

BT acquisition called-in for national security assessment

News story

The acquisition by Altice of 6% of shares in BT has been called-in for a full national security assessment.



The acquisition by Altice of 6% of shares in BT has been called-in for a full national security assessment by Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng today (Thursday 26 May).

The government has powers under the National Security and Investment Act 2021 to scrutinise and – if necessary – intervene in qualifying acquisitions on national security grounds.

The government has 30 working days (extendable by up to a further 45 working days) to carry out that assessment. That process is underway.

Published 26 May 2022

Foreign Secretary says West needs to ensure Putin loses in Ukraine: 26 May 2022

- Foreign Secretary Liz Truss travels to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) on Thursday, where she will use an address to BiH armed forces to urge partners to continue to rally behind Ukraine, saying “we cannot take the foot off the accelerator now”

- Truss aims to mobilise \$100 million of UK-backed investment in Western Balkans by 2025, through investment partnerships agenda
- Truss will re-affirm UK's commitment to peace and stability in the Western Balkans, in the face of Russian malign influence

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss will today (Thursday 26 May) warn against "appeasement" of Vladimir Putin and tell allies and partners there must be no "backsliding" in support for Ukraine.

Truss will use a speech to BiH armed forces to rally allies for greater support for Ukraine, including delivering more weapons and targeted sanctions, and argue "we must all learn the lessons of history" in standing up to Putin, ensuring he loses in Ukraine. BiH has been a vocal partner in the region, calling out Russia's illegal behaviour in Ukraine.

In a speech to the BiH armed forces at Sarajevo's Army Hall, the Foreign Secretary will say:

Russia's aggression cannot be appeased. It must be met with strength.

We must not allow a prolonged and increasingly painful conflict to develop in Ukraine.

We must be relentless in ensuring Ukraine prevails through military aid and sanctions. We can't take our foot off the accelerator now.

Truss will also re-affirm the UK's commitment to peace and stability in the Western Balkans, announcing UK plans to deepen its security and economic partnership with BiH in the face of secessionists and Russian attempts to influence and destabilise the country, a quarter-of-a-century since one of the worst conflicts in Europe. She will announce her aim to mobilise \$100 million of UK-backed investment in Western Balkans by 2025, through investment partnerships agenda.

Addressing the secessionists within BiH directly, after sanctioning two political figures last month for their destabilising behaviour, Truss will say:

Bosnia and Herzegovina's future lies in sovereignty and self-determination, in greater partnership with NATO and countries like the UK.

On Friday (27 May), the British Foreign Secretary continues her European visit, as she arrives in Prague for talks with Foreign Minister Jan Lipavský. She will praise the Czech Republic for its tough stance towards Russia, including supplying tanks to Ukraine, and urge more countries to follow its example.

Truss will also galvanise allies, including the Czech Republic, to work together on a new Marshall Plan for Ukraine, ensuring the country's speedy reconstruction.

In Prague, the Foreign Secretary will also sign a statement of intent to agree a Strategic Bilateral Framework between the UK and Czech Republic, ensuring we work more closely together in a number of areas, including security cooperation, trade, science & innovation and climate.

ENDS

[Prime Minister to address Parliament ahead of Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson will address Parliament to pay tribute to Her Majesty The Queen.



The Prime Minister will address Parliament today [Thursday 26 May] to pay tribute to Her Majesty the Queen ahead of her Platinum Jubilee.

In proposing an Humble Address, he will praise her dedicated service to the people of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth throughout her historic seventy year reign.

To celebrate the milestone, thousands of people in communities across the UK will come together to take part in festivities during a four-day Bank Holiday weekend spanning 2-5 June.

Events such as a Service of Thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral, the Platinum Party at the Palace and the Platinum Jubilee Pageant will take place, bringing people together to celebrate Her Majesty.

Proposing the Humble Address, Prime Minister Boris Johnson will say:

Today we pay tribute to a head of state whose length of service and dedication to duty to are simply without parallel.

The only monarch most of us in this country have ever known and the rock to which our nation and our people have been anchored throughout all that the past 70 years have thrown at us.

That is why next week the people of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth will be unabashed in celebrating not the institution of the Crown but the individual who wears it.

This remarkable woman who by God and her right has led her country through good times and bad.

Who has dedicated her life to her people, to her beloved Commonwealth, to the very idea of what a constitutional monarchy can and should be.

Published 26 May 2022

[Five landmark nature recovery projects launched to protect wildlife and improve public access to nature](#)

Five unique nature recovery projects spanning nearly 100,000 hectares will transform the public's enjoyment of nature in the West Midlands, Cambridgeshire, the Peak District, Norfolk and Somerset, the government and Natural England announced today (Thursday 26 May).

These multi-partnership projects will see newly created and restored wildlife-rich habitats, corridors and stepping-stones which will help wildlife populations to move and thrive across town and countryside.

They will improve the landscape's resilience to climate change, providing natural solutions to reduce carbon and manage flood risk. Equivalent in size to all 219 current National Nature Reserves they will also allow more people to enjoy and connect with nature on their doorstep.

The Purple Horizons project in Walsall in the West Midlands alone will enable over 500,000 people to reconnect with nature close to where they live, in one of England's most socially deprived areas.

All five projects will also make a significant contribution towards the national delivery of the international commitment to protect at least 30% of land and sea by 2030, and will help to achieve the Environment Act's legally binding target to halt the decline in species abundance by 2030.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said:

These five projects across England are superb examples of exciting, large-scale restoration that is critically needed to bring about a step change in the recovery of nature in this country.

They will significantly contribute to achieving our target to halt the decline in species abundance by 2030 and our commitment to protect 30% of our land by 2030, enabling us to leave the environment in a better state than we found it.

Natural England Chair Tony Juniper said:

Nature recovery can only occur if we take action at scale, and that can only work through partnerships. These five landmark projects will seek to recover species and habitats through collaboration among a wide range of land owners and organisations, delivering benefits for wildlife, local economies, adaptation to climate change and for public wellbeing.

Looking after and recovering the health of the natural world upon which we all depend is at the heart of Natural England's work, including through the development of the Nature Recovery Network that is such an important part of the Government's environmental ambition. I am delighted we are taking this step today, driving practical action on what is one of the most urgent challenges of modern times.

Joan Edwards, director of policy at The Wildlife Trusts, says:

It's good to see positive ambition from Government to help people access nature close to where they live, as well as efforts to connect existing strongholds for wildlife. Species desperately need green corridors to bridge together fragmented habitats in addition

to big, bold projects that enable landscapes to recover at scale.

Wildlife has suffered catastrophic declines in recent decades and 15% of species in the UK are at risk of extinction. Government can help turn that around by accelerating the creation of a nature recovery network, dedicating more land for nature, and applying stronger protections for our most important sites.

The nature recovery project areas are:

- Purple Horizons, West Midlands- extending across 10,000 hectares on the fringes of the West Midlands conurbation, Purple Horizons is restoring and connecting fragmented nationally and internationally important heathlands to create a mosaic of heathland-wetland-woodland-grassland, vital for the recovery and long-term resilience of the area's reptiles, birds and pollinators.
- Cambridge Nature Network, Cambridgeshire – covering 9,200 in and around the City of Cambridge, linking the inner city to rural countryside across a range of priority habitats and landscapes including chalk grassland, fenlands and ancient woodlands.
- Wye Valley, Peak District – covering 10,000 hectares, the project is conducting pioneering investigations on how an investment model can be created to generate funding for habitat restoration and creation, providing multiple nature recovery benefits.
- Somerset Wetlands, Somerset – with the new 6,140-hectare super National Nature Reserve at its heart, Somerset Wetlands is working with local partners and landowners across 60,000 hectares to enhance nature recovery through habitat creation and investing in strategic solutions that make the wetlands more sustainable and the landscape more resilient to climate change.
- Wendling Beck, Norfolk – the Wendling Partnership has come together to embark on an ambitious and inspiring nature restoration project linking initiatives around the Upper River Wensum and 10,000 hectares in the surrounding farmed countryside of mid-Norfolk.

An initial £2.4m in funding is being provided by Defra and Natural England, part of funding for the flagship Nature Recovery Network (NRN) which aims to increase, improve and connect existing wildlife-rich sites and restore and connect degraded land, turning it into healthy functioning ecosystems, rich in wildlife and resilient to climate change, which provide us with clean air, water and healthy soil.

The Nature Recovery Projects being announced today will also include improved footpaths, bridleways and green infrastructure which will connect nature to where people live, work and play – benefiting physical health and mental wellbeing, and providing habitat creation that supports the roll out of biodiversity net gain, demonstrating how public and private finance can support nature recovery.

The announcement today follows last week's declaration of the new [Somerset Wetlands 'super' National Nature Reserve \(NNR\)](#) by Natural England which will protect 6,140 hectares of precious saltmarsh, heath and wetland habitats that are home to nationally significant wildlife populations.

Jobs and passengers at the heart of government's 10-point plan for aviation

- government launches 10-point strategy to deliver an innovative and sustainable aviation sector as it recovers from the pandemic
- new aviation passenger charter will ensure consumers know their rights when flying
- Aviation Council established to bring the aviation sector together to learn the lessons of the pandemic and grow back sustainably

Consumers, jobs and innovation are at the heart of the government's new strategy for building the aviation sector of tomorrow.

Launched by Aviation Minister Robert Courts during a visit to Heathrow Airport, Flightpath to the future aims to rebuild consumer confidence, build back sustainably from the pandemic, support jobs across the country and build a skilled and diverse workforce that's fit for the future.

The delivery of the new 10-point plan will be supported by an all-new Aviation Council made up of airlines, airports and wider representatives from the aviation sector, as well as ministers and officials from both the UK government and devolved administrations.

The council will work to use the lessons learned from the pandemic to support recovery and make air travel better for passengers and better for the planet.

As outlined in the strategy, the government will launch a new aviation passenger charter later this year, a one-stop guide for consumers informing them of their rights and what they can reasonably expect of the aviation industry when flying.

The charter will be developed in partnership with industry and consumer groups to help rebuild consumer confidence in air travel following the pandemic.

Aviation Minister Robert Courts said:

The pandemic posed an existential threat to the aviation sector. Now recovery has started, we have a chance to build back better than ever before.

Through this new strategy, I'm setting out 10 priorities to ensure we build an industry that's not only fit for the future but one that's world-leading.

By working closely with the sector to focus on sustainable growth, powered by the latest innovations, we can ensure aviation creates jobs and opportunities across all 4 nations of the UK.

The past few months have been challenging for the sector as it returns to business as usual with a massive recruitment drive now underway to meet demand. As set out in 'Flightpath to the future', the government will work closely with industry and consumer groups to help the sector to provide the best service possible for consumers.

Airport Operators Association Chief Executive, Karen Dee, said:

Airports provide the vital aviation links businesses across the UK need to trade within the UK and abroad. Post-pandemic, it is vital government and airports work together to rebuild and grow those links to support jobs and create new economic opportunities across all regions of the UK.

Airports look forward to working through the new Aviation Council with government ensure effective delivery of our shared ambitions to support levelling-up while also enabling people to take well-earned breaks abroad and reconnect with family and friends in other countries.

With the sector on the cusp of a green flying revolution, the government will work with it to develop the right skills and workforce to accommodate new technologies from drones, flying taxis and electric planes.

Richard Moriarty, Chief Executive of the UK Civil Aviation Authority, said:

As aviation recovers, we share government's ambitions for the sector to build back to become cleaner, greener, more innovative and to continue prioritising safety and delivering for its consumers.

The established and emerging aviation and aerospace sectors and their stakeholders will need to work together to deliver this and I'm looking forward to the Civil Aviation Authority being part of that collective effort.

The plans form a key part of the government's levelling-up agenda, focusing on attracting and retaining the skills the sector needs as it recovers, unleashing the potential of the next generation and supporting a diverse workforce across the 4 nations of the UK that is fit for the future.

Ian Wilson, CEO DHL Express UK, said:

Air freight accounts for 40% of UK imports and exports and is vital for the UK economy, enabling international trade and supporting UK businesses.

As we look to the future, aviation will continue to play an important role in delivering on the UK's freight ambitions, particularly when it comes to decarbonisation of the supply chain.

As a global business, DHL Express is making significant investments in zero and low emission innovations such as sustainable aviation fuel and electric cargo planes and we look forward to working alongside the government as the UK becomes a leading market for these clean technologies.

The plans set out today (26 May 2022) will also deliver benefits for communities across the whole country through new jobs and better connectivity by becoming one of the first countries in the world to routinely use new aircraft to provide new and improved low carbon transport for goods, people and trade.

We can also benefit from new regulatory freedoms outside the EU, for example, to support further growth of general aviation.

The government will also later this year publish its jet zero strategy and set out its vision for how the aviation sector can reach net zero by 2050.

UK ingenuity is already developing zero emission aircraft and sustainable aviation fuels and combined with improvements to airport and airspace efficiency, we will deliver net zero flying for everyone.

Today's publication follows the [Transport Secretary's historic challenge to the industry to deliver the first ever net zero transatlantic flight by the end of 2023](#), powered purely by sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) – made from waste products, including household cooking oil and black bin rubbish.

Announced earlier this month, the pioneering test flight will be [supported by up to £1 million of competition funding](#) and will increase understanding of commercial flights powered by these fuels.