

## UK Foreign Secretary travels to Central Asia and Mongolia - London announces £50 million of new funding to support region's sovereignty

The UK Foreign Secretary David Cameron will visit Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Mongolia to as part of government ambition to increase engagement with this pivotal region of the world, Foreign Office reports. He will meet leaders across the region to deepen cooperation on shared challenges, from counter-terrorism to climate change.

He will use the visit to announce £50 million new development funding for the Central Asia and Eastern Neighbourhood region over the next 3 years. UK funding will not only boost regional growth and economic resilience but build trade and cooperation between the region and the UK.

Foreign Secretary will announce a new initiative by the British Council to promote the English language in Central Asia, with online teaching resources available to English teachers throughout the region, for the first time tailored with local content. He will double the amount of funding for Chevening scholarships, so more people can study at Britain's world-class universities. The visit will support British businesses in job creation and growth from Bridgend to Bishkek. The focus will be on British businesses that can provide sustainable, high-quality investments. The Foreign Secretary, David Cameron, said: "We live in a contested, competitive world. If you want to protect and promote British interests you need to get out there and compete. Central Asia is at the epicentre of some of the biggest challenges we face and it's vital for the UK and the region that we drive forward its future prosperity."

During the visit, the Foreign Secretary will visit an array of important sites including a hydro-electric project in Tajikistan, a canal irrigation site in Kyrgyzstan and a cultural site in Mongolia.

David Cameron is the first British Foreign Secretary to visit Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan and the first to Uzbekistan since 1997.

Foreign Office stresses that this week's visit underlines the UK government's ambition to increase engagement with this pivotal region, and is a crucial moment to drive forward British values, build geopolitical relationship and deliver opportunities for people in the region and the UK. //nCa, 22 April 2024