

BCC: Pragmatism, not ideology, needed in customs debate

Reacting to comments made by Business Secretary Greg Clark MP and other political interviewees on the Andrew Marr programme regarding future customs arrangements, Dr Adam Marshall, Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce, said:

Whatever the final customs deal, the UK government must ensure that trading businesses face only one set of changes, not two, as they move goods across borders whether by land, sea or air.

“An agreement to maintain something close to the status quo until new rules, technology, infrastructure and staff are in place is a no-brainer. The alternative is greater uncertainty, disrupted supply chains, and one costly adjustment after another.

“Every trading business I speak to wants practical considerations, not ideology, to drive Cabinet decision-making and negotiations with the EU. The customs question is no different. If the government’s position is that the UK will not be in a customs union with the EU, it has an obligation to make this shift happen with the least possible disruption to business, consumers and the wider economy.

“A clear sunset clause would ensure that a pragmatic customs transition is completed without a cliff-edge for business or endless can-kicking by ministers.”

Ends

Notes to editors:

The British Chambers of Commerce has not endorsed any proposals for a final-status customs arrangement.

BCC research with the Port of Dover released on Monday 30th April, which surveyed 835 exporting and importing firms in Q1 2018, found that:

- 36% of trading businesses rely on just-in-time delivery of materials or components
- 33% of businesses affected by the implementation of new customs procedures still aren’t planning for checks and declarations between the UK and the EU
- 29% of companies believe they will be impacted in terms of administration, costs or operations by delays or congestion at UK or European ports after Brexit – but aren’t yet planning for this.

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) sits at the heart of a powerful network of 53 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

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