

Offshore accommodation merger raises competition concerns

The CMA has found that the proposed deal between Floatel and Prosafe raises competition concerns in the supply of offshore accommodation.

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The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has been investigating the proposed deal between Prosafe SE (Prosafe) and Floatel International Limited (Floatel). Both companies supply semi-submersible offshore accommodation support vessels (ASVs) – or ‘flotels’ – to oil and gas companies. These are used to provide accommodation, storage and working space for employees working offshore.

After completing its initial Phase 1 investigation, the CMA is concerned that the deal could reduce competition in the supply of ASVs for oil and gas projects on the UK continental shelf.

The CMA’s investigation has found that Prosafe and Floatel are the 2 largest suppliers in the market, owning the vast majority of semi-submersible offshore accommodation in North West Europe. They compete closely with each other and have consistently won the most contracts over time. Aside from the merging businesses, there are limited alternatives available to customers at present.

The CMA is therefore concerned that because of the deal, Prosafe and Floatel’s customers would face higher prices or lower quality offers when tendering for ASVs due to insufficient competition.

If the merging businesses are unable to address the CMA’s concerns, the deal will be referred for an in-depth Phase 2 investigation, to be carried out by a group of independent CMA panel members.

For more information, [visit the Prosafe SE/ Floatel International Limited merger case page](#).

Thailand: applications for UK government's prestigious Chevening Scholarships now open

Applications for Chevening Scholarships to study in the UK are open between 5 August and 5 November 2019.

National campaign to recruit 20,000 police officers launches today

A national campaign to recruit 20,000 new police officers is launched today (Thursday) – urging people to join the police and ‘Be a force for all’.

The police recruitment drive is the biggest in decades and follows the Prime Minister's commitment to increase police numbers over the next three years.

The Chancellor yesterday announced funding to support the recruitment of a first wave of up to 6,000 officers, who will be shared among the 43 forces in England and Wales. This includes £750 million for 2020-21 and an immediate £45 million to kick-start recruitment.

The remaining 14,000 will be recruited in the following two years, backed by government funding, and will be additional to officers hired to fill existing vacancies.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

Getting more police on our streets is an absolute priority and I'm delighted our recruitment campaign for 20,000 new officers is now under way.

I have been clear from day one I will give the police the resources they need and I am delivering on that commitment.

They have my full support and together we will cut crime, get criminals off the streets and keep people safe.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

One of the government's first actions was to commit to putting 20,000 new police officers on our streets, and the launch of today's campaign shows we've wasted no time in getting on with the

job.

Our police are the best in the world. They protect our people and communities and this government will ensure they are well resourced so they can tackle the crime on Britain's streets.

By bolstering the police's ranks we can help our dedicated officers tackle crime, protect communities and be a force for all.

The 'Be a force for all' campaign has been developed by the Home Office in partnership with the police and using feedback from the public via independent research.

It features serving police officers, including a neighbourhood officer, a police dog handler and a firearms officer. One of the officers started as a volunteer Special Constable, while another is a former charity executive who changed career.

They appear on billboards and digital displays at locations across England and Wales, including at shopping centres and railway stations, as well as in a radio advertisement.

A new website has also been set up to provide potential recruits with more information and direct them to the recruitment pages of local police forces.

A second phase of advertising is planned for the new year.

Martin Hewitt, Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council, said:

Today's recruitment campaign launch, and the government funding to deliver it, represents a significant opportunity for policing. This net increase in officers will help us provide a better service to the public, reduce crime, and ease the unprecedented pressure on our people. It will also help us to accelerate our plans to improve diversity in policing.

It also opens up the exciting opportunity for a career in policing to many more people. If you want a varied career and to make a positive difference in your community, policing could be for you. We want to attract people from a range of backgrounds with a range of skills who will complement the able, professional officers and staff currently working across policing to keep people safe.

Recruiting 20,000 officers over three years is unprecedented. It will require significant planning, but we are confident we can fulfil this commitment with the right resources and support from the government.

Katy Bourne OBE, Chair of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, said:

Police and Crime Commissioners welcome today's recruitment campaign launch. These additional officers will help our police forces to cut crime and deliver better outcomes for victims. We know that this is what the public want.

This is a huge opportunity for policing to deliver on behalf of all our communities. We will work to ensure the successful recruitment of these officers over the next three years.

A National Policing Board, chaired by the Home Secretary and bringing together government and police leaders, has been set up to oversee the recruitment drive and other major policing issues.

The Home Secretary has previously announced the Home Office is accelerating plans for a Police Covenant to ensure serving and former officers are treated with the respect they deserve.

The Home Office also extended a pilot relaxing conditions around the use of section 60 serious violence stop and search powers.

Meanwhile, police funding is increasing by more than £1 billion this year, including money raised from council tax and to tackle serious violence.

RFA Mounts Bay delivers aid to The Bahamas

The ship has distributed Department for International Development (DFID) relief items, including vital shelter kits. A rigid-hulled inflatable boat was deployed from RFA Mounts Bay this afternoon (04/09) with a dedicated Humanitarian and Disaster Relief team to join up with the Royal Bahamas Defence Force and unload vital aid to some of those who have been worst hit by the category five storm.

The ship has been in the Caribbean since June in preparation for the hurricane season and was re-tasked last week to sail to The Bahamas in anticipation of Hurricane Dorian, the strongest ever recorded in The Bahamas.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

The highly skilled crew and specialist equipment of RFA Mounts Bay have been on call since June to support our overseas territories and friends in the hurricane season.

Its Wildcat helicopter has begun conducting reconnaissance flights of The Bahamas to help assess the damage and the crew have begun

distributing UK aid. My thoughts remain with those affected and our world-class military will continue to assist the Bahamas Government to offer relief and aid to those who need it most.

International Development Secretary Alok Sharma said:

The images of devastation and destruction across The Bahamas are truly shocking. The clock is now ticking to get help to those in need, and I'm pleased that Mounts Bay has begun to deliver life-saving relief items to those in desperate need.

Sadly, we know all too well that hurricane season in the Caribbean can wreak this level of catastrophe, which is why we sent a team of DFID humanitarian experts and prepositioned water carriers, hygiene kits and shelter kits on-board.

RFA Mounts Bay has embarked a dedicated Humanitarian and Disaster Relief team, and is carrying vital aid and specialist equipment, such as all-terrain quads, dump trucks, diggers and stores. It also stores DFID water carriers, hygiene kits including basic items such as soap, and shelter kits. Since Hurricane Dorian hit, a liaison officer from the Royal Bahamas Defence Force and a DFID humanitarian expert have been onboard to help coordinate the relief efforts.

It also has a Wildcat helicopter that has been conducting reconnaissance flights over the islands to assess the damage and provide important intelligence to the Bahamian government and the team of DFID experts who have deployed to the region.

DFID's team is working alongside the Bahamian Government's National Emergency Management Agency and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency, as well as other international partners, to assess the damage caused by the hurricane, and to plan the response.

Commanding Officer RFA Mounts Bay, Captain Rob Anders, said:

RFA Mounts Bay has been working alongside The Bahamian National Emergency and Management Agency and US Coastguard personnel, using our Wildcat helicopter to conduct initial assessments on Abaco Island and we have landed reconnaissance troops ashore.

I am pleased to be able to use our people and equipment to send water and food ashore to provide aid to the Bahamian people.

We hope that our presence in the area in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Dorian will provide some peace of mind and reassurance to all those affected.