



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office



**Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon
Minister of State (Middle East,
North Africa, South Asia,
Commonwealth and the UN)**

**Prime Minister's Special
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Lord Berkeley
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0AA

18 March 2024

Dear Lord Berkeley,

Thank you for your contributions during the Oral Statement on Ukraine on Thursday 29 February. I committed to looking further into UK support for transport infrastructure in Ukraine.

In June 2022, the Government announced that £10 million would be allocated to help restore railway infrastructure in Ukraine. This aid has now seen a crucial railway bridge repaired, with several more pre-pack bridges delivered from the UK, alongside hundreds of essential tools, pieces of equipment, and building materials, including six JCBs which have already been put to good use.

Numerous Ukrainian engineers were trained in the UK in the use of the donated equipment so it could be rapidly deployed on Ukraine's rail network, which has remained a critical lifeline for the military effort and its grain exports, as well as for evacuees. The Government is in close discussion with the Government of Ukraine about how to maximize their rail capacity and keep both trains and grain moving. Whilst most Ukrainian agricultural produce is now exported from Black Sea ports and via Danube routes, Ukraine is also exporting agricultural produce by rail via its EU neighbours. Since mid 2022, volumes exported have been 700,000 tonnes on average per month, mainly of grain.

The Government is also supporting Ukraine to maintain the resilience of its aviation and maritime sectors, which have been severely disrupted by the war. The Department for Transport is providing funding for Ukraine's Air Service Navigation Provider (ANSP) through its membership of the inter-governmental body EUROCONTROL. In 2023, EUROCONTROL established a Solidarity Fund for Ukraine's ANSP, to help it maintain its staffing and services, for when its airspace re-opens. The Government contributed £3.7 million in 2023, and a further £3.7 million in 2024. In addition, the Department for Transport is delivering a skills package for transport workers, including approximately £1.5 million for Ukrainians to train as merchant navy officers in the UK, and the provision of virtual reality training headsets for maritime students in Ukraine. More widely, the UK has supported Ukraine in successfully increasing its exports through the Black Sea, which are now at the highest volumes since the conflict began. In particular, a bespoke insurance package has been developed by a UK based insurer with Ukraine, with the support of the UK government. This facility has been a vital factor in significantly lowering premiums for commercial shipping using the corridor, encouraging shipping to use the route.

The UK government also welcome private sector support for Ukraine, including the donating of buses. In August 2023, First Bus donated two buses to take medical aid from the UK across Europe into Ukraine to the cities of Kyiv and Lviv. They were fully loaded up by the Plymouth Ukraine Medical Aid Group with medical aid for distribution across Europe and into Ukraine. We are aware of other creative donations of buses to support humanitarian objectives and encourage, where possible, second-hand equipment that is no longer used in the UK, to be donated to Ukraine to help rebuild communities.

Our support for Ukraine and its people is unwavering, and we will stand with them for as long as it takes.

I have placed a copy of the letter in the Library of the House.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

LORD (TARIQ) AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON

Minister of State

Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict