

UK and US militaries launch £800k International Space Pitch Day

International Space Pitch Day was launched today by UK Director Space Air Vice-Marshal Harv Smyth.

International Space Pitch Day is a joint UK-US initiative that aims to find, fund and fast-track innovation and technology that gives advantage to military personnel and operations in the space domain.

The competition is open to innovators and entrepreneurs from all over the world delivered through the UK [Defence and Security Accelerator \(DASA\)](#), assisted by [Starburst Accelerator](#).

The endeavour is jointly funded by the UK's [Defence Science and Technology Laboratory \(Dstl\)](#), [Royal Air Force](#) and the [US Air Force](#).

It is specifically designed to bolster tech start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and harness the power of their ingenuity and innovation.

The competition will see organisations receive specialist mentoring and training in the hope of securing a coveted place at the first International Space Pitch Day in front of senior UK, US and NATO military leaders at the [Defence Space Conference](#) in London in November 2020.

Those organisations who make it through to the International Space Pitch Day will be in contention to secure a \$66,000 (£53,000) contract from the judging panel to speed up their innovations and technology.

The format will be the first of its kind in an international collaboration between two international allies.

UK Defence Minister Jeremy Quin said:

Opportunities like International Space Pitch Day demonstrate our determination to modernise the way we work, whilst providing our brilliant innovators with the investment and support they need.

This collaborative event will allow us to identify and accelerate the newest technologies, and remain competitive against our adversaries.

Director Space Air Vice-Marshal Harv Smyth said:

International Space Pitch Day is a world-leading joint initiative by the closest of allies and we are excited by the huge

opportunities this could bring to our respective nations, our alliances, and our space and tech industries.

This is all about fast-tracking innovation and cutting-edge technology to the front line quicker than ever before, and fresh ways of working with industry to make sure we stay ahead of our shared adversaries and the threats they pose. I look forward to judging the finalists at the Defence Space Conference in November.

A grand coalition of Dstl, DASA, Royal Air Force, UK Strategic Command, the US Air Force, US Space Force, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) has been assembled to find, fund, and fast-track the best ideas from start-up innovators to the front line.

Starburst Aerospace will act as an industry partner to the International Space Pitch Day and carry out specialist training and mentoring on its behalf through an Allied Defence Accelerator.

This year's competition is seeking solutions to six challenges set by the UK and US Space teams:

1. Visualisation of key events and information for combined space operations with allies and commercial partners.
2. Understanding current satellite systems relevant to the operations of a particular commander.
3. Understanding the present and potential impact of space weather on users across all domains.
4. Provision of training against realistic threats and opportunities, incorporating live data, and integrating space across multiple domains.
5. Enabling common and user-defined operational pictures to support multi-national space domain awareness and command and control.
6. A verification and comparison tool for Space domain awareness, which can take orbital observation data from a variety of sources and in a variety of formats and produce a single, reliable operational picture.

[Full details, scope and requirements of International Space Pitch Day and the Allied Defence Accelerator can be found here.](#)

[A Virtual Learning Environment for International Space Pitch Day and the Allied Defence Accelerator has also today gone live.](#)

Compulsory registration questions for the International Space Pitch Day and the Allied Defence Accelerator must be submitted by midday BST on Wednesday, 19 August 2020.

International Space Pitch Day 2020 proposals must be submitted by midday BST on Wednesday 2 September 2020.

[Roland fined £4 million for illegally preventing online price discounts](#)

Background

When online resellers have the freedom to price items independently this leads to healthy competition – rivals strive to offer the best deal for customers and people can shop around for a better deal.

However, if a supplier dictates to its resellers a specific minimum price that they cannot drop below, or tries to stop them from selling at a reduced price, rival resellers are blocked from competing on price and customers lose out. This practice is known as Resale Price Maintenance (RPM) and is illegal.

We recently fined Roland, a supplier of electronic music equipment, £4 million for breaking the law by manipulating online resale prices in this way.

What Roland did

Between 7 January 2011 and 17 April 2018, Roland set minimum prices for its electronic drum kits, related components and accessories and told resellers not to sell below these prices.

It used price-monitoring software to police the minimum pricing policy. This software monitored online prices to make sure resellers were selling at or above the prices Roland specified.

In order to make sure that resellers kept to these prices, Roland threatened (and sometimes applied) sanctions against those who advertised and sold at lower prices. For example, Roland removed key discounts off the trade price for certain resellers.

These sanctions were clearly seen as a commercial risk to resellers who may otherwise have decided to offer lower prices. One reseller noted that if it 'advertised Roland products at less than the suggested retail price' it 'would lose some of the discounts' from Roland.

Many resellers understood that Roland's pricing policy meant that they could not sell below the minimum price and that this may breach competition law. For example, in response to a request from Roland to price at the minimum price, a reseller replied '#notallowedtomapbutkindado lol x'.

Many resellers used price monitoring software themselves and often reported on one another, letting Roland know when others were dropping their price.

Price monitoring software, when used correctly, should benefit competition by encouraging firms to undercut rivals. In this instance, the software was misused as a tool for Roland to help keep resellers' prices artificially

high.

How Roland broke the law

RPM is illegal because it cheats people out of a fair deal. It involves a supplier enforcing a minimum price, and therefore restricting the possibility of discounts – rather than allowing resellers to compete on prices.

In this case, some of Roland's senior employees were aware that the practice of setting a minimum resale price was wrong. For example, one senior Roland employee noted in an internal email that they had to be very careful about talking to resellers about resale prices as Roland could be leaving itself 'wide open for an investigation by the competition authorities' stating that they were 'not copying this message more widely – it is too dangerous due to the sensitive content.'

Despite knowing what they were doing was wrong, Roland continued to enforce RPM, and took various measures to hide its wrongdoing. For example, Roland staff at times avoided creating written records and stated in an internal document 'Admin – Reiterate – Delete all Text messages/emails. No more emails re price.' and communicated this policy to resellers either orally or through 'code'. Also, on occasions, Roland staff deleted written communications about this policy.

What action we took

We fined Roland £4 million for breaking the law. The fine was increased because senior management was involved, and because the illegal behaviour was judged to be intentional – staff knew what they were doing was wrong and tried to hide it.

Roland admitted to breaking the law, and cooperated with the CMA's investigation, and its fine was reduced to reflect this.

What the lessons are

There are a number of lessons that businesses can learn from this case, including the following:

- It is illegal for a supplier to interfere with a reseller's ability to set their own prices independently.
- The consequences of breaking competition law can include fines of up to 10% of a business's global turnover.
- The CMA has sophisticated means of gathering evidence even where companies have tried to hide their actions by deleting communications.

- If you are ever asked not to put something down in writing you should be suspicious as it could relate to something illegal. If so, you should seek legal advice and seriously consider whether to report the matter to the CMA.
- Directors and senior staff have a special responsibility to be well informed on competition law and make sure their companies are behaving legally.
- Attending compliance training alone isn't sufficient to be compliant – you must actively comply with the law.
- As a reseller you can also be investigated for breaking the law if you are found to have co-operated with a minimum pricing policy. If a supplier tries to make you comply with a minimum pricing policy you should refuse and point them to our guidance and consider reporting them to us. Resellers may also face enforcement action such as fines.

What you can do

This case shows that it's important for suppliers and resellers to review their pricing practices so they don't risk entering into illegal agreements. Some of the ways to do this are to:

- Create a culture of compliance – everyone in your business must understand what they need to do to stay on the right side of competition law.
- Read our [60-second summary on RPM](#) and watch our video – both give pointers to help businesses avoid breaking the law.

[Video](#)

- If you have information on other companies in your industry that may have been involved in an anti-competitive arrangement, you should consider [reporting it to us](#) or calling us on 020 3738 6000.
 - If you think your business has been involved in RPM, seek independent legal advice and notify the CMA as soon as possible – you may benefit from lenient treatment by being the first to come forward to the CMA.
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New Law changes to bring better connectivity to the UK

The move is part of the plan to give the UK the telecoms infrastructure it needs to meet the growing demands of consumers and businesses and to take advantage of future technologies that will be vital for the economy.

The telecoms regulator Ofcom will be granted new powers so it can share with the government information from broadband companies about where they plan to build gigabit-capable broadband networks, and to publish data about areas where gigabit broadband rollout is not currently planned.

These powers will help encourage the commercial rollout of gigabit broadband in locations where it is not yet earmarked. The government will also be able to take into account this information when deciding where it will spend £5 billion of funding to give the public access to the fastest broadband, capable of one gigabit per second download speeds.

This funding has been pledged to make sure hard-to-reach areas receive these much faster internet connections at the same time as towns and cities.

Separately, the government has confirmed it will push ahead with its plans to reform planning laws to make it easier for industry to share and upgrade mobile phone masts. This will speed up the rollout of 5G and improve 4G coverage in rural areas.

Matt Warman, Minister for Digital Infrastructure, said:

We're investing billions so no part of the UK is left behind by the opportunities and economic benefits that faster, more reliable and more secure digital connectivity brings.

These changes will help target public funding in hard to reach areas most in need of better broadband. It will also help mobile companies banish rural not-spots by upgrading and sharing their masts.

European Electronic Communications Code

The government has today set out how it will bring the [European Electronic Communications Code](#) into UK law. The UK played a leading role in the negotiations for the Code, which updates the telecoms regulatory framework for the EU. A number of its provisions are influenced and inspired by existing UK objectives and best practice.

While the Code largely consists of minor changes to the existing legal framework, the government will bring in some new pro-investment measures from the Code that are in the UK's national interest and support its plans for

nationwide gigabit broadband. Other measures will give people and businesses greater consumer protection and ensure Ofcom's regulatory powers are up to date.

They include, but are not limited to:

- Network forecasting – New powers for Ofcom to gather information on operators' planned network rollout. Ofcom will share this information with the government to allow better targeting of public investment in poorly-connected areas. It will also publish non-confidential data about where rollout is not planned to help inform industry investment.
- A focus on gigabit-capable networks – A new broad duty for Ofcom to promote connectivity, access to, and take-up of gigabit-capable networks to help the UK realise its full digital potential.
- Promoting cooperation and competition in hard to reach places – In areas where it is costly or difficult to install new networks, such as urban blocks of flats and rural locations, Ofcom will have the power to impose obligations on operators already present to offer network access or to share equipment such as mobile masts with other operators.
- Pro-investment regulation – Ofcom's market review period will be increased from three to five years which will give a longer period of regulatory stability to the telecoms market and more certainty for investors in gigabit broadband.
- Easier switching for consumers – Currently, when switching broadband providers, consumers need to liaise with their old and their new provider and juggle the relevant old service end dates and the start dates for new services. Under these changes, they will be able to contact their new provider, who will lead and co-ordinate the switching process so it is as smooth as possible and with minimal loss of service.
- Better regulation of bundles – Consumers on bundled contracts, which include mobile and broadband but also other services such as video and music streaming, will be able switch providers more easily. This means they will avoid being locked into bundled contracts if, for example, providers make changes to their contracts, or something goes wrong with just one service in the bundle.

Mobile infrastructure planning reforms

In another [response to a public consultation published today](#), the government has announced it is taking forward proposals to simplify planning rules to speed up 5G rollout and improve rural mobile coverage.

Reforming planning laws in England will allow mobile network providers to put more equipment than they currently can on phone masts, making it easier to share masts and increase mobile coverage areas. This will help maximise the use of existing mast sites and minimise the need to build more infrastructure.

The reforms will allow:

- New masts to be built taller, subject to prior approval by the planning authority, to deliver better coverage and allow more mobile operators to place equipment on them
- Existing phone masts to be strengthened without prior approval, so that they can be upgraded for 5G and shared between mobile operators
- Building-based masts to be placed nearer to highways to support better mobile coverage of the UK's road networks, subject to prior approval
- Cabinets containing radio equipment to be deployed alongside masts, without prior approval, to support new 5G networks

Before amending the existing legislation, the government will carry out a technical consultation on the detail of the proposals, including the appropriate environmental protections and other safeguards, and the specific limits to be put on the widths and heights of phone masts.

The government also expects the mobile phone industry to commit to further measures and assurances to ensure that the impact of new mobile deployment is minimised.

Housing Minister Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP said:

Delivering much-needed new homes is at the heart of this Government's mission to support people in every part of the country, and this means delivering the modern infrastructure needed to go with them.

We're taking forward plans to extend mobile coverage, particularly for those in rural areas, so everyone can benefit from the latest technology and the jobs, opportunities and growth that comes with this.

These reforms will aid the delivery of the £1 billion deal the government made in March with the mobile network operators to build a Shared Rural Network which will mean poor mobile coverage becomes a thing of the past. It has seen the four main mobile operators undertake legally binding commitments to collectively increase mobile phone coverage throughout the UK to 95% by

the end of 2025, by investing in a network of new and existing phone masts that they would all share.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

European Electronic Communications Code:

- The European Electronic Communications Code Directive revises the EU telecoms regulatory framework, which has underpinned UK telecoms law since 2003. The UK played a leading role in the negotiations for the Directive, which largely reflects UK best practice. Its core objectives are to: drive investment in very high capacity networks and services through sustainable competition; support efficient and effective use of radio spectrum; maintain the security of networks and services; and provide a high level of consumer protection.
- The UK's approach to implementation of the Directive is in line with the UK's commitments under the EU Withdrawal Agreement to transpose EU legislation before the end of the transition period and to provide flexibility for future domestic policy. It meets the minimum requirements of the Directive, and minimises additional costs to businesses.
- The public consultation on the Code, published in July 2019, sought views on its implementation, focusing on provisions affording flexibility at the national level, including those supporting accelerated commercial roll-out of gigabit-capable and 5G networks.
- Provisions where we have departed from the preferred approach outlined in the consultation represent areas where the UK legal regime is already flexible enough to cater for the specific EECC provision or a degree of discretion exists in the Directive to allow the UK (along with other EU member states) to take account of market conditions and characteristics existing in national markets.
- Some articles are either already addressed by existing UK legislation, or are being transposed by Ofcom through their existing powers in the case of consumer measures, or by other Departments, such as a provision on car radio interoperability that is being transposed through Department for Transport's Road Vehicles (Approval) Regulation legislation.
- In recognition of the limited time between publication and the date when these measures will come into force and the impact of COVID-19, working with Ofcom, the government has sought to ensure that measures that

directly bite upon industry including consumer protection measures will only be enforced at the appropriate time. The government is supportive of Ofcom's statement, published on its website on 7 May, outlining that industry will be given at least 12 months to implement proposed changes to their regulatory rules allowing industry flexibility it needs during this challenging period.

Mobile infrastructure planning reforms for England:

- The consultation ran for 10 weeks, from 27 August 2019, closing on 4 November 2019. Planning law is a devolved matter. These proposals and any future legislative changes apply to England only. The technical consultation will seek views on the detail of the proposals, including the appropriate environmental protections and other safeguards to mitigate the impact of new mobile infrastructure.
- In developing the technical consultation, we will also work with industry and local planning authority representatives, and other government Departments and relevant regulators, including Ofcom, to strengthen the Code of Best Practice on Mobile Network Development in England

Electronic Communications Code – intention to consult on possible reforms:

- The Electronic Communications Code, which is separate from the European Electronic Communications Code, is the domestic legal framework underpinning agreements between landowners and communications operators in the UK. The Code was substantially reformed in 2017 to make it cheaper and easier for electronic communications apparatus to be deployed, maintained, shared and upgraded. Now, more than ever, it is important that operators are able to do this at pace. Therefore the government intends to consult in due course on changes to the Code that may be needed to achieve this.

[Home Secretary announces details of the Hong Kong BN\(0\) Visa](#)

The government has today [released more information on the new Hong Kong BN\(0\) Visa](#), which will create a bespoke immigration route to enable British National (Overseas) (BN(0)) citizens ordinarily resident in Hong Kong, and their immediate family members, to move to the UK to work and study.

The government committed to open this new immigration route following the

Chinese government's decision to impose a new National Security Law on Hong Kong.

The new Hong Kong BN(0) Visa is a significant change to the UK immigration system and will allow BN(0) citizens to apply for two periods of 30 months' leave or 5 years' leave. This new immigration route will afford BN(0) citizens the right to live and work or study in the UK and gives them a path to full British citizenship.

In addition to providing a pathway for BN(0)s, this route will also enable those born after 1 July 1997 to a British National (Overseas) registered parent to apply to come to the UK.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

The UK has a strong historic relationship with the people of Hong Kong and we are keeping our promise to them to uphold their freedoms.

BN(0) citizens will now have a choice to come and live, work and study in the UK, building a new life for them and their family.

We look forward to welcoming BN(0) citizens to the UK.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

Today's announcement shows the UK is keeping its word: we will not look the other way on Hong Kong, and we will not duck our historic responsibilities to its people.

BN(0) citizens coming to the UK will have access to the job market at any skill level and without salary threshold but will not have access to public funds under this route. This will enable those who want to live in the UK to do so and become valued members of our society.

Those who come to the UK through this route will be able to apply to settle in the UK with indefinite leave to remain once they have lived in the UK for 5 years. After 12 months with this status they will then be able to apply for British citizenship.

In order for BN(0)s citizens to take up this offer they do not need to have a valid Hong Kong BN(0) passport. They'll need a valid passport to show proof of identity, but this can be any applicable nationality passport. They can use a valid or expired BN(0) passport to show proof of BN(0) status, however, if they do not have a BN(0) passport the Home Office may be able to check status without one.

Those born after 1 July 1997 were not eligible to become BN(0)s having been born after the UK's handover of Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong BN(0) Visa route will open from January 2021. Eligible BN(0) citizens are able to apply for this route both inside and outside the UK.

For those who wish to travel before the route opens, the UK will ensure that BN(0) citizens who wish to come to the UK are able to do so, subject to standard immigration checks. A BN(0) citizen can come to the UK as a visitor for up to six months without a visa, or apply for an existing visa route. Eligible BN(0) citizens unable to meet the Immigration Rules may be granted Leave Outside the Rules at the border. Eligible BN(0) citizens will be able to switch to the Hong Kong BN(0) Visa route once it is open, from within the UK.

The creation of this new bespoke route is a demonstration of the UK's commitment to BN(0) citizens in Hong Kong. [More information on the route and requirements can be found on GOV.UK.](#)

[UN Human Rights Council 44: UK's closing statement](#)

The 44th session of the Human Rights Council concluded on Friday 17th June, adopting important resolutions on Syria, Belarus, Eritrea, Discrimination against Women and Girls and other pressing issues. I would like to extend my gratitude to the HRC President and Secretariat for their efforts and creativity that allowed the session to take place smoothly in a hybrid format.

As the international community works together to face the challenges presented by Coronavirus (COVID-19), it is crucial that states continue to meet their human rights obligations and take steps to mitigate the disproportionate impact of Coronavirus on women and girls, and the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of society, including refugees and members of ethnic, religious and belief minorities, and ensure that they are actively included in response and recovery efforts. I welcome the Council's adoption of the latest Syria resolution, which focuses on the regime's continued practice of enforced disappearance and arbitrary detention. Given the additional risks posed by Coronavirus, the regime must release all those arbitrarily detained. The resolution also highlights the latest report by the Commission of Inquiry, which found reasonable grounds to believe that war crimes and crimes against humanity had been committed during the military offensive in Idlib. Russia and China's reprehensible use of their vetoes at the Security Council to reduce cross-border aid access into Northern Syria will lead to further loss of life. The resolution rightly demands that the regime and its allies allow urgent, unimpeded, humanitarian access to alleviate the continued suffering of millions of vulnerable Syrians.

The UK delivered a cross-regional joint statement on Hong Kong and Xinjiang

on behalf of 28 countries. It is important to bring these issues to the Human Rights Council, given China's ongoing human rights violations in Xinjiang, and the unprecedented nature of China's actions in Hong Kong. As the Prime Minister has said, the imposition of legislation related to national security in Hong Kong is a clear and serious breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration. The statement also reiterated our shared concerns about Xinjiang, and encouraged the High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide regular information on both situations. I am encouraged that the statement brought together a broad group of states to call on China to uphold its international commitments and human rights obligations.

I also welcome the adoption of the resolution on Eritrea. The UK supports the work of the Special Rapporteur, and I was pleased to see her mandate renewed for another year. I welcome Eritrea's engagement over the past year, but encourage further efforts to make tangible progress on key areas, such as reform of national service, and the implementation of UPR recommendations.

The adoption of the resolution on Belarus ensures that the Belarusian government continues to be held to account for its failure to meet its human rights obligations. I call for the release of those arbitrarily arrested and detained for exercising their right to freedom of expression and assembly as the country prepares for the Presidential election. I also urge Belarus to allow the Special Rapporteur access as a concrete step towards increased international cooperation.

I am pleased that the UK co-sponsored the resolution on the elimination of Female Genital Mutilation. FGM is an extremely harmful practice, causing severe and lifelong physical, psychological and emotional harm to women and girls. The UK is proud to be a leading donor in the effort to support and accelerate the Africa-led movement to end FGM. There is still much more to do and we will continue our work to support the global ambition to end FGM by 2030.

I am also pleased that the UK co-sponsored the resolution on Elimination of Discrimination against Women and Girls. I welcome its recognition of the disproportionate impact of Coronavirus on women and girls. We must work together to eliminate discrimination and gender-based violence, and ensure that women's rights, including comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights, are central to the global recovery.

I am pleased that all the amendments that sought to weaken the text failed; it is encouraging to see the international community defend language on women's rights. The UK firmly supports the sexual and reproductive health and rights of all women and girls. Women and girls' control over their own lives and bodies is fundamental to gender equality, and we will continue to work with others to protect this.

I welcome the adoption of the resolution on Freedom of Opinion and Expression, which the UK was pleased to cosponsor. Freedom of opinion and expression are essential in any functioning democracy; people must be allowed to discuss and debate issues freely, and to challenge their governments. During the session we highlighted our concern about the recent ruling in the

case of the journalist Maria Ressa in the Philippines.

The Human Rights Council continues to play an essential role in holding to account those who violate or abuse human rights, particularly now, as the coronavirus pandemic brings unprecedented humanitarian challenges and disruption to economies and societies, and has a negative impact on the enjoyment of human rights around the world. As we seek election to the Council later this year, the UK remains strongly committed to supporting the Council and the wider international community in championing human rights.