

News story: Defence Secretary praises 'good partners' Croatia during visit

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At the Ministry of Defence in London today they discussed Britain's bilateral relationship and explored ways the UK can work together with Croatia on joint activities.

The Defence agreement focuses on developing the UK-Croatian Defence relationship including focus on: existing joint operations to support stability, peace and security; effective deployments together on future international operations; and further opportunities and benefits for defence procurement and equipment support.

By signing the agreement the Defence Secretary has also confirmed the UK will hold annual Defence talks with Croatia, which will be held at policy director level.

This year Croatia is contributing to the NATO high readiness force which the UK is leading, by providing a platoon of Military Police and a Civil Military Co-operation Team. Croatia will also contribute to the German Enhanced Forward Presence in Lithuania.

Croatia has around 100 troops deployed on operations in Afghanistan, where 500 UK personnel are based in Kabul to provide officer training and wider assistance and advice.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

Croatia is a good partner of the UK with our Armed Forces' serving together within NATO in Afghanistan and in Europe. The UK will continue to play a leading role in NATO and I welcome Croatia's commitment to the high-readiness force that we are heading this year.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon and Croatia's Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Damir Krstičević signed a Defence agreement during the visit. Crown Copyright.

During their meeting the ministers also discussed the Defence Secretary's meeting with Croatian President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic in October and HMS Defender's visit to the port of Split last June.

The UK enjoys good relations with several states in southern and south eastern Europe. In September the Defence Secretary visited Bulgaria and

Albania as part of his regional engagement, and last month met UK personnel providing training to the Armed Forces in Ukraine.

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[Press release: Five guilty of illegally fishing in Nottinghamshire](#)

Fishing without a licence has landed five Nottinghamshire anglers with penalties totalling more than £3,500.

Shaun Ryan of Bentinck Close in Newark, Teresa Cotton of Bramerton Road in Nottingham, Sean Bosworth of Hanley Avenue in Nottingham, Robert White of Melbourne Road in Nottingham, and Miodrag Katin of Woolmer Road in Nottingham

were all guilty under Section 27(1)(a) of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975.

All were reeled in by Environment Agency bailiffs on regular patrols designed to catch unlicensed anglers in the act – and protect the sport for those who do follow the rules.

The five offenders were tried on Wednesday 1 February at Nottingham Magistrates Court. Fines totalled £2,750 but with costs and victim surcharges included, the five paid out penalties totalling £3,661.99. A rod licence currently costs from just £27.

Callum Underhill, Environment Agency enforcement officer, said:

Wednesday was a good day for the near-million anglers that fish legally every year, respecting each other and the sport. There really is no excuse – if you don't have a licence, pick one up from the Post Office or online before we pick you up.

It makes no sense to have the embarrassment of a court visit, a criminal conviction and a bill for potentially thousands of pounds when an annual licence is currently just £27. We think these cheats will think twice before picking up a rod illegally again and if they don't, our officers are ready and waiting.

The money from rod licence sales supports fish, fisheries and fishing, and protects the future of the sport. A small number of anglers refuse to buy a licence, cheating the sport and their fellow anglers.

For the minority who flout the rules, the most common offence is fishing without a valid licence, which could land them with a fine of up to £2,500 and a criminal record.

In 2015/16, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire enforcement officers checked 6,255 licences and reported 158 for fishing illegally, bringing in fines and costs totalling £45,517.

Last year in England, the Environment Agency checked more than 62,000 rod licences and prosecuted more than 1,900 anglers for rod and line offences, resulting in fines and costs in excess of £500,000.

Any angler aged 12 or over, fishing on a river, canal or still water needs a licence. A full rod licence costs from just £27 (concessions available) and is available from the Post Office either online or in a local branch, or by phoning 0344 800 5386.

Money from rod licence sales is invested in England's fisheries and is used to fund a wide range of projects to improve facilities for anglers including protecting stocks from illegal fishing, pollution and disease; restoring fish stocks through re-stocking; eradicating invasive species; and fish habitat improvements. Rod licence money is also used to fund the Angling Trust to

provide information about fishing and to encourage participation in the sport.

To help crack down on unlicensed fishing, the Environment Agency urges people to report illegal activity by calling its incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- Miodrag Katin, who was proved guilty in absence, was fined £660 and ordered to pay costs of £127, as well as a victim surcharge of £66, making the total penalty £853. Mr Katin was caught on 4 June 2016 on the River Trent at West Bridgford, Nottingham.
 - Robert White, who pleaded guilty, was fined £450 and ordered to pay costs of £127.47, as well as a victim surcharge of £45, making the total penalty £622.47. Mr White was caught on 23 July 2016 on the River Trent at Gunthorpe, Nottingham.
 - Sean Bosworth, who was proved guilty in absence, was fined £660 and ordered to pay costs of £127.47, as well as a victim surcharge of £66, making the total penalty £853.47. Mr Bosworth was caught on 12 July 2016 at Trent View Fishery, Hoveringham.
 - Teresa Cotton, who was proved guilty in absence, was fined £660 and ordered to pay costs of £127.47, as well as a victim surcharge of £66, making the total penalty £853.47. Ms Cotton was caught on 2 July on the River Trent at Colwick, Nottingham.
 - Shaun Ryan, who pleaded guilty, was fined £320 and ordered to pay costs of £127.47, as well as a victim surcharge of £32, making the total penalty £479.47. Mr Ryan was caught on 23 July 2016 on the River Trent at Gunthorpe, Nottingham.
 - All were found fishing for freshwater fish or eels with an unlicensed instrument in a place where fishing is regulated, contrary to Section 27(1)(a) of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975.
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News story: Recovering the cost of NHS treatments given to overseas visitors

New regulations requiring all hospitals to check upfront whether patients are eligible for free NHS treatment will be in place under plans to recover the cost of health treatments provided to patients not ordinarily resident in the UK.

Legal changes will require all hospitals to establish whether patients are eligible for free treatment, and to charge upfront those who are not eligible, for any non-urgent, planned care.

The law will change from April 2017 and this will play an important role in meeting the government's ambition to recover up to £500 million a year from overseas visitors who are not eligible for free care.

The new measures will also require hospitals and NHS bodies to identify and flag a patient's chargeable status so that other parts of the NHS can more easily recoup costs from overseas visitors wherever charges apply.

Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt said:

We have no problem with overseas visitors using our NHS – as long as they make a fair contribution, just as the British taxpayer does.

So today we are announcing plans to change the law which means those who aren't eligible for free care will be asked to pay upfront for non-urgent treatment.

We aim to recover up to £500 million a year by the middle of this Parliament – money that can then be reinvested in patient care.

Stephen Graves, Chief Executive Officer at Peterborough and Stamford Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, which piloted upfront charging for elective care, said:

Since implementing our policy, we have seen an improvement in our hospitals. The funds recouped are invested back into the system to benefit patients and our approach has not been to the detriment of the high quality patient care and patient experience we are able to provide.

There has not been any impact on the number of non-UK residents coming through the system for treatment but we do now identify non-eligible patients sooner, and at a higher volume than previously.

The government [consulted on extending charging rules to areas of NHS care](#) between December 2015 and March 2016. The consultation aimed to support the principle of fairness by making people who are not ordinarily resident in the UK pay for NHS care.

The government will provide support and guidance to the NHS so it can identify those not eligible for free care and address any challenges ahead of the implementation of new legal regulations.

NHS Improvement will also be working intensively over the coming months with trusts that have the most potential to recover costs.

[Press release: Patel: Syria progress at risk without new push in 2017](#)

International Development Secretary Priti Patel today warned that international efforts must be redoubled if the much needed humanitarian pledges made at last year's London Syria Conference are to be delivered. Her call came as the UK published the latest data tracking the progress of all major donors against their promises. Following a 2 day visit to Lebanon and Jordan, Ms Patel welcomed the progress made in getting children into school and Syrian refugees into work – the focus of the 2016 Conference.

That includes new training and job opportunities for tens of thousands of Syrian refugees and more than 75,000 children enrolled in schools in Lebanon and Jordan. New funding has also significantly exceeded the \$6 billion total promised for 2016 at the Syria Conference, with \$8 billion allocated last year. International Development Secretary Priti Patel said:

This time last year, the world came together in the face of a relentlessly brutal conflict and agreed to actions that would give hope to Syrian refugees. Alongside the life-saving emergency support UK aid provides we have prioritised opportunities for refugees to work and ensure a generation of Syria children were not denied an education.

I have seen for myself in Lebanon and Jordan how that approach is working. UK aid is saving and transforming lives while giving refugees a reason to remain close to home rather than risking their lives in the crossing to Europe.

But the job is only half done. It is now critical that donors deliver on their long-term funding pledges. The protracted crisis in Syria is the defining humanitarian challenge of our time and history will judge us if the international community does not

deliver on the support Syrian refugees and the region needs.

The International Development Secretary made clear that donors and host countries must significantly step up their efforts in 2017 to deliver on promises to create more than one million jobs and to ensure every child affected by the Syria crisis has the chance of an education. She has called for:

- donors to deliver predictable, multi-year funding so host countries can plan their long term response – that means ensuring the 2017 UN appeals are funded, but also providing new loans to support jobs and growth in the region
- governments in the region to work with key international financial institutions and UN agencies to develop a credible pipeline of job-creating projects
- host countries to complete the reform of their economies to support business creation, remove remaining legislative restrictions on work, and attract investment
- donors, NGOs and education providers to work with regional governments to improve the quality of education through support to teacher training, school management and standards
- more support to non-formal education, so children who have been out of school can catch up quickly before joining formal school
- the international community and host countries to jointly tackle barriers that are stopping children attending school, including child labour and adolescent marriage.

The Syria Conference was held in London on February 4th 2016 and co-hosted by the UK. Over the last year, the UK has pushed other donors to keep pace in responding to the crisis and to deliver on their promises. That includes the publication today of the second edition of the Pledge Tracker Report, produced by the UK and designed to hold donors to account for the financial promises they made at the Syria Conference.

Although the report shows that total funding pledges made at the Syria Conference have been exceeded, it also highlights that more than a fifth of donors have either not delivered on their promises or are spending the money but not reporting back in a co-ordinated way. The Pledge Tracker Report is intended to highlight such failings and bring pressure on non-compliant donors to address them.

Along with new funding exceeding the \$6 billion pledged, other key results in the 12 months since the Syria Conference took place on 4 February 2016 include:

- work permits issued to 37,000 Syrians in Jordan, nearly a tenfold increase in the last year
- an innovative pilot programme with SMEs in Lebanon to deliver jobs for refugees and the poorest Lebanese
- a UK-supported trade deal that will allow Jordanian exporters easier access to the EU market

- more than 75,000 children enrolled in schools in Jordan and Lebanon in 2016, as well as teacher training and an increase in school places
- more than half a million children inside Syria receiving formal primary or secondary education thanks to UK support
- loans and grants to help set up Special Economic Zones and provide refugees with training and job opportunities in Jordan.

Notes to editors

1. The new figures set out in today's report show that both the UK's own pledge of £510 million as well as the total \$6 billion promised by the international community as a whole for 2016 have been exceeded. The UK has spent £550 million and Conference donors have now allocated \$8 billion, \$6.2 billion of which has already been spent. The report can be seen on the [London Conference website](#).
2. The London Conference on Syria and the region took place on 4 February 2016 and was co-hosted by the UK, along with Germany, Kuwait, Norway and the United Nations. It brought together more than 60 countries and organisations, including 33 heads of state and Governments. In excess of \$12 billion was pledged by the international community – more than has ever been committed for a humanitarian crisis in a single day.
3. Historic 'Compact' agreements with Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan aimed to create at least 1.1 million jobs so that refugees have a livelihood closer to home, as well as creating jobs for local people and fuelling economic growth in the region. Refugee hosting countries agreed to ensure that no child missed out on the chance of an education as a result of the conflict, including a pledge to deliver education to all refugee and host community children in countries neighbouring Syria.
4. The UN has launched an \$8 billion appeal to meet humanitarian needs inside Syria and across the region in 2017, highlighting that the conflict in Syria remains one of the world's biggest humanitarian crises. It is vital that all donors not only fully deliver on their pledges to date, but step up with the new funding needed for 2017.