

Foreign Secretary statement on BVI Premier arrest

Press release

The Foreign Secretary's statement following the arrest of BVI Premier, Andrew Fahie



Foreign Secretary, Liz Truss said:

This afternoon, the Premier of the British Virgin Islands, Andrew Fahie, was arrested in the United States on charges related to drugs trafficking and money laundering.

I am appalled by these serious allegations. This arrest demonstrates the importance of the recently concluded Commission of Inquiry.

I have spoken to the Governor of the BVI and he will be holding an emergency meeting of the Territory's Cabinet later today. He will set out next steps tomorrow, including urgent publication of the Inquiry's report.

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UK invites Honduras to join a new

global security approach

World news story

British Ambassador Nick Whittingham invited Honduras to embrace a reboot in the free world's approach to tackling global aggressors in the wake of the Ukraine crisis.



Ambassador Whittingham explained the war should be a catalyst for rebooting, remodelling and recasting a global security architecture that has failed Ukraine.

He praised strength and unity of the free world's response to Putin's invasion, including Honduras' support at multilateral forums. Nevertheless, he stressed this collective response needs to follow through to ensure aggressors fail and are contained in the future.

This new approach melds hard security and economic security, builds stronger global alliances, recognises we are seeing the return of geopolitics, and will urge action in three areas:

1. Stronger defence – based on collectively investing more in defence, including maintaining NATO's open door policy (including for Sweden and Finland), and for NATO to adopt a more "global" outlook where it steps up work with Pacific partners.
2. Boosting economic security – reducing economic dependency on aggressors and creating stronger trade, investment, science and tech ties among allies and partners.
3. Building a stronger network of alliances – with the G7 playing a stronger role, as it has done during the Ukraine crisis, and building a deeper, more intertwined network of bilateral security and economic partnerships.

Ambassador Whittingham warned the fate of Ukraine remains in the balance and urged allies, including Honduras, to double down in ensuring Putin fails in Ukraine. The G7 and partners need to keep the pressure on Russia through tougher sanctions, providing further military aid, and continued humanitarian support.

UK Foreign Secretary, Liz Truss, set the UK's latest position on the war in Ukraine at the [Mansion House speech](#) on 27 April. The Mansion House speech is delivered at the annual Lord Mayor's Easter Banquet. The event is a set piece in the diplomatic calendar and is attended by ambassadors, diplomats, FCDO staff and the business community.

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[UK invites Guatemala to join a new global security approach](#)

World news story

British Ambassador Nick Whittingham invited Guatemala to embrace a reboot in the free world's approach to tackling global aggressors in the wake of the Ukraine crisis.



Ambassador Whittingham explained the war should be a catalyst for rebooting, remodelling and recasting a global security architecture that has failed Ukraine.

He praised strength and unity of the free world's response to Putin's invasion, including Guatemala's active leadership at multilateral forums and welcoming of Ukrainian refugees. Nevertheless, he stressed this collective response needs to follow through to ensure aggressors fail and are contained in the future.

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[New law in place to strengthen UK professions](#)

- New law enshrines the autonomy of UK regulators to decide whether an individual with overseas qualifications is fit to practise a regulated profession in the UK
- The Professional Qualifications Act ensures UK regulators can recognise the qualifications of skilled professionals from around the world – not just the EU – so the world’s best can make their way to the UK to boost prosperity
- the law will make it easier for UK professionals to practise overseas, thanks to new trade deals and more consistent information sharing between UK and overseas regulators

A new approach to recognising professional qualifications gained overseas is now in force following Royal Assent, the government has announced today (Thursday 28 April).

The Professional Qualifications Act revokes the previous EU system for how certain professional qualifications gained overseas are recognised in the UK.

The previous EU-derived system often gave preferential treatment to holders of qualifications from the European Economic Area and Switzerland. These arrangements were unreciprocated since the UK left the EU. Under the new system, which is better suited to the UK's own needs, UK regulators have the autonomy to decide on the right approach to recognising overseas professional qualifications.

The freedom of UK regulators of professions, such as the Architects Registration Board and the General Medical Council, to decide who is fit to practise is now enshrined in UK law for the first time. This ensures UK regulators can make recognition decisions in the best interests of their profession – upholding the UK's high professional standards.

Labour Markets Minister Paul Scully said:

We're freeing our professions from outdated EU arrangements so they can decide for themselves which individuals hold the qualifications, skills and experience to meet the UK's high standards.

Making sure regulators have the powers to uphold standards is a huge step forward in making the UK the best place to work and do business.

Minister for Investment Lord Gerry Grimstone said:

The Professional Qualifications Act helps deliver a Global Britain by bolstering regulators' ability to strike ambitious international agreements, helping UK professionals get their qualifications recognised around the world.

This will spread UK skills, knowledge and innovation further across the globe, providing a boost to UK businesses exporting their services.

The Act supports the UK's world-leading professions to export their services and strengthens the UK's ability to negotiate and implement ambitious deals on the recognition of professional qualifications.

It also helps UK professionals to be recognised abroad by ensuring UK regulators can strike recognition deals with overseas counterparts including those in Australia and New Zealand following our new trade deals with those partners.

By improving information sharing between regulators and making professions' entry requirements clearer, the Act also helps aspiring professionals understand how to be recognised in the UK.

Hugh Simpson, Chief Executive and Registrar of the Architects Registration

Board (ARB), said:

The UK is a global leader in architecture and we are delighted at the passing of new legislation to help facilitate UK architects to practise globally and for international architects to work in the UK.

The Professional Qualifications Act will enable ARB to enter agreements with regulators in other countries so that UK architects can more easily register and practise internationally and international architects can register and practise in the UK. These Mutual Recognition Agreements, in which we are already in advanced stages of negotiation with the USA, Australia and New Zealand, will ensure standards are maintained and the public can remain confident that only suitably qualified and competent architects can practise in the UK.

The Act applies across the UK and provides for the devolved administrations to make regulations within devolved legislative competence.

The Act also includes targeted measures to improve the regulation of professions across the UK. This includes increasing transparency around entry and practice requirements and improving information sharing between regulators. Taken together, this will help professionals navigate the regulatory landscape through greater transparency around entry and practice requirements.

The Act's key provisions will come into effect between now and the Autumn and the government will work closely with regulators and other stakeholders on the dates for commencement and to make sure regulators are well prepared.

The Act strengthens the UK's ability to negotiate and deliver ambitious arrangements on the recognition of professional qualifications with current and future trade partners. It means the government can further empower UK regulators to strike deals on recognition with their overseas counterparts, helping UK professionals get their qualifications recognised internationally.

The Act helps aspiring professionals understand how to access UK professions and helps UK professionals seeking to get their qualifications recognised to practise overseas. This will include through the continued provision of an assistance centre to help professionals navigate this.

The government will continue to consult and work in partnership with regulators to uphold their autonomy and UK standards, and to ensure the new approach remains up to date.

New subsidy control system will support UK jobs, boost the economy and strengthen the union

- New system will drive economic growth and prosperity and help level-up across the UK
- Rules mean every subsidy must deliver strong benefits for local communities and ensure good value for money for the British taxpayer
- Provides a more agile and flexible system, better suited to the UK's own needs than the EU's bureaucratic EU State aid regime

A new system to regulate subsidies to business receives Royal Assent today (28 April) to boost the economy and put the UK on the front foot in emerging industries, helping growth and jobs.

Under the new rules, the Devolved Administrations and local authorities will, for the first time, decide whether to issue subsidies by following UK-wide principles, delivering good value for the British taxpayer while being awarded in a timely and effective way.

Previously, the devolved administrations were subject to the EU's prescriptive State aid regime which governed the powers of elected governments in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast to support viable businesses. Under the EU system, all subsidies except those under a 'Block Exemption Regulation' had to undergo a lengthy bureaucratic process of being notified to and approved by the European Commission in advance, delaying vital funds from reaching viable businesses in good time.

These UK-wide principles will allow public authorities to deliver subsidies where they are needed without facing excessive red tape, creating a level playing field for subsidies across the entire country.

Small Business Minister Paul Scully said:

The new subsidy control regime is robust yet agile, allowing public authorities to provide subsidies where they are needed most.

Under the EU's State aid regime, the UK was bound by excessive bureaucracy and lengthy pre-approval processes, however now we have the flexibility to better support businesses to grow and thrive, in a way that suits the interests of UK industries and supports the levelling-up agenda.

It is expected to come into force in Autumn 2022.

The new system will prohibit subsidy races in which public authorities try to outbid each other's subsidies to attract investment and will also give public

authorities the flexibility to design subsidies according to local needs, including to give subsidies that target localised and regional inequalities.

The new rules will help foster a vibrant free market economy in the UK by banning unlimited government guarantees to businesses as well as subsidies granted to “ailing or insolvent” enterprises where there is no credible restructuring plan.

The UK’s new system will also contribute to meeting the UK’s international commitments on subsidy control, including its international commitments at the World Trade Organization and in Free Trade Agreements.

Further information

- A subsidy is a financial contribution using public resources which confers a benefit on a specific recipient. This could include, for example, a cash payment, a loan with interest below the market rate, or a guarantee. Subsidies can be given by all levels of government in the UK.
- Enforcement will be through the UK’s courts and tribunal system. Jurisdiction to judicially review the award of subsidies will be given to the Competition Appeal Tribunal.
- Since 1 January 2021, the UK has followed the commitments on subsidy control set out in its free trade agreements with other countries, notably the provisions of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules on subsidies, as well as the relevant provisions within the Northern Ireland Protocol. How to implement our international commitments in UK law is a domestic decision and the new subsidy control regime announced today builds on, and is aligned with, these commitments.
- The new Subsidy Advice Unit will be set up within the Competition and Markets Authority.
- To further streamline the new regime, the government is exempting a limited set of subsidies from the subsidy control principles, such those required for safeguarding national security and subsidies granted temporarily to address emergencies such as flooding. As is the case now, all subsidies will still be subject to WTO rules.
- On 25 March, the government launched a public consultation on the initial Subsidies of Interest/Particular Interest (SSoPI) regulations. The consultation closes on 6 May.
- Ahead of the new regime coming into force, the government will be publishing guidance to support public authorities getting ready for the new rules.
- Until the new regime comes into force in Autumn 2022, public authorities are required to follow the commitments on subsidy control set out in its Free Trade Agreements with other countries, notably the provisions of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, and the WTO rules on subsidies, as well as the relevant provisions within the Northern Ireland Protocol.
- Article 10 of the Northern Ireland Protocol provides that EU State aid rules would continue to apply to the UK in respect of measures which affect trade in goods and wholesale electricity between Northern Ireland

and the EU. In practical terms, this would primarily apply to aid granted to manufacturers of goods and wholesale electricity located in Northern Ireland. Subsidies for services in Northern Ireland will be within scope of the new regime.

- However, as first set out in the Command Paper of July 2021, the Government considers the existing provisions in Article 10 redundant in their current form. The current situation prevents subsidies from being granted on an equal basis across the UK, so there are issues that need to be addressed. We need to see increased engagement from the EU on the Protocol, so that we can work towards solutions.