

[Social Security Advisory Committee: appointment of interim chair](#)

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[Cleaning chemicals firms' merger raises competition concerns](#)

The Competition and Markets Authority's (CMA) in-depth investigation has provisionally found that the merged organisation is likely to face limited competition from other suppliers. Ecolab and Holchem are two of the largest suppliers of cleaning chemicals to food and drink manufacturers in the UK. The merger will create a new organisation with a market share of 40-50%, much greater than any of the remaining competitors.

Both companies make and supply cleaning chemicals and technical support services for businesses that manufacture, process and package food, drink and dairy products. Access to competitively-priced, safe and effective cleaning chemicals and services is an important part of keeping food and drink safe and free from contamination.

The group of independent CMA panel members leading the inquiry has analysed a significant amount of data, including on customers and tenders which showed that they compete closely. The Group also conducted hearings with Ecolab and Holchem and sought views from customers.

Kirstin Baker, the Inquiry Chair said:

"We are concerned that as a result of this merger, prices will go up or quality standards in crucial support services will get worse. The Group has therefore provisionally concluded that the merger is likely to lead to a substantial lessening of competition."

The CMA is now inviting comments on both its provisional findings (by 27 August) and its possible remedies (by 13 August), including unwinding the deal.

Further details can be found on the [Ecolab/Holchem case page](#).

Ian Diamond appointed as UK's National Statistician

Her Majesty the Queen, on the advice of the Prime Minister, has appointed Professor Sir Ian Diamond as National Statistician. Sir Ian succeeds John Pullinger, who retired at the end of June.

The National Statistician is the Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, Permanent Secretary of the Office for National Statistics and Head of the Government Statistical Service. As Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir Ian will be an executive member of the Board of the UK Statistics Authority.

Sir Ian's career spans many areas of social and official statistics. Most recently, he served as Principal and Vice Chancellor of the University of Aberdeen, and prior to that held the role of Chief Executive of the Economic and Social Research Council. He is also a Fellow of the British Academy, Royal Society of Edinburgh and the Academy of Social Sciences.

Sir David Norgrove, Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, warmly welcomed Sir Ian's appointment:

I am delighted that we have appointed Sir Ian as the UK Statistics Authority's new Chief Executive and National Statistician. Ian brings with him enormous professional experience and particular expertise in census design and analysis.

I would like to record my warm thanks for John Pullinger's exemplary leadership of the Statistical Service over the last five years as National Statistician before his recent retirement. We have valued enormously John's professional wise counsel and wish him well for the future.

The Chief Executive of the Civil Service, John Manzoni, said:

I would like to congratulate Sir Ian on his appointment. With his considerable standing in the statistics community and talent for analysing large and complex data on population statistics, I am

sure he will provide strong direction for the UK Statistics Authority and Office for National Statistics.

I would also like to thank John Pullinger for his excellent work over the last five years and wish him all the very best for the future.

On the announcement of his appointment by Her Majesty the Queen, Sir Ian Diamond said:

The UK's statistical system is one admired world-over and it is an enormous privilege to have been appointed as the UK's National Statistician. I'm looking forward to building on the work of John Pullinger, as we make use of rich new data sources to deliver the data decision-makers across the UK need.

I'm particularly excited to be working with staff across the Office for National Statistics and the Government Statistical Service, as we empower our partners in Parliament, academia, business and beyond with trusted and quality data.

Foreign Secretary crosses the Atlantic to expand post-Brexit opportunities for Global Britain

Dominic Raab travels to Canada, the US and Mexico to ensure the UK seizes the global opportunities of the future.

Foreign Secretary crosses the Atlantic to expand post-Brexit opportunities for Global Britain

The Foreign Secretary and First Secretary of State Dominic Raab will travel to Canada, the United States of America and Mexico this week to ensure the UK seizes the global opportunities of the future. This North America tour follows the Foreign Secretary's visit to Bangkok last week where he met 20 foreign ministers from the Asia-Pacific region and more widely.

Ahead of the visit, the Foreign Secretary said:

In my first fortnight as Foreign Secretary, I'm travelling East and West to underline that the UK is determined to strengthen our friendships with countries across the world and raise our international horizons.

I'm determined that we fire up our economic relationships with non-European partners. That means working with them now to ensure a smooth transition of our trading arrangements after Brexit and means quickly moving to wide ranging trade deals that boost business, lower prices for consumers and respect our high standards.

I also want to build a stronger alliance to uphold international rule of law and tackle the issues that threaten our security whether that's Iran's menacing behaviour or Russia's destabilising actions in Europe, or the threat from terrorism and climate change.

Last week in Thailand, I met 20 Foreign Ministers from across Asia-Pacific and more widely to make the case for Global Britain. They were consistent in the warmth for Britain and desire to work more closely with us. This week I will cross the Atlantic to some of our oldest allies and a dynamic emerging market.

On his second major visit in as many weeks in office, the Foreign Secretary will visit: Canada – a close foreign policy partner that continues to invest heavily in the UK economy; the US – the UK's greatest ally and the country we trade with most; and Mexico – a fast growing emerging economy where the UK sees huge potential for intensified cooperation. Collectively the three represent £224.8 billion of annual bilateral UK trade with enormous potential for future expansion.

In Toronto (Tuesday 6 August), Washington (Wednesday 7 August) and Mexico City (Thursday 8 August) the Foreign Secretary will reiterate the UK Government's commitment to expanding existing collaboration on the global stage, including our joint commitment to the rules-based international order and greater coordination across our shared foreign policy priorities.

Further information