

# Foreign Secretary visits Cambodia to strengthen bilateral ties and cooperation on global challenges

In his first visit to Cambodia, the Foreign Secretary has met Foreign Minister Prak Sokhonn, to set out the UK's ambition for the UK to become an 'ASEAN Dialogue Partner', ahead of Cambodia taking up the Chair of ASEAN in 2022.

Dominic Raab has also met Environment Minister Say Sam Al to discuss climate change and Cambodia's COP26 aspirations.

Speaking in Cambodia, Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, said:

This year marks 30 years since the UK reopened our Embassy in Cambodia and I am struck by the progress the country has made from its thriving business' to standards of education and healthcare.

I look forward to building on these foundations, as Cambodia takes on the important role of ASEAN Chair next year.

ASEAN Dialogue Partnership would allow the UK to further strengthen relations with ASEAN countries, based on shared interests, constructive engagements, and mutual benefits, which can contribute to ASEAN's Community building and development cooperation efforts.

Yesterday while in Hanoi, the Foreign Secretary delivered opening remarks at the 5th ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) on the UK's ambitions for its "Indo-Pacific tilt" to an audience of more than fifty countries.

In attendance were several regional foreign ministers, including Vietnam's Foreign Minister Son, Singaporean's Foreign Minister Balakrishnan, Cambodian Foreign Minister Sokhonn, Laos' Foreign Minister Kommasith, Korea's Foreign Minister Chung, as well as the European Union's High Representative Borrell, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov and Portugal's Vice Foreign Minister, Zacarias.

The latest photographs from the Foreign Secretary's visit to South East Asia can be viewed on [Flickr](#).

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# Secretary of State Oliver Dowden: It's time to level up Britain's screens

Think of the last TV show you recommended to a friend. In my house, we're hooked on *Spiral*, the French police procedural. In the office, all the talk is about *Mare of Easttown*.

Whatever your choice, I'll bet you didn't switch on your TV and watch it live, alongside millions of others. When *Line of Duty* drew record-breaking live viewing figures earlier this year, it was a rare exception to the new broadcasting rule. Traditional viewing habits are dead. We now live in a world of smart TVs and streaming sticks, catch-up and on-demand; of that nightly dilemma between Netflix, BBC iPlayer, or Amazon Prime.

It's a golden age for TV – and I want to keep it that way. But to do that, we need the healthiest broadcasting landscape: one that is diverse, free and pluralistic. One where streamers can keep churning out brilliant shows, while traditional public service broadcasters retain their place at the centre of the UK's media ecosystem.

Right now, UK broadcasters are holding their own. Production studios are packed. The BBC and Channel 4 have put out two of the most critically-acclaimed shows of recent years, *I May Destroy You* and *It's A Sin*.

But our broadcasters can't do it alone – and they certainly can't compete in a digital world while operating under analogue rules.

So in the Autumn, I plan to bring forward a White Paper on the future of broadcasting, and how we can make it fit for the 21st century.

First, we need to level the playing field, and address one blatant disparity forcing traditional broadcasters to compete with one hand tied behind their backs. Every "linear" broadcaster – BBC, Sky, etc. – has to comply with stringent content and audience protection standards.

You might assume the same is true of video-on-demand services like Amazon Prime and Disney+. You'd be wrong. Of course, some have done an admirable job of introducing their own procedures – such as Netflix's voluntary age ratings partnership with the BBFC. But this is all on an ad-hoc and inconsistent basis.

So this summer we will consult on whether it's time to set the same basic rules for video-on-demand services as we do for traditional broadcasters.

The White Paper will also set out proposals on how we make sure public service broadcasters are given sufficient visibility – aka "prominence" – on different online platforms, and ensure viewers can continue to find and access original and high-quality British content.

Amidst all this TV upheaval, it's time to consider the long-term future of

one broadcaster in particular: Channel 4. When Channel 4 joined the airwaves in 1982, there were just three other terrestrial TV stations, and there was a lively debate about how to put the latest available set of bandwidths to best use. The main reason Channel 4 won that competition and was set up as a publicly-owned, commercially-run station was to provide greater choice.

Four decades later, choice is no longer an issue. Commercial satellite and digital terrestrial TV had already pushed channel numbers into the hundreds before the big online streamers exploded onto our screens.

Channel 4 has delivered on its remit since being established, and has done an excellent job in managing the recent market upheaval.

But this is 2021, not 1982 – and the broadcasting landscape has changed beyond all recognition.

I want to make sure Channel 4 thrives for another 40 years, and so I believe it's time to seriously consider changes to its current public ownership model. That model severely restricts Channel 4's ability to access capital and compete with commercial broadcasters by investing in technology and programming.

In order to secure its long-term success, this summer I will consult on the sale of Channel 4 – and I will be proceeding on the basis that an alternative ownership model (but one where it keeps its public service remit) may be better for the broadcaster, and better for the country. Private investment would mean more content, more jobs – and a more sustainable future for Channel 4.

In an era of fake news and huge technological change, we need trusted and respected media providers more than ever. We're taking steps to make sure they keep their place at the heart of British broadcasting, whatever the future holds.

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## [UK signs agreement to support enhancement of Ukrainian naval capabilities](#)

Minister for Defence Procurement Jeremy Quin and First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Tony Radakin were joined by Deputy Minister of Defence of Ukraine, Oleksandr Myroniuk, on the Type 45 Destroyer, where the Memorandum of Implementation (MOI) was signed.

Building on the agreement signed on HMS Prince of Wales in October 2020, the two nations and their industrial partners will now push Ukrainian naval

capabilities enhancement projects (UNCEP) forward.

These projects will include; the introduction of new capabilities through the delivery of new naval platforms and defensive shipborne armaments, the training of Ukrainian Navy personnel, the creation of new naval bases, and the purchase of two Sandown class mine countermeasure vessels.

**Signing the MOI on behalf of the UK, Minister for Defence Procurement Jeremy Quin said:**

The UK and Ukraine have a close defence relationship, and we continue to strengthen this partnership to help deter shared threats.

I am delighted that British and Ukrainian industry will work together on these projects, which will provide world-leading capabilities and provide opportunities for both our nations to boost our shipbuilding enterprises.

Babcock International will lead British and Ukrainian industrial partners to assist the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence in delivering these projects, with funding made available by UK Export Finance (UKEF).

**The Ukrainian Ministry of Defence said:**

Ukraine and the UK are good friends and allies. Today's Memorandum gives a new impetus to our co-operation in naval industry and will facilitate further development of the Ukrainian Navy. We appreciate the British support and value your experience.

Contractual work will now begin to implement the following projects:

- Missile sale and integration on new and in-service Ukrainian Navy patrol and airborne platforms, including a training and engineering support package.
- The development and joint production of eight fast missile warships.
- The creation of a new naval base on the Black Sea as the primary fleet base for Ukraine and a new base on the Sea of Azov.
- Babcock will participate in the Ukrainian project to deliver a modern frigate capability.

- A Government to Government sale of two refurbished Sandown class mine countermeasure vessels.

**David Lockwood, CEO Babcock International said:**

We are very proud to support Ukraine with their Naval Capabilities Enhancement Programme. This marks the beginning of a new international relationship for Babcock, bringing together our new ship capability, our infrastructure and support capability and our new strong relationship with the UK Government. I know that we can bring our collective experience and knowledge together to achieve some really great things.

Our strengthened relationship with the UK Government has been instrumental in underpinning this significant agreement which is supported by UK Export finance and we continue to work with them on a number of international opportunities.

The UK and NATO are committed to Black Sea regional security, stability and prosperity, and to Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, which is exemplified by HMS Defender's visit to the port of Odesa as part of the UK's Carrier Strike Group deployment.

During the visit by Ministers a trilateral exercise between the UK, Ukraine and the US took place on board the ship, showcasing our support to maritime capability development and interoperability.

The UK enjoys a strong bilateral relationship with Ukraine and is committed to securing its security. Since 2015, the UK has trained over 21,000 Armed Forces of Ukraine personnel in medical skills, logistics, counter improvised explosive devices (C-IED), leadership, planning and infantry tactics as part of Operation Orbital and the UK-led Maritime Training Initiative.

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## **CMA secures landmark commitments for leaseholders**

Press release

The CMA has secured formal commitments from leading companies as part of its ongoing work to tackle issues in the leasehold sector.



- Aviva to remove ground rent terms the CMA considers unfair and repay homeowners who saw rents doubled
- Persimmon Homes to offer leasehold house owners the opportunity to buy the freehold of their property at a discounted price
- As part of its ongoing investigation into the leasehold sector, CMA warns sector to review their practices in light of its action

Aviva has committed to remove certain terms from its leasehold contracts which cause ground rents to double, and Persimmon will now offer leasehold house owners the opportunity to buy the freehold of their home at a discounted price.

The move comes after the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) launched [enforcement action against 4 housing developers in September 2020](#). In connection with this action, the CMA has also been investigating several investment firms that bought a large number of freeholds from 2 of these developers and continued to use these same ground rent terms.

The commitments signed by Aviva and Persimmon – known formally as ‘undertakings’ – mean they have now agreed to the following:

- Aviva will remove from leasehold contracts certain clauses which were doubling the ground rents payable by leaseholders. It will also remove terms which were originally doubling clauses and have been converted into RPI-based ground rent terms. Doubling clauses that cause ground rents to double every 10 to 15 years mean people can often struggle to sell or mortgage their homes. They can also affect leaseholders’ property rights. Where Aviva is the current freeholder, those leaseholders’ ground rents will revert to the original amount – i.e. when the property was first sold – and this will not increase over time.
- Aviva has also agreed to repay homeowners who were affected by these doubling ground rent clauses. This means that, where ground rents had increased, people will be refunded the excess money they had paid over this time.
- Persimmon will offer leasehold house owners the option to buy the freehold of their property at a discount, better reflecting what they expected when they originally bought their house. It will also make repayments to certain homeowners who have already purchased their freeholds. This addresses concerns raised by consumers with the CMA, and local Trading Standards, that they were led to believe they could buy

their freehold at a certain price, only to find out later that this price had increased by thousands of pounds with no warning. It also means those individuals who have already bought their freehold will receive a refund, meaning they don't miss out.

- Persimmon has also agreed to extend the timeframe that prospective buyers are given to exchange contracts after reserving a property, and to provide people with more upfront information about the annual costs of buying a home. This addresses concerns that the 'reservation period' – i.e. the period of time during which a potential buyer must take a number of steps to progress the purchase – is too short and can pressure the buyer into making a decision, and that more information is needed up-front for consumers to make purchasing decisions.

Andrea Coscelli, Chief Executive of the CMA, said:

This is a real win for thousands of leaseholders – for too long people have found themselves trapped in homes they can struggle to sell or been faced with unexpectedly high prices to buy their freehold. Now, they can breathe a sigh of relief knowing things are set to change for the better.

It's good that Aviva and Persimmon have responded positively to this investigation, enabling these issues to be fixed for leaseholders. But our work isn't done. We now expect other housing developers and investors to follow the lead of Aviva and Persimmon. If not, they can expect to face legal action.

Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick said:

The Government asked the CMA to conduct this investigation – and I welcome their efforts to bring justice to homeowners affected by unfair practices, such as doubling ground rents, which have no place in our housing market.

This settlement with Aviva and Persimmon is a hugely important step and demonstrates our commitment to support existing leaseholders who may have been mis-sold properties.

We have also introduced new legislation that will protect future homeowners by restricting ground rents in new leases to zero and I would strongly urge other developers to follow suit in amending their historic practices.

The CMA has also written to the investment groups Brigante Properties, and Abacus Land and Adriatic Land, setting out its concerns and requiring them to remove doubling ground rent terms from their contracts. They now have the opportunity to respond to the CMA's detailed concerns and avoid court action by signing undertakings to remove such terms.

For more information on the CMA's review of the leasehold sector and for future updates, please visit the [leasehold case page](#).

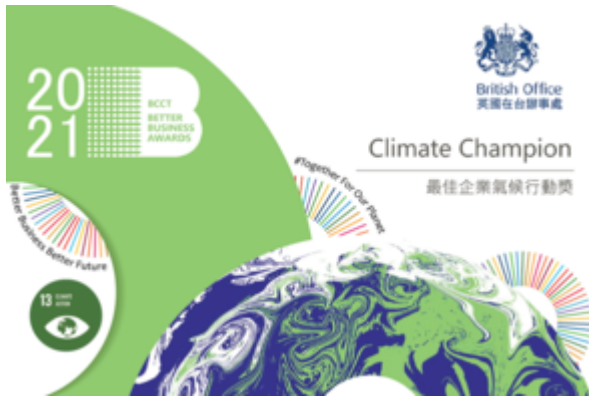
1. These undertakings have been provided to the CMA voluntarily and without any admission of wrongdoing or liability. It should not be assumed that the firms had breached the law – only a court can decide whether a breach has occurred.
2. For people who own, or are looking to buy, a leasehold property, [the CMA has produced written and video guidance](#), which offers advice on a number of issues, including what people can do when faced with fees and charges they consider unjustified.
3. The 4 housing developers within the scope of the CMA's investigation are Countryside Properties and Taylor Wimpey, for using potentially unfair contract terms, and Barratt Developments and Persimmon Homes over the possible mis-selling of leasehold properties.
4. The investment groups being investigated are Aviva, Abacus Land and Adriatic Land (in particular Abacus Land 1 (Holdco) Limited, Abacus Land 4 Limited, Adriatic Land 1 (GR3) Limited), and Brigante Properties. These firms bought leasehold contracts from 2 of the developers under investigation: Countryside and/or Taylor Wimpey.
5. The CMA's investigation into Countryside, Taylor Wimpey and Barratt Developments – and the named investment groups other than Aviva – is ongoing, and it should not be assumed that they have breached the law.
6. The main provisions of consumer protection legislation relevant to the CMA's concerns about ground rent terms are the Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Regulations 1999 (UTCCRs), for contracts entered into before 1 October 2015, and Part 2 of the Consumer Rights Act 2015 (CRA), for contracts entered into on or after 1 October 2015. The UTCCRs and Part 2 of the CRA aim to protect consumers against unfair contract terms, and require contract terms to be fair and transparent.
7. The main provisions of consumer protection legislation relevant to the CMA's concerns about mis-selling are the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs). The CPRs aim to protect consumers from unfair commercial practices such as the misleading provision or omission of information as part of sales processes.
8. As an enforcer under Part 8 of the Enterprise Act 2002, the CMA cannot impose administrative fines for breaches of this consumer protection legislation, but it can enforce the legislation through the courts, and where appropriate, obtain additional measures to improve consumer choice, drive better compliance with the law, or obtain redress for consumers.
9. The CMA's investigation of potential mis-selling of leasehold properties has benefitted from the support of several local Trading Standards offices which have been the focal point for some consumers to raise their concerns.
10. Persimmon has a current scheme for leasehold house owners to buy their freehold. The undertakings it has signed with the CMA mean leaseholders will be able to buy their freehold at a discount to the price under that scheme. People who purchased under the existing scheme may be entitled to a repayment.



## [British Office Taipei invites Climate Champion Award applications](#)

### World news story

In recognition of the efforts made by enterprises to tackle climate change, the British Office in Taipei today launches its Climate Champion Award.



The British Office Climate Champion Award is one of the British Chamber of Commerce in Taipei (BCCT)'s annual Better Business Awards (BBA). It is open to companies with operations in Taiwan that have taken significant steps to reduce their carbon footprint and have acted as a climate leader. Such steps include raising awareness with stakeholders, working with supply chains to reduce emissions, or introducing methods to reduce their carbon footprint or joining specific climate-related initiatives.

This is the first award of its kind that the British Office has supported. We will highlight one company in Taiwan that has taken a leadership role on climate and embedded climate action into all aspects of its business operations.

John Dennis, British Representative in Taipei said:

"The UK is leading the international business community in reducing emissions and tackling climate change, with well over a third of the UK's largest companies now signed up to the United Nation's [Race to Zero campaign](#), which encourages businesses to pledge to cut their emissions to net zero by 2050 or sooner. The British Office Climate Champion Award will recognise those companies who are leading the way in Taiwan and, we hope, will inspire others to raise their climate ambition."

The deadline for submission of applications is 6 August 2021. Full details on

the application process of [Climate Champion Award](#) are on the BCCT Better Business Awards website. The award will be presented at the BCCT's annual Better Business Awards on 29 September 2021 and the winner will be promoted through the HM Government channels as the British Office's climate champion.

### **More information**

1. CSR
2. Social Enterprise
3. Diversity
4. Business Leader of the Year
5. Green Energy
6. Climate Champion
7. Digital Innovation for Wellbeing.

Published 23 June 2021