

## **News story: Human Rights Minister marks World Day against the Death Penalty**

On World Day Against the Death Penalty, we reaffirm the UK's strong opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances.

It is over fifty years since the UK government abolished the death penalty. We believe its use undermines human dignity, that there is no conclusive evidence of its deterrent value, and that any miscarriage of justice leading to its imposition is irreparable.

More than 140 members of the United Nations have renounced capital punishment in law or practice. The death penalty is steadily becoming the exception rather than the norm.

We urge all states that retain the death penalty to move towards abolition. We will continue to work through our diplomatic network and with international experts to support those striving for reform of the death penalty and to make the case to those only at the beginning of that journey.

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## **Press release: Lord Deben and Paul Johnson reappointed to Committee on Climate Change**

The Committee provides independent advice to government and Parliament on reducing UK emissions and preparing for the impacts of climate change.

Lord Deben has led the Committee since 2012. His 5-year term, due to end this year, has been extended for a further 5 years until September 2022.

Paul Johnson's 5-year term, which also concludes this year, has been similarly extended for a further 5 years until 2022.

The reappointments were made by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), the Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, and agreed by the devolved governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Claire Perry, Minister for Climate Change and Industry, said:

I welcome the reappointment of Lord Deben as Chairman of the

Committee on Climate Change and of Paul Johnson as Committee Member.

The UK was the first country to introduce legally binding emission reduction targets under the Climate Change Act and we have led the G7 group of countries in cutting our emissions, while growing our economy by more than two-thirds since 1990. The independent advice provided by Lord Deben, Paul Johnson and the entire Committee will help us continue to lead the world in clean growth.

Commenting on his reappointment, Lord Deben said:

Britain is a leader in the world's battle against climate change and I am delighted and honoured to continue as Chairman of the Committee.

Since 2012, amongst many other tasks, the CCC has advised government on the fourth (2023 to 2027) and fifth (2028 to 2032) carbon budgets, advised the devolved administrations on emission reduction targets and reported to Parliament annually on UK progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

1. The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) is the independent statutory body established under the Climate Change Act (2008) to advise the UK government on building a low-carbon economy and preparing for climate change. Further information about the CCC is available at: [www.theccc.org.uk](http://www.theccc.org.uk).
2. Lord Deben was the UK's longest-serving Secretary of State for the Environment (1993 to 1997) and has held several other high-level ministerial posts, including Secretary of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1989 to 1993). He has consistently championed the strong links between environmental concerns and business interests. He also runs Sancroft, a corporate responsibility consultancy working with blue-chip companies around the world on environmental, social and ethical issues. In addition, Lord Deben is Chairman of Valpak Limited and Chairman of The Personal Investment Management and Financial Advice Association.
3. Paul Johnson has been Director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) since January 2011. He is also currently visiting professor in the Department of Economics at University College London. Paul has worked and published extensively on the economics of public policy, with a particular focus on income distribution, public finances, pensions, tax, social security, education and climate change. As well as a previous period of work at the IFS his career has included spells at HM Treasury, the Department for Education and the Financial Services Authority (FSA).

Between 2004 and 2007 he was deputy head of the Government Economic Service. Paul is also a member of the Banking Standards Board and of the executive committee of the Royal Economic Society. He was an editor of the Mirrlees Review of the UK tax system.

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## [News story: History of MOD in space](#)

But as long ago as 1918, when the predecessor of Dstl (the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory), the Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE), was based at Farnborough, and the space race hadn't been thought of, the RAE – working for the Ministry of Defence (MOD) – was at the forefront of rocket science research and development.

Launchers and rockets from the Skylark and Black Arrow were launched into Low Earth Orbit (LEO) from as early as 1957, with increasingly heavy payloads. By 1962, satellite technology was at an experimental phase, looking into the effects of the atmosphere and the ionosphere on the newest satellite technology.

Early prototype materials like silicon solar cells and gas-jets were tested from the 1970s, and the Skynet satellite systems – which provided military communications support at home and overseas – began in 1969. The Skynet system was so successful that successive developments of the original were launched into LEO until 2012. Infrared telescopes and new solar panels, or cells, were brought from concept to use, and geolocation – which GPS systems used in applications such as satnav now rely on – was then developed.

When the Russians launched Sputnik 1 and then 2, the UK and its cold war allies were watching them, initially with an early radar system from RAF Lasham in Hampshire, which was processed at RAE Farnborough, by the Space Group, which is now part of Dstl.

The Space Object Identification Programme began in RAE Special Systems Department in 1982. The techniques developed at RAE used Inverse Synthetic Aperture Radar (ISAR) to produce high resolution images of space objects using ground-based radar data. The Programme continued to provide valuable imaging data until 2001.

The Dstl Space Programme began in 2014 and has just been [relaunched with an injection of £50 million](#) over the next 5 years. The programme will continue to build on the historic achievements by Dstl's predecessors, working on further research into the space environment for the defence and security of the UK.

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## [News story: Home Office to review air weapons regulation in England and Wales](#)

The government is to review the regulation of air weapons licensing, following a request from the Suffolk coroner.

Speaking in an adjournment debate in the House of Commons, Minister for Policing and the Fire Service Nick Hurd said:

I have recently written to the coroner and confirmed my intention to review the regulation of air weapons in England and Wales. I think that this is an appropriate time to take stock of the regulatory position and assess whether the current controls, which are already strong, continue to be appropriate and effective.

I intend to look carefully at the existing controls on air weapons, including how best to ensure that these weapons are stored safely and securely.

I think that a review of air weapon regulation is important and timely, we will do so against a backdrop of existing controls that are, by all international comparisons, very robust.

The debate was secured by Bristol South MP Karin Smyth after the serious injury in her constituency of 18-month-old Harry Studley in July last year, who was shot with an air rifle by a neighbour.

That incident followed the case of Benjamin Wragge, aged 13 from Suffolk, who died in May 2016 after he was accidentally shot with an air weapon. Her Majesty's Senior Coroner for Suffolk, Dr Peter Dean, wrote to the Home Office requesting a review of legislation covering the use and manufacture of air weapons, with a view to preventing similar tragedies occurring in the future.

During the debate last night, the Minister confirmed he would be meeting Benjamin Wragge's family later this year to listen to their views.

The Home Office will determine the detail and scope of the review and, today (10 October), has published a revised edition of the Home Office [guidance leaflet](#) for air weapons users.

The leaflet will be available online and will also be distributed to readers of Airgun World and Airgunner. It advises on the laws and safety procedures to which all air weapon owners must adhere.

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# [Press release: Fox/Sky: CMA publishes statement of issues for investigation](#)

The CMA has set out more detail about what it intends to examine in its investigation into the proposed takeover of Sky Plc by 21st Century Fox.

On 20 September, Karen Bradley, the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport referred Fox's proposed takeover of Sky to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) on public interest grounds.

The CMA will now examine how the deal would impact media plurality and broadcasting standards in the UK.

The [issues statement](#) sets out the proposed approach to assessing the impact of the merger. Anyone wanting to provide submissions is invited to do so based on the areas and questions outlined in the issues statement.

The CMA is required to report to the Secretary of State with its recommendations within 6 months of opening the investigation.

Anne Lambert, Panel Chair, said:

Today we set out the scope of our investigation and the issues on which we will focus.

We now invite submissions on these specific matters so we can thoroughly examine the relevant evidence.

The CMA will use its extensive experience of investigating different issues in a wide range of sectors to thoroughly and impartially investigate the proposed takeover of Sky Plc by 21st Century Fox.

Once the investigation is complete we will report back to Karen Bradley for her to make a final decision.

## **Notes to editors**

1. The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer law.

2. The CMA has appointed an investigation group, which is responsible for providing the Culture Secretary with the CMA's final report. This will be chaired by [Anne Lambert](#). The other panel members are [Sarah Chambers](#), [John Krumins](#) and [Tim Tutton](#). All the appointees are chosen from the CMA's expert independent [panel members](#), who come from a variety of backgrounds including public policy, business, economics and law.
3. A [timetable](#) for the 6-month investigation has been published on the merger investigation page. This sets out all steps and provisional deadlines until the final report, including the timeline for submissions from third parties.
4. Submissions referring to competition issues arising from the merger will not be considered as these have already been investigated by the European Commission and cleared.
5. Media queries should be sent to: [press@cma.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:press@cma.gsi.gov.uk) or journalists can call 07774 134814.
6. Anyone wanting to submit evidence is advised to read the [case page](#) and [issues statement](#) and follow the instructions set out on these pages.