

**Session 2021-22**  
**No. 99**



**Thursday**  
**13 January 2022**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**  
**(HANSARD)**

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

**Written Statements .....1**

**Written Answers.....3**

[I] indicates that the member concerned has a relevant registered interest. The full register of interests can be found at <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-interests/register-of-lords-interests/>

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<b>Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon</b>	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
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<b>Lord Greenhalgh</b>	Minister of State, Home Office and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
<b>Lord Grimstone of Boscobel</b>	Minister of State, Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for International Trade
<b>Lord Kamall</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care
<b>Lord Offord of Garvel</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Scotland Office
<b>Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
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# Written Statements

Thursday, 13 January 2022

## Gibraltar: UK-EU Negotiations

[HLWS522]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** My Honourable Friend, the Minister for Europe (Chris Heaton-Harris), has made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

On 14 and 15 December 2021 the UK hosted a fourth round of negotiations with the European Union (EU) on Gibraltar, following previous rounds in December, November and October 2021.

Talks have been constructive and are making positive progress. Discussions have covered a range of issues within the Political Framework agreed between the UK Government, together with the Government of Gibraltar, and the Kingdom of Spain on 31 December 2020.

Ensuring the fluid movement of people between Gibraltar and the EU has been the key area of discussion. Other areas have included the movement of goods, law enforcement and criminal justice, transport, social security coordination, citizens' rights, and data protection.

Negotiations with the EU will continue in the coming weeks. The UK remains fully committed to seeking a treaty based on the careful and pragmatic balance achieved by the Political Framework. The UK has been clear we will not agree to anything which compromises UK sovereignty.

We are, of course, working closely with our Gibraltar friends for a solution that works for the people of Gibraltar so they can go about their business. The UK Government and Government of Gibraltar agreed our joint approach to negotiations at the UK-Gibraltar Joint Ministerial Council on 29 March 2021. Since then, we have and will continue to work closely together as discussions with the EU progress.

The UK Government and Government of Gibraltar have also continued work to ensure robust plans are in place for all eventualities, including a no negotiated outcome. While the Political Framework provides the route to a treaty it is only prudent to prepare for all eventualities.

In parallel to the UK-EU negotiations the UK Government, with the Government of Gibraltar, is maintaining a regular dialogue with the Kingdom of Spain.

In December, the Foreign Secretary travelled to Madrid to meet the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs José Manuel Albares to discuss strengthening the bilateral relationship between our two nations. The Ministers also welcomed the constructive nature of negotiations between the EU and the UK, reaffirmed their shared commitment to the Political Framework and agreed that it is in everyone's interest to conclude these talks in the first quarter of 2022. The UK looks forward to hosting the Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs on a visit to London in the coming weeks.

## Review of Intergovernmental Relations

[HLWS525]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** My Rt Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations (Michael Gove MP), has today made the following written statement:

Today the UK government has published an update on how the UK government and the devolved administrations intend to conduct formal intergovernmental relations with each other. All four governments have agreed to work under these new arrangements. I will be depositing the Review of Intergovernmental Relations in both House libraries.

The Review of Intergovernmental Relations, developed jointly by all four governments, provides an up-to-date and fit-for-purpose system, introducing new structures for more regular, formal intergovernmental engagement and new processes to increase impartiality and to avoid, resolve and, where necessary, escalate disputes. It is a commitment to a cooperative spirit and to constructive collaboration with the devolved administrations, through more transparent and accountable arrangements, and will be to the benefit of citizens in every part of the UK.

## Sanctions Regulations Report on Annual Reviews 2021

[HLWS523]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Today I am pleased to publish "The Sanctions Regulations Report on Annual Reviews 2021".

Section 30 of the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018 requires the Minister to annually review each set of sanctions regulations to assess whether they are still appropriate for the purpose stated in them. The Minister must lay before Parliament a report containing conclusions of the review, the reasons for those conclusions, and a statement of any action that that Minister has taken or proposes to take. The Sanctions Regulations Report on Annual Reviews 2021 meets the requirement of Section 30.

Since the end of the Transition Period, the UK has been pursuing an independent sanctions policy, driven by our foreign policy objectives and projecting the UK as a network of liberty and defender of human rights. As set out in the Integrated Review, the UK uses our sanctions regimes as part of an integrated approach to promote our values and interests, and to combat state threats, terrorism, cyber-attacks, and the use and proliferation of chemical weapons.

## UK-India Free Trade Agreement Negotiations

[HLWS521]

**Lord Grimstone of Boscobel:** My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for International Trade (Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP) has today made the following statement:

Today I am formally launching free trade negotiations between the UK and India from New Delhi, where I am meeting my Indian counterpart, Honourable Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal.

In line with our commitments to scrutiny and transparency, the Department for International Trade has published, and placed in the House libraries, more information on these negotiations. This includes:

- 1) The UK's strategic case for a UK-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA).
- 2) Our objectives for the negotiations.
- 3) A summary of the UK's public consultation on trade with India.
- 4) A scoping assessment, providing a preliminary economic assessment of the impact of the agreement.

A UK-India FTA would be a substantial opportunity for both of our economies and a significant moment in the UK-India bilateral relationship.

Trade negotiations are a priority for both countries and build upon the Enhanced Trade Partnership launched by Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in May 2021.

The UK-India bilateral trading relationship is already significant, amounting to over £23 billion in 2019, and both sides have agreed to double bilateral trade by 2030. The UK and India will seek to agree a mutually beneficial agreement supporting jobs, businesses and communities in both countries.

By 2050 India will be the third largest economy in the world. The size and growth of the Indian economy means a deal would unlock opportunities in every nation and region of the UK and across all parts of our economy. Tens of thousands of UK jobs are already supported by trade with India, and a trade deal has the potential to almost double UK exports to India, boost our total trade by as much as £28 billion a year by 2035, and boost wages across the UK by as much as £3 billion.

The opportunity is illustrated further by looking at some specific sectors. UK exports like Scotch whisky and cars currently face large duties of 150% and 125% respectively. A deal that removed these significant barriers to trade would make UK firms like car-makers in England's North East and whisky distilleries more competitive.

Services account for almost half of current exports to India and our analysis shows UK companies – from insurance providers, to construction firms, to financial services – are set to gain from a deal as India's economy continues to grow. This could include opportunities for companies that trade digitally, as the Indian government aims to have a trillion-dollar online economy by 2025 and increase internet access to more than 600 million people.

In addition, India's plan to rapidly expand offshore wind power generation is a major opportunity for the UK's world-leading renewable industry that could see UK wind turbines making a major contribution to helping the world reach net zero. UK exporters would benefit from a reduction of tariffs such as a 15% tax on certain wind turbine parts.

A deal with India would be a big step forward in the UK's strategy to refocus UK trade on the Indo-Pacific, where half the world's people live and 50% of global economic growth is produced. A new economic partnership with India, alongside UK membership of the Asia-Pacific trading bloc, the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), would create a pillar in the region supporting free and fair trade.

During negotiations, and on the path to a comprehensive agreement, both Governments will consider the option of an Interim Agreement that generates early benefits for both countries. In parallel to trade negotiations, the UK-India Joint Economic and Trade Committee will continue to work in improving the UK-India trading relationship and addressing market access barriers outside of a trade agreement.

The first round of FTA negotiations will begin on 17 January. As negotiations progress, I will ensure that Parliamentarians, UK citizens and businesses are provided with regular updates.

## VAT: Penalty Reform

[HLWS524]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** My right honourable friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Lucy Frazer) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

In Finance Act 2021, the Government legislated to reform penalties for late submission and late payment of tax, initially from 1 April 2022, and to align interest charges for VAT with other major taxes.

Today, I am announcing that these changes for VAT businesses will now be introduced 9 months later, on 1 January 2023.

HMRC is committed to becoming one of the most digitally advanced tax authorities in the world. The ambition and pace of change needs to be balanced with well-tested systems and good customer service, particularly when businesses are facing additional challenges and uncertainty.

This extra time allows HMRC to ensure the IT changes necessary for the new penalties and interest charges can be introduced as effectively as possible, ensuring a high standard of service to customers.

## Written Answers

Thursday, 13 January 2022

### Adrenaline: Medical Equipment

Asked by *Lord Black of Brentwood*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Commission on Human Medicines Public Assessment Report: Recommendations to support the effective and safe use of adrenaline auto-injectors, published on 11 November; and what steps they will take in response. [HL4252]

**Lord Kamall:** This report was commissioned by the Commission of Human Medicines (CHM), which is an independent advisory group to Ministers. The report and suggested actions, endorsed by the CHM, was accepted by Ministers ahead of the implementation of its recommendations.

While some recommendations have already been implemented, others are underway including changes to product labelling and improvements in adverse event reporting. Other recommendations, such as the availability of adrenaline auto-injectors, will require legislative amendment preceded by public consultation, to ensure that stakeholders are engaged and prepared before deployment.

### Bosnia and Herzegovina: Politics and Government

Asked by *Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to help support the (1) police, and (2) security, forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina given separatist threats. [HL5166]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The UK takes very seriously talk of secession and other threats to undo the progress of the last twenty-six years in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), and remains committed to helping BiH maintain lasting peace and stability. The EU stabilisation force, EUFOR, plays a vital role in safeguarding peace and security. Although the UK no longer participates in EUFOR following our withdrawal from the European Union, we liaise closely with Commander EUFOR and his team. We also support the NATO HQ in Sarajevo including through the secondment of UK staff officers, who are building the capacity of the BiH Armed Forces. At the NATO Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Riga, the Foreign Secretary called on Allies to enhance NATO's engagement on BiH. The UK will continue to support BiH in implementing domestic reforms and tackling challenges to peace and security.

### Embryos

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Lord Kamall on 2 November (HL3362) and 16 November (HL3662), why "information on the number of embryos produced, transferred, and confirmed pregnancies cannot be disclosed" for reasons of patient confidentiality, when the Written Answer from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Department of Health and Social Care on 15 April 2019 (241389) provided figures on the number of applications made, and approved, for mitochondrial donation techniques and the number of embryos discarded; whether there has been a change of policy regarding information about outcomes of pronuclear transfer or spindle-chromosomal complex transfer since 15 April 2019; and if so, (1) when that policy change was made, and (2) what were the reasons for that change. [HL4780]

**Lord Kamall:** In our Written Answer of 2 November 2021 to HL3362, the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) has advised that the information provided was incorrect. We have corrected the record through Written Ministerial Statement HLWS503 on 5 January 2022.

The HFEA advise that there has been no change of policy regarding information about outcomes of pronuclear transfer or spindle-chromosomal complex transfer. The HFEA publishes information which does not compromise patient confidentiality. All counts of less than five are not released as there is a significant possibility that when combined with other information which may be reasonably accessed, it could lead to the identification of a person to whom the HFEA owes a duty of confidentiality.

### Nigeria: Freedom of Expression

Asked by *Baroness Cox*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Nigeria about (1) the protection of freedom of speech and the press in that country, and (2) the imprisonment of journalist Luka Binniyat on 4 November 2021. [HL5102]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** The UK Government strongly believes that the rights of individuals and independent media to express opinions and peacefully challenge authority are essential to a free and open society, and we launched our media freedom campaign in 2018 to shine a global spotlight on media freedom. We regularly meet with the Government of Nigeria and the Nigerian National Human Rights Commission to discuss media freedom. Through our engagement we advocate for the protection of the rights

of journalists, and we will continue to do so. We are aware of the arrest of journalist Luka Binniyat and understand his case is ongoing. Officials at the British High Commission in Abuja are closely following developments.

### Northern Ireland Protocol: Trade

*Asked by Lord Kilclooney*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what has been the percentage change since (1) the UK withdrawal from the EU on 31 January 2020, and (2) the application of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland, in trade between Northern Ireland and (a) Great Britain and (b) the Republic of Ireland. [HL4483]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** Trade between Northern Ireland and Great Britain is not considered international trade and is, therefore, not captured in our official trade statistics.

As set out in the July 2021 Command Paper, the UK is clear that significant trade diversion is occurring and the thresholds for A16 safeguards have been met.

The percentage change in trade value since the UK withdrawal from the EU on 31 January 2020 and the current application of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland is devised using the Irish Government's Central Statistics Office (CSO) at the following link:

<https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/externaltrade/goodsexportsandimports/>.

According to the CSO, compared to the similar period from 2018 (February 2018 to October 2019), Irish exports and imports with Northern Ireland have increased by 18 per cent and 38 per cent respectively, since the UK withdrawal from the EU (February 2020 to October 2021).

According to the CSO, compared to the similar period from 2018 (January 2018 to October 2018), Irish exports and imports with Northern Ireland have increased by 44 per cent and 89 per cent respectively, since the application of the Protocol.

### Zimbabwe: Human Rights

*Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking, if any, in response to the petition highlighting the disenfranchisement of around five million Zimbabweans in the diaspora, which was presented at 10 Downing Street by the Zimbabwe Human Rights Organisation on 2 December 2021. [HL5134]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** We are aware of the petition submitted by the groups MyRight2Vote, Zimbabwe Human Rights Organisation, and Restoration of Human Rights Zimbabwe. The onus is on the Government of Zimbabwe to ensure that all citizens have the ability to vote in line with the constitution, section 67 of which states that "Every Zimbabwean citizen above 18 years has the right to vote secretly in elections". However, the UK continues to urge the Zimbabwean Government to fulfil their own constitution and their commitments to reform electoral laws.

### Zimbabwe: Voting Rights

*Asked by Baroness Cox*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the petition submitted by MyRight2Vote, Zimbabwe Human Rights Organisation, and Restoration of Human Rights Zimbabwe to the Prime Minister on 2 December 2021, what assessment they have made of the disallowance of Zimbabweans to vote in elections from outside of the country; and what representations they plan to make to the government of Zimbabwe to protect the democratic rights of its displaced peoples. [HL5104]

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** We are aware of the petition submitted by the groups MyRight2Vote, Zimbabwe Human Rights Organisation, and Restoration of Human Rights Zimbabwe. The onus is on the Government of Zimbabwe to ensure that all citizens have the ability to vote in line with the constitution, section 67 of which states that "Every Zimbabwean citizen above 18 years has the right to vote secretly in elections". However, the UK continues to urge the Zimbabwean Government to fulfil their own constitution and their commitments to reform electoral laws.

## Index to Statements and Answers

<b>Written Statements.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Gibraltar: UK-EU Negotiations.....	1
Review of Intergovernmental Relations .....	1
Sanctions Regulations Report on Annual Reviews 2021 .....	1
UK-India Free Trade Agreement Negotiations ....	1
VAT: Penalty Reform.....	2
<b>Written Answers.....</b>	<b>3</b>
Adrenaline: Medical Equipment.....	3
Bosnia and Herzegovina: Politics and Government .....	3
Embryos.....	3
Nigeria: Freedom of Expression.....	3
Northern Ireland Protocol: Trade .....	4
Zimbabwe: Human Rights.....	4
Zimbabwe: Voting Rights .....	4