

News story: Start date announced for negotiations with European Commission

The first round of talks that will see Britain leave the European Union will start on Monday June 19, officials have confirmed.

Following discussions in Brussels today, both sides agreed that the formal negotiations under the Article 50 process can now start.

In a joint statement issued today, officials said: “Michel Barnier, the European Commission’s Chief Negotiator and David Davis, Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, agreed today to launch Article 50 negotiations on Monday June 19.”

News story: Lord Ahmad appointed FCO Minister for the Commonwealth and UN

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon has been appointed as Minister for the Commonwealth and the United Nations at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. His responsibilities also include the Overseas Territories and the Caribbean.

I am honoured to have been appointed and look forward to representing the UK’s interests across the world.

It will be a privilege to continue the UK’s work internationally in support of our shared human values, promoting international peace, security and prosperity – all of which are in the vital interests of our country. I am also committed to promoting the UK’s leading role on global issues such as countering violent extremism and the protection and safeguarding of human rights and religious freedoms.

I am also honoured to have been appointed as the Prime Minister’s Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict.

As the UK prepares to host the Commonwealth Summit next year I also look forward to visiting and meeting with Commonwealth leaders and representatives across the world.

[News story: Advocate General appears in first sitting of UK Supreme Court in Scotland](#)

The Advocate General for Scotland, Lord Keen of Elie QC represented the UK Government in two UKSC hearings in Edinburgh this week. This was the first time the UK Supreme Court (UKSC) has sat outside London. The move was an historic occasion for the Court and well received by the legal profession in Scotland. On Monday 12 June 2017, Lord Keen represented the interests of the Secretary of State for the Home Department in the UKSC case of Sadovska and another v Secretary of State for the Home Department in relation to a sham marriage. On 21-22 June 2017, Lord Keen represented the interests of the Secretary of State for Justice in the UKSC case of Brown v The Scottish Ministers relating to the rehabilitation of extended sentence prisoners. Judgments for both hearings will be issued in due course.

[News story: Karen Bradley welcomes DCMS Ministers](#)

The ministerial team is as follows:

[Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP](#), Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport:

The Secretary of State has overall responsibility for strategy and policy across the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

The Department's main policy areas are:

- arts and culture
- broadcasting
- creative industries
- cultural property, heritage and the historic environment
- digital economy
- gambling and racing
- libraries
- media ownership and mergers
- museums and galleries
- The National Lottery
- Office for Civil Society
- sport

- telecommunications and online
- tourism

- broadband and mobile connectivity
- broadcasting
- creative industries
- cyber security
- data
- Digital Charter
- digital economy
- digital skills and engagement
- digital technology
- internet governance
- media
- online safety
- spectrum
- telecoms markets and resilience

[Tracey Crouch MP](#), Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Sport and Civil Society:

- gambling
- horse racing
- Office for Civil Society
- sport
- The National Lottery and society lotteries

[John Glen MP](#), Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Arts, Heritage and Tourism:

- arts
- culture
- heritage
- public libraries
- museums
- National Archives
- tourism

[Lord Ashton of Hyde](#), Parliamentary Under Secretary of State:

- ceremonials
 - DCMS business in the Lords
 - First World War commemorations
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[News story: Infrastructure systems for a better world: apply for funding](#)

Innovate UK will invest in projects that stimulate innovation in infrastructure systems that provide critical services for the economy, environment and society, and create growth for UK businesses.

There is up to £5 million for projects that last between 3 and 12 months. Up to £10 million is available for projects that last up to 3 years, with costs between £100,000 and £5 million inclusive.

You can also apply into a [Knowledge Transfer Partnership](#) in infrastructure systems if you'd like to work with a recent graduate.

The opportunity

Infrastructure systems are the backbone of:

- economic stability
- growth
- competitiveness
- productivity

They are vital for social wellbeing and environmental sustainability; especially so when you consider the growing number of people, particularly in urban areas, who rely on these systems.

There is £425 billion of planned public and private infrastructure investment in the UK to meet the challenges and make the most of our world-leading capabilities in this area.

This includes infrastructure solutions in:

- planning
- engineering
- architecture
- energy
- the intelligent mobility of people and freight
- communications

We also have a strong base of creative start-ups in the digital economy and excellent academic research to support this aim.

Our priority areas

We're particularly interested in projects in our priority areas for infrastructure systems. These are:

- smart infrastructure that improves whole-life performance and/or cost

and resilience

- energy, including:
 - energy systems that flexibly match changing energy supply and demand profiles at local, regional or national scale
 - nuclear fission innovations that lead to major cost reductions, improved asset integrity and develop the supply chain
 - offshore wind innovations that result in significant reductions in the cost of energy
- connected transport that encourages more efficient transportation of goods and people across more than one mode
- urban living, addressing the challenges people face in urban areas

Competition information

- the competition opens on 10 July 2017, and the deadline for registration is 13 September 2017
- projects must be led by a UK business or research and technology organisation
- you may work alone if you are an SME and your project is under one year with costs of less than £100,000. Otherwise, you must work with partners, including at least one SME
- total project costs can range between £25,000 and £5 million, and last up to 3 years
- businesses can attract up to 70% of their eligible costs, depending on their size and the project type