

New approach to import controls to help ease cost of living

The remaining import controls on EU goods will no longer be introduced this year, the government has announced today.

Instead, traders will continue to move their goods from the European Union to Great Britain as they do now.

Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, and the recent rise in global energy costs, have had a significant effect on supply chains that are still recovering from the pandemic.

The government has therefore concluded that it would be wrong to impose new administrative requirements on businesses who may pass-on the associated costs to consumers already facing pressures on their finances.

The change in approach is expected to save British importers at least £1 billion in annual costs.

The Government will now review how to implement these remaining controls in an improved way. The new Target Operating Model will be based on a better assessment of risk and will harness the power of data and technology. It will be published in the Autumn and the new controls regime will come into force at the end of 2023.

This process will build on existing work already taking place as part of the 2025 Border Strategy, including on the UK Single Trade Window – a new digital platform that will help traders to more easily move goods globally. Our goal is to create a seamless new 'digital' border, where technologies and real-time data will cut queues and smooth trade.

The controls introduced in January 2021 on the highest risk imports of animals, animal products, plants and plant products will continue to apply alongside the customs controls which have already been introduced.

Minister for Brexit Opportunities, Jacob Rees-Mogg said:

Today's decision will allow British businesses to focus on their recovery from the pandemic, navigate global supply chain issues and ensure that new costs are not passed on to consumers.

It's vital that we have the right import controls regime in place, so we'll now be working with industry to review these remaining controls so that they best suit the UK's own interests.

We want the process for importing goods from the EU to be safe, secure and efficient and we want to harness innovative new technologies to streamline processes and reduce frictions. It's

precisely because of Brexit that we're able to build this UK-focussed system

The UK Government is committed to ensuring the process for importing goods remains safe, secure and efficient and will harness innovative new technologies to streamline future processes and reduce frictions.

Our engagement with industry will be guided by these objectives, and will build on existing work already taking place, including on the UK Single Trade Window – a new digital gateway that will help traders to more easily move goods globally.

John Keefe, Director of Public Affairs. Eurotunnel said:

Eurotunnel supports this decision which will keep goods flowing seamlessly into the UK. It is good for traders as it reduces import declaration paperwork on food and perishables.

It is good for transporters as it increases fluidity at the border and it is good for consumers as it keeps the cost of living down.

Michael Schymik, International Director of SEF Langdon's said:

The current paper-based SPS processes and procedures are unsuitable in a 21st century digital world.

This change in policy towards a smarter digital border by the UK Government will allow the free flow of safe food products into Great Britain.

The decision may lead to a return of more EU companies exporting to the GB market, increasing competition and ultimately lowering prices for the consumer.

Notes to editors: