

BCC: Business welcomes milestone agreement on Brexit transition period

Commenting on the agreement of a 'status quo' transition period by UK and EU27 Brexit negotiators, Dr Adam Marshall, Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce, said:

"This is a milestone that many businesses across the UK have been waiting for. The agreement of a status quo transition period is great news for trading firms on both sides of the Channel, as it means that they will face little or no change in day-to-day business in the short term.

"While some companies would have liked to see copper-bottomed legal guarantees around the transition, the political agreement reached in Brussels is sufficient for most businesses to plan ahead with a greater degree of confidence. Many companies will now have the clarity they require to proceed with investment and hiring strategies that would otherwise have remained in question.

"In the interests of business across Europe, both sides must now do everything in their power to ensure that the transition does not become a political football later in the negotiation process."

On citizens' rights, Marshall said:

"Businesses across the UK will be particularly relieved that they will be able to hire and retain European nationals on similar terms over the next two years, given the significant skills gaps they continue to contend with."

On trade agreements, he added:

"A priority for both the UK and the EU must now be to secure agreement from our shared trading partners to keeping the status quo on existing EU free trade agreements. Any loss of market access would hurt UK exporters and European supply chains alike. It is excellent that the UK and the EU agree on the need for continuity in existing trade agreements; together, we must now seek confirmation from our trading partners.

"While businesses are interested in the prospect of the UK being able to sign new trade agreements during the transition period, the top priority must be to retain market access on the same terms with existing trading partners."

On the future UK/EU trading relationship, Marshall concluded:

"Over the next few days, securing assent from the European Council must be the top priority. Over the coming weeks and months, the UK government and the European Commission must adopt a laser-like focus on the future trading relationship – and swiftly conclude a deal that minimises further adjustment costs and that answers the many practical questions that trading businesses

still face.

“A zero-tariff agreement is a no-brainer for both sides. However, businesses need to see more pragmatic positions from both sides on customs and cooperation in services.”

Ends

Notes to editors:

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) sits at the heart of a powerful network of 52 Accredited Chambers of Commerce across the UK, representing thousands of businesses of all sizes and within all sectors. Our Global Business Network connects exporters with nearly 40 markets around the world. For more information, visit: www.britishchambers.org.uk

Media contacts:

Allan Williams – Head of Press and Communications

020 7654 5812 / 07920583381

Orla Hennessy – Press and Communications Officer

020 7654 5813 / 07825746812