

Tenth meeting of the Specialised Committee on the implementation of the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland: joint statement

Press release

This joint statement follows the tenth Specialised Committee on the implementation of the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland meeting, held by videoconference.



Joint statement from the United Kingdom and the European Union:

Today [8 March 2022], as a follow up to the [Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee meeting on 21 February 2022](#), the European Union and the United Kingdom held their tenth meeting of the Specialised Committee on the implementation of the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland (the 'Protocol'), by videoconference.

Representatives from the Northern Ireland Executive and from EU Member States also attended as part of, respectively, the UK delegation and the EU delegation.

The EU and the UK took stock of the progress made to address the specific issues concerning the Protocol raised at previous Specialised Committee meetings in accordance with Article 164 of the Withdrawal Agreement.

Both Parties underlined their ongoing determination to ensure that outstanding issues in the context of the Protocol are addressed, and durable solutions are found as soon as possible for the benefit of people and businesses in Northern Ireland.

The EU and the UK also took stock of the work of the Joint Consultative Working Group.

In addition, the EU and the UK reiterated the importance of further engagement with business groups, civil society and other stakeholders in Northern Ireland and committed to further joint engagements.

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[E3 statement to the IAEA Board of Governors on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, March 2022](#)

Chair,

France, Germany and the United Kingdom would like to thank Director General Grossi for his latest report contained in GOV/2022/4 and Deputy Director General Aparo for his Technical Briefing. We commend the Agency for its reporting, despite the limitations placed on its activities in Iran, and support its independence.

We note with concern that, since the last Board of Governors in November, Iran has continued to advance its nuclear programme by developing its stockpile of enriched uranium and conducting activities that provide permanent and irreversible knowledge gains. Iran's nuclear programme has never before been this advanced, and is exposing the international community to unprecedented levels of risk.

In particular, Iran has nearly doubled its stockpile of Highly Enriched Uranium since the last Board and has begun to convert this material into Highly Enriched Uranium targets over the last two weeks.

Iran has also continued to stockpile 20% enriched uranium, and since the last Board, has begun to operate a cascade of advanced IR-6 centrifuges to do so at the underground Fordow facility. Iran has no plausible civilian justification for 20% and 60% enrichment and the production of Highly Enriched Uranium is unprecedented for a State without a weapons programme. Accumulation of uranium enriched at 20% and 60% is further reducing the time Iran would take to break out towards a first nuclear weapon. Iran's R&D on, and extensive use of, advanced centrifuges have permanently improved its enrichment capabilities. This means that Iran's continued escalations are irreversibly reducing the non-proliferation value of the JCPoA.

The IAEA has also been without crucial access to data on centrifuge and component manufacturing for over a year since Iran stopped implementing

verification and monitoring arrangements agreed in the JCPOA, and suspended implementation of the Additional Protocol. The Agency reports that verification and monitoring activities have been seriously affected as a result of Iran's decision to stop the implementation of its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA.

The E3/EU+3 have been engaged in intensive negotiations with Iran for eleven months. We are now very close to finalising a deal that would address our most pressing and immediate non-proliferation concerns, returning Iran's nuclear programme to JCPOA limits as well as restoring JCPOA transparency measures and Iran's implementation of the Additional Protocol. The rate of advances in Iran's nuclear programme means this deal cannot remain on the table indefinitely. The window of opportunity is closing. We call on all sides to make the decisions necessary to close this deal now, and on Russia not to add extraneous conditions to its conclusion.

We strongly urge Iran to avoid undertaking any new escalations and in particular, call upon Iran to immediately cease all activity related to conversion of Highly Enriched Uranium, which will have practical implications for returning to JCPOA limits. We urge Iran to prepare to take steps towards reimplementation of the JCPOA, including by: firstly, ceasing the production of high enriched uranium and any enrichment above JCPOA limits; secondly, preparing to dispose of its stockpile of enriched uranium in excess of JCPOA limits; thirdly, returning enrichment capacities and R&D to agreed limits; fourthly, stopping all activities related to the production of uranium metal; and fifthly, restoring full transparency and cooperation with the IAEA.

We reiterate that Iran must cooperate with the IAEA and enable the Agency to restore continuity of knowledge over its nuclear programme, enhancing the Agency's ability to resume verification and monitoring, and provide full and effective assurance to the international community over the peaceful nature of Iran's programme. We commend the IAEA for its objective reporting, and its rigorous and impartial implementation of the mandate conferred on it by the United Nations Security Council, and we encourage the Director General to keep the Board informed regarding progress on monitoring and verification in Iran in all its aspects. We would welcome the Agency's latest quarterly report on monitoring and verification in Iran be made public.

Thank you Chair.

**[Health and Social Care Secretary
speech at the CEPI Global Pandemic](#)**

Preparedness Summit 2022

It's an honour to welcome you all to this Summit on behalf of the UK Government.

We gather at a time of great instability and uncertainty in the wake of a horrific act of aggression on this continent.

But we should take some inspiration from the way that so much of the world has come together to support the people of Ukraine.

Showing the same sense of common purpose and shared solidarity that was on display throughout the pandemic. The success story of Covid vaccines is just one example showing how, when we apply all our efforts and energy to a single goal barriers that once seemed insurmountable can fall away.

I remember how when the pandemic first began there were prominent voices saying that it would take a decade before we could start putting jabs in arms.

But now, just two years on, almost five billion people have had the protection of at least one Covid vaccine dose.

This has been a true global effort – for instance the Pfizer vaccine contains some 280 different components from nineteen different countries.

Thanks to this work across borders, safe and effective vaccines were developed at an incredible pace including by building on earlier work funded by the UK and CEPI to develop the vaccine for MERS.

This shows the importance of learning from previous scientific advances and the rapid progress that can be made when Governments, and industry and academia all co-operate together and work across the world.

Today, on International Women's Day I also want to take a moment to remember the contribution of incredible scientists like Professor Dame Sarah Gilbert who is here with us today, and I know that she will be addressing you later.

Professor Dame Sarah was one of the pioneers behind the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine 2.5 billion doses of this vaccine have been delivered across the world with most of those delivered at cost price.

CEPI has played a pivotal role in this vaccine that has protected so many people and I'm proud that the UK has been one of CEPI's biggest supporters.

Just as we've been at the forefront of the effort to vaccinate the whole world – through COVAX and I'd like to thank CEPI for the critical part that they have played in this vital mission along with the co-leads with Gavi and the World Health Organisation.

But just because we are starting to turn the tide on this virus thanks to the

protection that the vaccines have provided it does not mean that we should take our foot off the accelerator.

We still face the threat of new Covid variants that could be more severe they could be more transmissible or they could even escape the protection of current vaccines and when it comes to future pandemics – it is a question not of if but when.

Because over the coming years global travel will intensify more people will live in dense urban areas and climate change will further disrupt the already complex relationship we have with our natural environment.

We know that vaccines are the best weapon that we possess against future pandemics and that this is the moment to build on the extraordinary momentum that we have already seen.

We must keep moving at the pandemic pace and pursuing scientific solutions.

For instance, the partnership that some of you would have heard about from the Prime Minister the partnership between CEPI and one of our most pioneering companies, DIOSynVax.

It's a partnership that's working on developing a variant proof vaccine that could shield us all from future deadly COVID variants.

As well as partnerships like these, we must keep striving to secure access to vaccines across the world and shorten the vaccine development process even further – which has shrunk so much during the Covid pandemic.

This is the ethos behind the 100 Day Mission – a vital partnership looking at how we can make diagnostics, and therapeutics and vaccines more available more effective more affordable within the first 100 days of any new pandemic being identified.

Now to do this, we need to make it easier to get clinical trials up, and get them running, and delivering results and we must work more seamlessly across borders – to share data and avoid the costly duplications of effort.

Of course this won't happen on its own.

It will take the same laser-like focus that has helped us to put Covid on the back foot.

I am thrilled already by the pledges that I've just heard about from Richard, the pledges from the Government of Japan the Wellcome Trust and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to support this work.

This is building on the £160 million already from the UK over the next five years.

It is not always easy to think about adversaries that don't even exist.

But if we wait until these threats materialise, then it will be too late.

So I urge other donors to step up and to fund this vital work to help us reduce the grief and devastation that future pandemics will bring.

Anyone who doubts what we are able to achieve when we put our minds to it and how vaccines can change the course of history should take a look around this museum.

You know right here in one of the world's greatest collections of scientific and medical ingenuity is the vial from the first vaccine ever given through a Covid vaccination programme this vaccine has now been put in arms of billions of people all across the world – including in a vaccination centre right here in this museum, where I got my first jab as well.

It sits alongside artefacts from campaigns against polio and the plague.

That is the magnitude of what we, we have achieved.

If we keep working together, and learn the lessons of the past two years, I have no doubt that we can do so again. Thank you all very much.

[PM meeting with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán: 8 March 2022](#)

Press release

The Prime Minister spoke to Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán this afternoon to discuss the deteriorating situation in Ukraine.



The Prime Minister spoke to Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán this afternoon to discuss the deteriorating situation in Ukraine.

The leaders condemned Russia's abhorrent actions in Ukraine and said Putin must stop his barbaric campaign.

Setting out the UK's plans to go harder and faster on sanctions, the Prime

Minister said he believed it is key the UK and Hungary work together on how they could reduce dependency on Russian gas and oil.

Both agreed that Russia's destabilising across Europe needed to be countered, including by deepening cyber resilience ties between the UK and Hungary.

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International Women's Day 2022

Officers and civilian staff from across the Ministry of Defence Police (MDP) have been sharing their pledges to #BreakTheBias, the theme for this year's International Women's Day (8 March), as we reflect on our collective commitment to help level the playing field and continue to build an environment where women can thrive at work and within the communities we serve and protect.

MDP officers and staff sharing their #BreakTheBias pledges. Crown copyright.

Improving the representation of women in firearms roles across UK policing continues to be a challenge nationally. In the MDP, 11% of our Authorised Firearms Officers and 64% of our civilian staff are women, working in a range of roles and specialisms throughout the force. We have female representation in almost all ranks and grades across our organisation, up to Assistant Chief Constable and Civil Service Grade 6.

The representation of women in the MDP shows how we are "breaking the bias", given the stereotypical perception that being an armed police officer is a "job for the boys" only. There is, however, still much more to be done and we're working to encourage more women to join us and to ensure equitable and fair treatment and support for all serving female officers and civilian staff.

We recognise the importance of a working environment free from prejudice and where everyone feels valued. As a police force, we're committed to promoting inclusivity and tackling any unacceptable behaviour, within and around the sites and communities we serve and protect, providing a policing service that is inclusive, professional, and ethical, working together with stakeholders and partners to provide support and keep women safe.

Chief Inspector McGlinchey with her #BreakTheBias pledge. Crown copyright.

We all have a role to play in driving forward positive change, calling out

unacceptable conduct, breaking gender biases, questioning stereotypes and celebrating the achievements of women in the MDP and more widely in society.

New Assistant Chief Constable Melanie Dales said:

During my short time with the MDP so far, I have met some great female MDP role models and seen evidence of positive ongoing work to continue building a truly inclusive working environment and culture, within which women are valued and can progress to their full potential.

I am also very pleased to see the work that the MDP are developing as part of the national Violence Against Women and Girls strategy, both within our own Force and more widely in support of the national Enough campaign. Nobody should be bystanders. We can all do our bit to keep women and girls safe, and as police officers we must call out, challenge, report and act against any behaviour that betrays our professional standards or that concerns us.

As the new MDP Gender Champion, I look forward to working with our dedicated staff and teams across the organisation and within the wider MOD, to further progress activity to remove barriers and identify initiatives to improve the lived experience for women in the MDP and Defence.

Here's just some of the things we're doing to "break the bias" and support continuous growth and development of an inclusive culture in the MDP:

- The MDP Gender Network aims to improve the lived experience – including engagement, development, and promotion opportunities – for women in the force and those who support them. The Network provides input on policies and processes, and contact points, as a safe space for members to raise any issues or share ideas and thoughts.
- Collaborative working with other networks and associations within Defence, the Civil Service and policing, including the Defence Gender Network and the British Association of Women in Policing (BAWP)
- provision of a dedicated Force Maternity Coordinator, on a voluntary basis, providing guidance, advice and support to female officers going on or returning from maternity leave, as well as support and guidance in relation to paternity, adoption, and shared parental leave
- engaging our staff networks, including the Gender Network, in an

independent assessment of current MDP shift patterns, to develop options to improve efficiency and effectiveness and support flexible working

- developing our mentoring processes and positive action activity, to support recruitment and staff development in the coming year and beyond

Further information

During Women's History Month throughout March, on Facebook and Twitter, we'll be...

- reflecting further on what we're doing to help #BreakTheBias
- supporting and promoting the national [Enough Campaign](#)
- and MDP women will be answering some quick questions on themselves and life in the force, as they share their #MyMDPMinute

Find out more about our commitment to diversity and inclusion in the MDP: [we value difference in our force with a difference](#)