

PM call with President of the European Council Charles Michel: 21 March 2021

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to the President of the European Council Charles Michel.



The Prime Minister spoke with President of the European Council, Charles Michel, this afternoon.

Both leaders agreed on the importance of continued close cooperation and a united UK-EU response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the Prime Minister thanked the President of the European Council for his work on this to date.

They also condemned the barbaric attacks on civilians, including in Mariupol over the weekend, and agreed that Putin posed a grave threat to wider European security and must be stopped.

Ahead of this week's NATO and G7 meetings, both the Prime Minister and the President of the European Council noted the importance of maintaining pressure on the Putin regime through sanctions and providing further financial assistance to the Ukrainian government.

The Prime Minister also stressed the need to step-up efforts to supply additional defensive military support to Ukraine and continue to reduce the West's reliance on Russian hydrocarbons.

The Prime Minister raised the Northern Ireland Protocol and said that solutions needed to be found in order to protect peace and stability and safeguard the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in all its dimensions. The President of the European Council agreed to meet with the Prime Minister to discuss this issue further.

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[Enter our competition to be Ambassador or Consul General For A Day 2022](#)

Why you should enter this competition

Women and girls represent half of the world's population and therefore also half of its potential. Today there are too few women in international diplomacy, including women from under-represented backgrounds, whether ethnic, religious, economic, cultural, or personal identity, among others. Women are not represented at parity in political and business sectors.

To end this underrepresentation, we must ensure equality of opportunity and equitable outcomes for everyone.

This is why we are encouraging young women in Turkey to make their voices heard on topics that affect us all. We will encourage the winners to become leaders and advocates for change by offering them the opportunity to take a look behind the scenes of the British Embassy in Ankara and the British Consulate General in Istanbul.

Who can enter

You can enter this competition if, at the time of applying, you:

- identify as female
- reside in Turkey
- are aged between 18 and 24 years

Close relatives of British Embassy Ankara and Consulate General Istanbul employees and anyone otherwise connected with the judging of the competition will not be eligible to enter.

Expenses: There is no entry fee. The British Embassy Ankara and Consulate General Istanbul will cover agreed travel costs and, if needed, accommodation expenses for the winners. Winners will be contacted by the Consulate or Embassy to agree this on an individual basis.

How to apply

All candidates must answer the following question:

- if you had the power to make one change to improve the lives of women and girls around the world, what would it be?

Entries can be in either a written format (essay) or a video. The word limit for the essay is 250 words and the video should not be longer than two

minutes. The essay or video can be in English or Turkish.

If you want to shadow the Ambassador in Ankara:

If you want to shadow the Consul-General in Istanbul:

Video entries must be sent by sharing a WeTransfer link, or a link to a video saved in a private/hidden channel on YouTube.

Together with the essay or video, each candidate must send the following contact details:

- name
- date of birth
- email address
- telephone number

These details will be used to inform candidates about the results of the competition.

Closing date for entry will be 23:59 hrs, 31 March 2022. After this date, no further entries to the competition will be permitted.

What you will win

- you will shadow either the British Ambassador in Ankara, or the British Consul General in Istanbul; with a day of events (programme TBC). A translator will accompany the winners throughout the day to help with English/Turkish communication
- 5 runners up to the Consul General for a Day entries and 5 runners up to the Ambassador for a Day entries will receive a highly commended certificate for their entry

Terms and conditions

1. The candidates must enter the competition with essays or videos, which have not been published in print or online prior to the announcement of the Ambassador for a Day competition and have not been used for applying to similar initiatives. The content of the essays and the videos must be original.
2. Only one entry will be accepted per person. Multiple entries from the same person will be disqualified. However, if the candidate would be prepared to attend either location, they can state this in their application. The location they enter to will be considered their

preference.

3. Winners from the previous Ambassador for a Day campaign in Turkey cannot enter the current competition.
4. No responsibility can be accepted for entries not received for whatever reason.
5. The winners will be selected anonymously based on their essay/video by a judging panel, which includes British Embassy and British Consulate General employees. There will be one winner of Ambassador for a Day, and one winner of Consul General for a Day (two winners in total).
6. The winners will be notified by email within three weeks of the closing date. If a winner cannot be contacted within four working days of notification, the British Embassy reserves the right to withdraw the prize from the winner and pick a replacement winner from among the other competitors.
7. The winners must be meet the following conditions:
 - be available to travel to either Istanbul or Ankara on the winner's day, which will be in May 2022 (winners will be informed of the dates when they are confirmed)
 - have valid ID and/or passport, and bring that ID with them on the winner's day
 - agree to be photographed and/or filmed during public engagements within the Ambassador for a Day campaign in order to promote the initiative provided that the photos/videos do not prejudice their dignity and reputation
8. The British Embassy Ankara and the British Consulate General Istanbul's decision in respect of all matters to do with the competition, including but not limited to the appraisal of the participants, the organisation of carrying out the competition and the awarding of the winners' prizes will be final and no correspondence will be entered into. They shall have the right to change the dates and order or presenting the awards shall a necessity occur whereby the participants shall be notified.
9. By entering this competition, the entrant is indicating her agreement to be bound by these terms and conditions.

New digital tools to help residents have their say on local developments

Members of the public will be able to use innovative new technology to have a greater say in shaping and regenerating their communities, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) announced today (21 March 2022).

Over £3.25 million from the Proptech Engagement Fund will be spent on 28 projects across England trailing cutting edge digital tools to make the planning system more open, engaging and accessible.

The projects include using 3D interactive maps and virtual reality to help local people better envisage proposed new developments in their communities and encourage them get more involved in planning locally.

Modernising the planning system and using digital technology will help increase community participation in local decision making, including underrepresented groups such as renters and those from black and ethnic minority groups. By empowering communities and giving local people greater say in shaping their neighbourhoods, towns and cities in this way supports the government's efforts to level up across the country.

Minister for Housing Rt Hon Stuart Andrew said:

We need a modernised planning system which fully embraces digital technology to create places in which people take real pride.

By bringing the planning system up to date with the latest methods, we are ensuring that communities can have more of a say on the development of their town, city or neighbourhood.

The selected projects include:

- Watford Borough Council will develop a digital platform to help residents have their say on how to spend contributions from developers towards infrastructure in their community
- Walsall Council will use funding to encourage underrepresented community voices to have their say on the regeneration of Bloxwich and Walsall Town Centre, which are supported by the Towns Fund
- Plymouth Council, alongside South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council, will produce a set of interactive maps for residents to identify what infrastructure is needed in their local area

The pilots, which will run until September 2022, will inform the government's work to modernise the planning system and DLUHC is working closely with

planning authorities across the country to establish best practice and identify where further digital guidance and innovations are needed.

Today's announcement builds on the launch of two Neighbourhood Planning pilots, which focus on boosting community planning in urban and deprived areas to help more people have a say over the future of their local areas.

The PropTech Engagement Fund was initially launched in August 2021. In October 2021, the Department announced 13 areas that received a share of £1.1 million in the first round of funding.

A breakdown of the Local Planning Authorities that have been allocated funding under the second round of the PropTech Engagement Fund and the amount they have received is below:

- Plymouth City Council (joint bid with South Hams District Council and West Devon Borough Council): £285,000
 - Newham Council: £125,000
 - Epping Forest District Council (joint bid with East Herts District Council, Harlow Council, Hertfordshire County Council and Essex County Council): £228,800
 - East Hampshire District Council: £40,500
 - West Oxfordshire District Council: £118,250
 - Watford Borough Council: £123,000
 - Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council: £120,000
 - Birmingham City Council: £65,500
 - South Cambridgeshire District Council: £117,000
 - Redbridge London Borough: £125,000
 - Haringey London Borough: £99,000
 - Waltham Forest London Borough: £69,500
 - Havant Borough Council: £83,450
 - Southampton City Council: £125,000
 - Harborough District Council: £125,000
 - Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea: £118,000
 - Epsom and Ewell Borough Council: £125,000
 - Runnymede Borough Council: £90,020
 - Lambeth London Borough: £92,164
 - Leicester City Council: £86,750
 - Stevenage Borough Council: £125,000
 - Wandsworth: £98,000
 - Cornwall Council: £125,000
 - Wirral Council: £92,950
 - Bolsover District Council: £95,800
 - Dacorum Borough Council (joint bid with St Albans City & District Council, Three Rivers District Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, Watford Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council): £121,750
 - Lewes District Council: £112,500
 - Surrey County Council: £121,187
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New report confirms fluoridation can reduce tooth decay among children

- Benefits are greater for those in more deprived areas, reducing inequalities and helping level up oral health
- Health and Care Bill will cut bureaucracy and make it simpler to expand water fluoridation schemes

Adding fluoride to drinking water can significantly reduce tooth extractions and cavities among children and young people, according to the latest health monitoring report for England.

The findings, from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), show children and young people in areas in England with higher fluoride concentrations were up to 63% less likely to be admitted to hospital for tooth extractions due to decay than those in areas with low fluoride concentrations. The difference was greatest in the most deprived areas as children and young people in these areas benefitted the most from fluoridation.

Fluoride occurs naturally and is present in water and some foods in varying concentrations. In some areas with low natural fluoride levels, fluoride is added to drinking water, in line with safe limits, to improve dental health for children and adults as an effective and safe public health measure.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Sajid Javid said:

The evidence is clear: water fluoridation is a safe and effective measure to help improve our nation's oral health.

This report continues to highlight how fluoridation can help reduce cavities and tooth extractions among children, especially those in more deprived communities, helping us level up health across the country.

Through our Health and Care Bill, we will aim to make it simpler to roll out water fluoridation in more areas.

Around 10% of the English population lives in areas with water fluoridation schemes. These schemes cover much of the North East and Midlands and the North West, East of England and Yorkshire and the Humber. The report highlights that:

- In the most deprived 20% of areas, the chance of five-year old children having cavities was 25% lower in areas with a fluoridation scheme than in areas without.
- Five-year-olds in areas with higher fluoride concentrations were less likely to experience dental cavities than in areas with low fluoride

concentrations.

- Up to 56% of hospital admissions for the removal of decayed teeth among children and young people could be prevented in the most deprived areas through water fluoridation schemes.

Director of Public Health Analysis from Office of Health Improvement and Disparities John Newton said:

This report supports the view, as recently underlined by the UK Chief Medical Officers, that water fluoridation is an effective public health intervention for reducing the prevalence of tooth decay and improving dental health equality.

Tony Fletcher, from UK Health Security Agency's Environmental Epidemiology Group, said:

The environmental epidemiology team in UKHSA conducted analyses of data across English districts with varying drinking water fluoride concentrations. The results support previous findings that higher levels of fluoride are associated with improved dental health outcomes.

We found no new evidence to conclude there is a risk of general health harms at the water fluoride concentrations studied, which are all within UK regulatory limits.

There is no convincing scientific evidence that fluoride in drinking water at levels used in fluoridation schemes is harmful, whereas studies show that appropriate levels of fluoride can reduce the prevalence and severity of tooth decay in both adults and children.

Expanding water fluoridation is one aspect of OHID's ambitious agenda to tackle inequalities in health and care and support children's healthy development. A white paper setting out a plan to address health inequalities will be published by the Department for Health and Social Care later this year.

Additional information:

- The Water fluoridation: health monitoring report for England 2022 report is available on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk). The next report will be due by March 2026 at the latest.
- The Health and Care Bill will make it simpler to expand schemes by allowing decisions to be made centrally. Any planned expansion will be subject to the successful passage of the Bill, funding being agreed and public consultation.
- OHID and UKHSA have a duty under the Water Industry Act 1991 to monitor the effects of fluoride on people living in areas covered by water fluoridation schemes on behalf of the Secretary of State. They report on

this at least every four years.

- The UK Chief Medical Officers recently published a joint technical statement outlining the issue of tooth decay in the UK and the role of water fluoridation in improving the dental health of both adults and children. This statement is publicly available on GOV.UK, accessible [here](#).

Government Chemist contributes to food allergen guidance

News story

The GC team collaborated with experts to develop quantitative risk assessment guidance for food allergens



Selection of foods that can cause allergic reactions

Background

Food allergen risk assessment (RA) is the use of information on the characteristics of unintended allergen presence in food to estimate the likelihood and nature of potential adverse effects experienced by consumers with food allergy, due to exposure in the consumed final product.

Quantitative risk assessment (QRA) of cross contamination by food allergens brings sharper focus to decision making in the subsequent risk management. This includes the interpretation of analytical findings, handling of potential food recalls and the management of precautionary allergen labelling. Allergen QRA exists in many different forms with different requirements placed on the risk assessor depending on the question that needs to be answered.

Published guidance

Representing the Government Chemist, [Professor Michael Walker](#) is co-chair of an International Life Sciences Institute, European section, ILSI Europe Expert Group (EG) on food allergen QRA. The EG was created to attempt to achieve consensus on the methods needed for allergen QRAs by food business operators, and their implementation. An electronic workshop was held in October 2020 with representatives from a wide range of food allergy and allergen stakeholder groups. The workshop identified that a summary of current best in class guidance, identified gaps, potential improvements & harmonization of allergen QRA arising largely from cross contact would be very beneficial.

The EG have now published an introduction to allergen QRA and an overview of inputs potentially needed for different QRA methods, when deemed feasible and necessary. The paper also introduces the EG. Areas of focus include proactive assessments for food production under normal conditions, both in the upstream supply chain and in food production facilities, and reactive assessments as part of an allergen incident response. The paper offers insights into more detailed guidance for allergen QRA that will be published later in the year in open access as an ILSI Europe report.

The [paper is currently available as a pre-print](#).

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