

New Trade Commissioner for LATAC announced

Press release

International Trade Secretary, Liz Truss, appoints Jonathan Knott as a new HM Trade Commissioner (HMTc)



As the UK announces its intention to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), International Trade Secretary Liz Truss, appoints Jonathan Knott as the new HMTc for Latin America and the Caribbean region, to champion British trade with important economic partners in the region.

As HMTc for the LATAC region and Consul General São Paulo, Jonathan will look to grow trade and investment between the UK and Latin America and the Caribbean, as the UK moves forward with its new independent trade policy. Joining CPTPP would see the UK deepen its access to fast-growing markets and major economies including Mexico, Chile and Peru.

Jonathan joins the Department for International Trade (DIT) from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), where he was most recently British Ambassador to Poland and Director of the UK government's Central Europe Network. Jonathan speaks 5 languages including Spanish, Portuguese and French.

Secretary of State for International Trade Liz Truss said:

I am delighted to welcome Jonathan to his new role, he brings a wealth of experience and expertise working with international partners and promoting the UK overseas.

The LATAC region has enormous opportunities for UK businesses and is home to some of the largest economies in the world.

HMTC Jonathan Knott said:

I am thrilled to be appointed as Her Majesty's Trade Commissioner for Latin America and the Caribbean. We already enjoy a strong relationship with the region, and I look forward to building on this. My focus in this new role will be to create more opportunities for our countries to forge deeper trading ties and helping our businesses recover from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The UK will be taking a leading role in promoting the benefits of free and fair trade, including at the WTO, our potential future membership of CPTPP, and pushing the global climate agenda through our COP26 Presidency this year. I look forward to working closely with our friends and partners across the LATAC region.

The UK enjoys a thriving trade and investment relationship with countries across the Caribbean and Latin America. Total trade between the UK and LATAC was £26.3 billion in the year to Q3 2020.

Published 19 February 2021

UK government welcomes the European Commission's draft data adequacy decisions

- Today's draft decisions follow months of discussions and pave the way for continued free flow of data between the EU and the UK
- The UK now urges the EU to fulfil its declared commitment to complete the technical approval process swiftly, so that we have final data adequacy decisions as soon as possible
- This will provide certainty for businesses, enable continued cooperation between the UK and the EU, and will ensure law enforcement authorities can keep our citizens safe

The government welcomes the European Commission's draft data adequacy decisions, which recognise the UK's high data protection standards and set out that the UK should be found 'adequate'.

The UK has a world-class data protection system, currently the same as the European Union's, so it is logical that the Commission should find the UK 'adequate'.

The EU already recognises other countries around the world as adequate including Argentina, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland and Uruguay – and the UK freely exchanges data with these countries.

Positive data adequacy decisions under both the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Law Enforcement Directive (LED) would allow for personal data to continue to flow freely from the European Union (EU) and wider European Economic Area (EEA) to the UK.

Seamless international data flows are essential in a hyper-connected world. They underpin the exchange of information and ideas supporting trade, innovation and investment, assist with law enforcement agencies tackling crime, and support the delivery of critical public services sharing personal data as well as facilitating health and scientific research.

Technical confirmation of the draft adequacy decisions will help make sure UK businesses and organisations in everything from logistics to legal services, healthcare to human resources, can continue to receive personal data from the EU and EEA without additional compliance costs. This ensures they will avoid potential knock-on effects for consumers and boost UK startups and smaller firms which operate in EU markets and sell to EU customers.

The UK formally provided the Commission with [comprehensive explanatory material](#) nearly a year ago at the start of the adequacy assessment in March 2020. The UK has already recognised the EU and EEA member states as 'adequate', as part of its commitment to establish a smooth transition for the UK's departure from the bloc and manage data flows on an objective basis.

Since then, UK officials led by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) have held a series of discussions with their European Commission counterparts to reiterate carefully and fully the UK's legal and regulatory framework and demonstrate beyond doubt that the UK clearly meets the EU's data adequacy requirements.

The draft decisions published today by the Commission will now be shared with the European Data Protection Board for a 'non-binding opinion', before being presented to EU member states for formal approval.

The UK made its representations to the EU in a timely manner but the Commission did not finalise draft decisions in time to complete the adoption process by the end of the transition period. For this reason, as part of the UK/EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, a time-limited 'bridging mechanism' for personal data flows was agreed. This currently allows personal data to continue to flow as it did before the end of the Brexit transition period for up to six months, while the EU completes the adequacy process.

The UK government now urges the EU to swiftly complete this technical process for adopting and formalising these adequacy decisions as early as possible.

Secretary of State for Digital Oliver Dowden said:

I welcome the publication of these draft decisions which rightly

reflect the UK's commitment to high data protection standards and pave the way for their formal approval.

Although the EU's progress in this area has been slower than we would have wished, I am glad we have now reached this significant milestone following months of constructive talks in which we have set out our robust data protection framework.

I now urge the EU to fulfil their commitment to complete the technical approval process promptly, so businesses and organisations on both sides can seize the clear benefits.

Julian David CEO of techUK said:

The European Commission's decisions that the UK's data protection regime offers an equivalent level of protection to the EU GDPR reflects the UK's high data protection standards.

Today's decision is warmly welcomed by the tech sector which has been making clear the importance of a mutual data adequacy agreement since the day after the referendum.

Receiving data adequacy, alongside the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement, will set a solid foundation for digital trade with the EU, including strong non-discrimination clauses and positive data flows provisions, that will give businesses the confidence to invest.

Notes

- The 'bridging mechanism' will remain in place until June 30 or until the adequacy decisions come into effect, whichever is sooner.
- The UK has a long and proud tradition of defending privacy rights. In the 1970s, the UK developed pioneering committees to explore the protection of personal data, and in 1981 the UK was one of the first to sign Council of Europe Convention 108. More recently, the UK played an active role in developing the GDPR and LED. The UK Government will continue to promote high data protection standards.
- Read the [European Commission's press statement here](#).
- Read the [GDPR decision here](#).
- Read the [Law Enforcement Directive decision here](#).

DCMS press office is on 020 7211 2210.

£180m Army vehicle contract protects 700 Glasgow jobs

Press release

A £180 million contract to deliver cutting edge threat detection technology for the British Army's new Boxer vehicles will support hundreds of jobs in Scotland, it is announced today.



The Remote Weapons Stations will deliver cutting-edge technology for the Army's Boxer vehicles. MOD Crown Copyright

The 10-year Remote Weapons Stations (RWS) contract will protect over 700 jobs at Thales UK's Glasgow site while supporting 30 apprenticeships.

It uses a 360-degree high definition long range cameras attached to the outside of the vehicle to scan for enemy threats, even when Boxer is moving at speed. The RWS then alerts soldiers inside the armoured Boxer through a digital display – so they can keep a permanent watch outside while remaining safely inside the vehicle.

The system also offers key defensive capabilities, including a multi-barrel smoke grenade launcher, thermal imaging, and infra-red pointers.

Defence last year secured a substantial settlement of more than £24 billion over four years to modernise the Armed Forces to meet the threats of the future and support British across the Union.

Minister for Scotland, Iain Stewart said:

We look forward to working with Thales UK on the delivery of these Remote Weapons Stations, knowing this contract will not only contribute to the safety of British military personnel on the front line, but also support industry growth here in Scotland.

Protecting hundreds of jobs and supporting 30 apprenticeships, this £180 million UK Government investment further demonstrates our commitment to supporting the defence sector in Scotland and underscores the many opportunities available within the United Kingdom economy.

Minister of State for Defence, Baroness Goldie said:

This £180m contract with Thales UK will deliver pioneering surveillance and protection for our front line soldiers and our new Boxer fleet. We depend on skills and technology from across the United Kingdom and this order will secure 700 Scottish jobs.

Our troops face a myriad of new and emerging threats so it is imperative we invest in critical detect and destroy technology such as this.

Following the sonar contract for Dreadnought submarines last year, this is Thales UK's second multi-million-pound contract within 12 months, further showcasing the government's commitment to levelling-up across the UK.

DE&S Director Land Equipment, Major General Darren Crook said:

This is another significant step forward for Boxer and I am delighted to see the different threads of the programme coming together. This is a military capability of the future to be proud of.

The UK re-joined the Boxer programme in 2018 and has committed £2.8 billion to deliver over 500 vehicles to the British Army. The first vehicles are scheduled to be ready for service in 2023.

Steven Lockley, Managing Director of Thales in the UK's vehicle integration business in Glasgow, said:

Thales' sub-contract is a great step forward after months of hard work. Working with our strategic partners, Thales is bringing new skills and technologies into the programme, our facilities in Scotland and the UK supply chain.

[More help for Self Assessment taxpayers](#)

Self Assessment taxpayers will not be charged a 5% late payment penalty if they pay their tax or set up a payment plan by 1 April 2021, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) has announced.

The payment deadline for Self Assessment is 31 January and interest is charged from 1 February on any amounts outstanding. Normally, a 5% late payment penalty is also charged on any unpaid tax that is still outstanding on 3 March. But this year, because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, HMRC is giving taxpayers more time to pay or set up a payment plan.

Taxpayers can pay their tax bill or set up a monthly payment plan online at GOV.UK. They need to do this by midnight on 1 April to prevent being charged a late payment penalty.

The online Time to Pay facility allows taxpayers to spread the cost of their Self Assessment tax bill into monthly instalments until January 2022.

HMRC recognises the pressure affecting taxpayers due to the pandemic, and encourages anyone worried about paying their tax and unable to set up a payment plan online to contact HMRC for help and support on 0300 200 3822.

More than 97,260 customers have set up a self-serve Time to Pay arrangement online, totalling more than £367 million.

Jim Harra, HMRC's Chief Executive, said:

Anyone worried about paying their tax can set up a payment plan to spread the cost into monthly instalments. Support is available at GOV.UK to help anyone struggling to meet their obligations.

There are several ways that taxpayers can [pay their Self Assessment tax bill](#) in full. They can pay online, via their bank, or by post.

Taxpayers should still pay in full if they can. This is the only way to stop interest accruing.

Self Assessment taxpayers who are required to make Payments on Account, and know their 2020 to 2021 tax bill is going to be lower than in 2019 to 2020 – for example due to loss of earnings because of COVID-19 – can reduce their Payments on Account. Visit GOV.UK to [find out more about Payments on Account and how to reduce them](#).

Self Assessment taxpayers who have yet to file their 2019 to 2020 tax return

should file by 28 February to prevent being charged a late filing penalty of £100.

Be aware of copycat HMRC websites and phishing scams. Taxpayers should search 'self assessment' on GOV.UK to get the correct link for their Self Assessment tax return online securely and free of charge. They also need to be alert if someone calls, emails or texts claiming to be from HMRC, saying that they can claim financial help, are due a tax refund or owe tax. It might be a scam. Check GOV.UK for information on [how to recognise genuine HMRC contact](#).

Visit GOV.UK to [find out more about Self Assessment](#).

This announcement is in addition to last month's announcement that HMRC will not charge late filing penalties for returns filed online by 28 February. That announcement related to filing of Self Assessment returns and is unaffected by today's announcement which relates to paying Self Assessment liabilities.

This is the first time HMRC has delayed the charging of penalties for late payment of Self Assessment liabilities

Self Assessment timeline:

- 31 January – Self Assessment deadline (paying and filing)
- 1 February – interest accrues on any outstanding tax bills
- 28 February – last date to file any late tax returns to avoid a late filing penalty
- 1 April – last date to pay any outstanding tax or make a Time to Pay arrangement, to avoid a late payment penalty
- 1 April – last date to set up a self-serve Time to Pay arrangement online

The Self-serve Time to Pay data referenced is for online payment plans created between 1 October 2020 and 17 February 2021.

Self-serve Time to Pay allows taxpayers to set up a payment plan online to help them manage the cost of their tax bill up to £30,000. Customers will be able to pay their tax bill in monthly instalments, up to January 2022.

If someone's Self Assessment debts are more than £30,000, or they need longer to pay a debt in full, they cannot set up a Time to Pay arrangement online. But they may still be able to set up a Time to Pay arrangement by calling the Self Assessment Payment Helpline on 0300 200 3822.

There is no change to the payment deadline and other obligations are not affected. This means that:

- the payment deadline remains 31 January and interest will be charged on late payment. The current rate of late payment interest is 2.6%
- a 5% late payment penalty will be charged if tax remains outstanding, and a payment plan has not been set up, by midnight on 1 April 2021. Further late payment penalties are charged at 6 and 12 months (August 2021 and February 2022 respectively), on tax outstanding where a payment

plan has not been set up

Follow the National Cyber Security Centre's 6 essential steps to keep yourself and your business secure online by visiting [CyberAware.gov.uk](https://www.cyberaware.gov.uk).

January 2021 Transaction Data

News story

This data provides information about the number and types of applications that HM Land Registry completed in January 2021.



Image credit: NicoElNino/Shutterstock.com

Please note this data shows what HM Land Registry has been able to process during the time period covered and is not necessarily a reflection of market activity.

In January:

- HM Land Registry completed more than 1,635,591 applications to change or query the Land Register
- the South East topped the table of regional applications with 387,517

HM Land Registry completed 1,635,591 applications in January compared with 1,431,694 in December and 1,838,833 last January 2020, of which:

- 299,991 were applications for register updates compared with 272,475 in December
- 870,631 were applications for an official copy of a register compared with 718,867 in December
- 204,003 were search and hold queries (official searches) compared with 221,840 in December

Applications by region and country

Region/country	November applications	December Applications	January Applications
South East	409,245	337,929	387,517
Greater London	314,597	259,272	298,896
North West	191,689	166,638	184,916
South West	170,214	141,011	165,451
West Midlands	143,935	121,054	137,979
Yorkshire and the Humber	135,951	111,242	125,734
East Midlands	122,093	102,151	117,215
North	80,300	67,269	77,101
East Anglia	72,154	61,473	387,517
Isles of Scilly	43	53	60
Wales	69,930	63,541	71,420
England and Wales (not assigned)	86	61	82
Total	1,710,237	1,431,694	1,635,591

Top 5 local authority areas

January 2021 applications

Top 5 Local authority areas January applications

Birmingham	23,223
Cornwall	20,849
City of Westminster	19,594
Leeds	18,684
Buckinghamshire	16,768

December 2020 applications

Top 5 local authority areas December applications

Birmingham	21,069
City of Westminster	17,307
Leeds	17,137
Buckinghamshire	15,282
Cornwall	14,724

Top 5 customers

January 2021 applications

Top 5 Customers	January applications
Infotrack Limited	85,460

Top 5 Customers	January applications
Enact	37,663
TM Group (UK) Ltd (Search Choice)	21,986
Optima Legal Services	21,269
O'Neill Patient	20,340

December 2020 applications

Top 5 customers	December applications
Infotrack Limited	80,703
Enact	32,972
TM Group (UK) Ltd (Search Choice)	24,696
Optima Legal Services	19,316
O'Neill Patient	18,654

Next publication

Transaction Data is published on the 15th working day of each month. The February data will be published at 11am on Friday 19 March 2021.

Published 19 February 2021