

News story: Statement on the Sky / Fox merger media public interest consideration process

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Karen Bradley, today confirmed that, following discussion with the parties, Ofcom, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) and the Propriety and Ethics Team in the Cabinet Office, she has written to the CMA and Ofcom extending the period within which they must report to her on the proposed merger.

As has been the case throughout this process, the Secretary of State has kept Parliament informed on progress of the proposed merger and intends to table a Written Ministerial Statement early next week on this issue. In the meantime, she has written to the speakers and leaders of both the House of Commons and House of Lords, the chair of the commons select committee (CMS), and the shadow culture secretary – these letters have been laid in the parliament library and are public.

Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Karen Bradley, said:

On Thursday 16 March I intervened in the proposed acquisition of Sky by 21 Century Fox on the media public interest grounds of media plurality and commitment to broadcasting standards by issuing a European Intervention Notice (EIN).

The EIN triggered the requirement for Ofcom to assess and report to me on the public interest grounds specified and for the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to report to me on jurisdiction. I required Ofcom and the CMA to provide their reports to me in response to the EIN by Tuesday 16 May. Once these reports are received, my decision-making role in this process would resume.

Given the proximity of this decision to the forthcoming general election and following discussions with the parties, Ofcom, the CMA and the Cabinet Office Propriety and Ethics team, I wrote to Ofcom and the CMA on Friday 21 April to extend the period by which these reports should be submitted to Tuesday 20 June.

Notes to editors

1. Sky Plc announced on Friday 9 December that it had received an approach from 21 Century Fox (21CF) to acquire the 61% share of Sky Plc which it does not already own.
2. The Secretary of State confirmed, in a statement to both Houses of Parliament on 16 March that she had issued a European Intervention Notice (EIN) on the media public interest grounds of media plurality and commitment to broadcasting standards.

3. The original EIN required Ofcom and the CMA to provide reports to the Secretary of State by Tuesday 16 May. The revised deadline is Tuesday 20 June and is expected to fall after the State Opening of Parliament
4. The General Election was called on Tuesday 18 April and will take place on Thursday 8 June. The purdah period begins at midnight on Friday 20 April.
5. For further information please contact the DCMS press office on 0207 2112210