

Fox pledges to keep Sky News independent of Murdoch

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Rupert Murdoch's 21st Century Fox has vowed to preserve the editorial

independence of Sky News in order to secure its takeover of pan-European TV giant Sky, documents showed Monday.

Britain's top competition regulator, which had ruled last month that the Sky [takeover](#) was not in the public interest, revealed the Fox pledge in submissions published online.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) regulator had provisionally concluded in January that the takeover would hand too much power over British media to Murdoch.

In response, Fox pledged a series of measures to "guarantee" the editorial independence of Sky News.

Should the takeover proceed, Fox said in its submission that it would establish an independent board to outline the media organisation's editorial strategy and direction.

Fox added that "no employee or officer of 21st Century Fox, or a member of the 21st Century Fox board who is a trustee or beneficiary of the Murdoch Family Trust, will influence or attempt to influence the editorial choices made by the head of Sky News".

The group would maintain a Sky-branded [news](#) service in Britain with equivalent levels of investment for at least five years.

21st Century Fox had bid £11.4 billion (\$15.1 billion, 12.7 billion euros) two years ago for the 61-percent of Sky it does not already own.

In a twist to the Sky saga, Disney announced in December a \$52.4-billion deal to buy 21st Century Fox.

However, the CMA had also indicated last month that its plurality

concerns would "fall away" on completion of Disney's takeover of Fox.

The entertainment group added in its submission therefore that its proposed remedies would cease to exist once the Disney takeover was sealed.

The British government had referred the takeover to the CMA for an in-depth probe last September owing to concerns about media plurality and broadcasting standards.

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The CMA, which will publish its final report on May 1, had last month outlined three possible remedies for its concerns.

Those included blocking the deal, spinning off or selling Sky News, or seeking to "insulate" Sky News from the influence of the Murdoch Family Trust.

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