier to use.

## **Right homes in the right places**

The Bill will also deliver new reforms to the planning system, ensuring new development is more beautiful, produces more local Infrastructure, is shaped by local people's democratic wishes, improves environmental outcomes, and occurs with neighbourhoods very much in mind.

Measures include:

- Local plans – the way in which councils set the vision for future development in their area and decide whether to give planning permission – will gain stronger legal weight and be made simpler to produce. Communities will have a major say in these plans giving them more opportunity to shape what happens in their areas. Currently 61% of councils do not have an up to date local plan, which leaves communities exposed to development on which they haven't had a meaningful say.
- A digitised planning system making plans and planning applications fully available on your smartphone.
- Stronger protections for the environment in local plans, empowering councils to make better use of brownfield land and protect precious greenbelt land.
- Local design codes will be made mandatory so that developers have to respect styles drawn up and favoured locally – from the layout or materials used, to how it provides green space.

The government has today also outlined a new deal for millions of renters in private and social housing.

By ending Section 21 evictions and extending the Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector, all renters can expect a decent, safe, and secure home. At the same time, these measures deliver a fairer system for good landlords who can struggle to recover their properties when faced with anti-social behaviour or wilful non-payment of rent.

Details on further support for tenants in social housing will be unveiled later this year which will include a review of the Decent Homes Standard, new consumer regulation and regular inspections of the largest landlords.

## Further information

The planning measures have been informed by over 40,000 responses made to the government's 2020 'Planning for the Future' White Paper, and inquiry by the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee.

In order to continue to support the hospitality sector, we will also extend the temporary pavement licence process for one further year while we seek to make permanent these provisions through the Bill, subject to Parliamentary approval.

---

## [PM opening remarks at press conference in Finland: 11 May 2022](#)

Thank you very much President Sauli Niinistö and thank you for hosting me today. It's wonderful to be in Helsinki this evening, at this pivotal a moment in our shared history.

It's pivotal because, as I also discussed with colleagues with Prime Minister Andersson in Sweden, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has changed the equation of European security and it has rewritten our reality and reshaped our future.

We've seen the end of the post-Cold War period, and the invasion of Ukraine sadly has opened a new chapter.

That invasion has already failed for two reasons.

Firstly because of the unbreakable spirit of the Ukrainian people who have fought back and rallied the world behind them.

And secondly because that Ukraine struggle for freedom, that heroic fight, has brought the world together in condemnation of this assault on our values.

And it would be fair to say it has also brought Finland and the UK even closer together today.

The security declaration, the solemn declaration, we have signed today ensures our two nations can intensify our partnership and take it to unparalleled heights – both latitudinal and metaphorical.

From the High North to the Baltics and beyond, our armed forces will train, operate, and exercise together – marrying our defence and security capabilities and formalising a pledge that we will always come to one another's aid.

Because this is not a short term stop gap as you consider NATO membership, but an enduring assurance between our two nations.

An assurance that brings us even closer together as we face the challenges of today, the threats of tomorrow, side-by-side.

---

## [New Charter to improve media access to courts](#)

- new agreement to cement journalists' rights when reporting trials and hearings
- Charter outlines how courts service provides help and information to media
- key move to increase public confidence in the justice system

The document brings together practical guidance for journalists attending courts and tribunals so that it will be easier for them to get the access, documents and information they are entitled to.

It has been developed by the Media Lawyers Association and HM Courts and Tribunals Service and was unveiled at the Society of Editors Annual Conference today (11 May 2022).

The Charter sets out advice on how journalists can request to observe video hearings or tune in remotely, given that there are currently around 12,500 hearings held remotely per week, compared to just a handful before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Justice Minister James Cartlidge said:

Justice has to be seen to be done to maintain public confidence and the media play a vital role as their eyes and ears in the courts.

This Charter will help ensure reporters retain the access to courts and information they require to keep the public informed.

The Charter outlines how courts and tribunals provide designated seats in courtrooms for journalists and that wi-fi is available to them so they can report live on social media platforms or news websites.

Details of the protocol for sharing court lists, documents and information about defendants with the media is also included.

John Battle, Head of Legal and Compliance at ITN and Chairman of the Media

Lawyers Association, said:

The Charter is a significant step forward. It brings together in one document the basic rights reporters have when reporting the courts.

The Charter will help court reporters to carry out their vital role informing the public about the justice system. It is fundamental for justice, the rule of law and democracy that the courts are reported.

Dawn Alford, Executive Director of the Society of Editors said:

The Society of Editors welcomes today's launch of the Reporters' Charter which will, no doubt, become an invaluable tool for journalists and court staff and ensure that the rights of reporters to attend court and receive documentation are better recognised and applied in practice.

We congratulate the Media Lawyers Association and HMCTS on this achievement. The Society is delighted to endorse, promote and distribute the Charter.

## **Notes to editors**

- The Reporters' Charter is available to view on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) and the [Society of Editors website](https://www.societyofeditors.org.uk)
- Decisions on whether a hearing is public or private, and available to observe remotely, lie with independent judges.