

Statement to Parliament: EU Transport Council 8 June 2017

The only Transport Council under the Maltese Presidency (the Presidency) took place in Brussels on Thursday 8 June. The UK was represented by the UK's Deputy Permanent Representative to the EU, Katrina Williams.

The council adopted a general approach on lorry and bus driver training (Driver CPC Directive) as well as council conclusions on road safety and the EU's maritime priorities. All 3 were widely supported by member states. The UK intervened to support the road safety conclusions, welcoming the elements related to safer road infrastructure and connected and autonomous vehicles, and highlighting the UK's Safer Road Fund.

Under any other business, a range of items were discussed. The Commission presented its new mobility package of proposals which aims to modernise the road transport framework and strengthen the competitiveness and social standards of the EU road haulage sector. Some member states supported stronger social standards in the road transport sector while others felt the Commission's proposals did not sufficiently support liberalisation in the sector. A number of member states called for the political and geographical balance of the proposals to be carefully considered.

The Presidency provided information on the progress of the trilogue discussions with the European Parliament on a Professional Qualifications in Inland Navigation Directive and the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) Regulation. Overall member states welcomed the substantial efforts of the Maltese Presidency in negotiations to date with the European Parliament.

The Commission presented an overview of the 'open and connected Europe' aviation package which was published on the morning of the Transport Council. The package includes a proposal to revise Regulation (EC) No. 868/2004, guidelines on airline ownership and control, guidelines on public service obligations and best practice on minimising air traffic control disruptions.

Sweden provided information on her approach to protection against acts of terror in road transport in light of the terrorist attack that occurred in Stockholm in April. The UK intervened to express its solidarity and emphasise the importance of this issue and of sharing best practice, supported by other member states. Those who intervened offered condolences to the UK following the London Bridge attack on 3 June.

In addition, the Commission updated the council on recent developments on aviation security and the Netherlands asked the Commission to provide information on their work on social issues in aviation. Luxembourg urged member states to speed up the implementation of the European rail traffic management signalling system (ERTMS) and presented the work she had done to develop a blue-print EU cycling strategy. Germany flagged the high-level dialogue on connected and autonomous driving that would take place in

Frankfurt on 14 and 15 September and the Estonian Presidency presented its work programme for its presidency beginning 1 July 2017.

Over lunch Commissioner Bulc led a discussion on an initial strategy at the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from ships.

Press release: Defence Secretary announces £48 million Apache training contract

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon today announced a six-year £48 million Apache helicopter training contract at the annual Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) Land Warfare Conference.

This investment in Apache air and ground crew will support around 70 jobs in Dorset, Hampshire and Suffolk with Aviation Training International Ltd (ATIL). Around 700 Army personnel will go through the training scheme per year, including around 50 pilots and 400 ground crew.

While addressing the challenges which face today's armies, the Defence Secretary also announced new measures to meet global information and cyber threats by bolstering and reorganising the Army's Royal Corps of Signals and Intelligence Corps.

The Royal Signals will receive an additional regiment to enhance its cyber capabilities, so it can distribute information rapidly and effectively; while the Intelligence Corps will be organised to focus on counter-intelligence, security, and cultural understanding.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

This £48 million contract will support UK jobs and provide world-class Apache training for our personnel. The Apache is a vital part of the British Army's fighting force that is helping to keep this country safe.

We are also preparing our forces for the battlefields of tomorrow in an era of complex global challenges by ensuring our formidable Signals and Intelligence Corps are ready for the information warfare of the 21st Century.

This investment is only possible thanks to a rising defence budget and a drive for efficiency and innovation which

will help our Armed Forces stay at the cutting edge.

The Land Warfare Conference is the annual forum for Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Nicholas Carter, to discuss the global challenges facing land forces. This year's theme is Using Land Power Decisively in an Era of Constant Competition.

Yesterday, General Carter opened the conference with discussion about the value and future of land power in a changing, increasingly complex world. He challenged the conference to address issues of information warfare, recruitment training, and innovation to keep land forces relevant on the 21st Century battlefield.

General Sir Nicholas Carter said:

The global strategic context is complex and dynamic; indeed its defining condition seems to be one of instability. The pervasiveness of information is changing the character of conflict opening new ways for state and non-state adversaries to exploit ambiguity, blurring the boundaries of peace and war.

This conference has seen an impressive group of panel chairs, speakers and serving personnel tackling some of the key issues surrounding the utility of land power in this era of constant competition.

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Press release: Church Commissioner

Appointment: Loretta Minghella

The Queen has approved that Ms Loretta Caroline Rose Minghella, OBE be appointed First Church Estates Commissioner in succession to Sir Andreas Whittam Smith, CBE.

Background

Loretta has been Chief Executive of Christian Aid since 2010, with overall responsibility for its strategy, plans and programmes across the world. She has since overseen responses to emergencies such as earthquakes and typhoons, the refugee crises in the Middle East and Europe, and hunger and famine in East Africa. She has also led Christian Aid's long term development work and advocacy on major issues affecting the world's poorest people, including climate change.

Loretta is a lawyer by training who, after practising as a criminal litigator, began a career in financial regulation in 1990. The first Head of Enforcement Law, Policy and International Cooperation for the Financial Services Authority, she also chaired the International Organisation of Securities Commissions' Standing Committee on Enforcement and Information-Sharing.

In 2004, Loretta became Chief Executive of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme, in which capacity she oversaw the payment of over £21 billion in compensation to victims of bank and other financial failures. In recognition of her contribution in that role, she was awarded the OBE in the New Year's Honours 2010.

A trustee of the Disasters Emergency Committee and of St Georges House Trust (Windsor Castle), Loretta is a member of the Church of England's Ethical Investment Advisory Group and a Sarum Canon at Salisbury Cathedral. Loretta has a BA (Hons) in Law from the University of Cambridge.

She lives with her husband and two children in London and attends St Barnabas Church, Dulwich, where she is, in her own words, an 'enthusiastic if not talented' member of the choir.

The Justice Secretary must deal with the epidemic of violence, drugs,

overcrowding and understaffing in our Prisons – Burgon

Richard

Burgon MP, Labour's Shadow Justice Secretary, commenting on Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons' report on Birmingham prison which is published tomorrow, said:

"As the evidence of the Conservative-created crisis in our prisons continues to mount, the Queen's Speech shows the Government has given up trying to sort out their mess.

"The Justice Secretary must deal with the epidemic of violence, drugs, overcrowding and understaffing, which was left to fester over the election campaign. To help get a grip of the situation, Labour would recruit 3,000 prisons officers."