

# New Trade Commissioners to lead UK trade and investment overseas

- International Trade Secretary, Liz Truss, appoints three HM Trade Commissioners
- They will operate across China and Hong Kong, South Asia and Europe
- HM Trade Commissioners champion British trade around the world

International Trade Secretary, Liz Truss, has named three new HM Trade Commissioners (HMTCs). They will champion British trade with some of the UK's biggest economic partners as the Coronavirus crisis highlights just how important it is to keep trade flowing and supply chains open so we can all have the essential supplies we need.

CEO of the Commonwealth Enterprise & Investment Council, Alan Gemmell, has been appointed as HMTC for South Asia. Consul-General in Shanghai, John Edwards, becomes HMTC for China and Hong Kong. The previous HM Trade Commissioner for China, Richard Burn, has been appointed temporarily to the role of HMTC Europe.

## **International Trade Secretary, Liz Truss said:**

By attracting inward investment and supporting UK businesses, our HM Trade Commissioners will play a key part in delivering free trade agreements that benefits every part of the UK.

It's fantastic to welcome Alan, John and Richard who are great champions of British trade and bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to their new roles.

## **Permanent Secretary at the Department for International Trade, Antonia Romeo said:**

I am delighted to welcome John, Alan and Richard to their new roles on the DIT leadership team. They all have proven expertise and experience in supporting British businesses to export and grow internationally, and attracting inward investment into the UK. At this time, this work is more important than ever.

£286 billion of goods and services were traded between the UK and Asian countries in 2019. The continent is also home to 6 of the top 20 fastest-growing economies in the world and the diverse and fast-growing economies of the region offer huge potential to UK business.

In 2019, the total trade in goods and services between the UK and South Asia was £30 billion, an increase of 9.9% or £2.7 billion compared to 2018; and

the total trade in goods and services between the UK and China and Hong Kong was £104.6 billion, an increase of 16% or £14.4 billion compared to 2018.

**Speaking after his appointment, HMTc for South Asia, Alan Gemmell said:**

I'm excited to return to South Asia as HM Trade Commissioner. The UK and South Asia share deep personal links and strong business connections.

I look forward to helping these relationships flourish with trade and investment at their heart.

**John Edwards, HMTc for China and Hong Kong said:**

Our bilateral trade with China and Hong Kong broke £100bn for the first time in 2019 with our exports to China growing faster than any other global region. Regions across the UK also continue to benefit from Chinese investment – more than any other country in Europe.

**Richard Burn, HMTc for Europe, added:**

All European countries will remain critically important trading partners for the UK, as we agree a new trading relationship with the EU.

The mission of DIT across the Europe region will be to help British businesses succeed in the new trading environment and to build an ambitious level of inward investment.

**About HMTcs**

All of the new HMTcs cooperate closely with HM Ambassadors and High Commissioners, the wider diplomatic network, and other HM Government colleagues based in countries in their region, in a joined-up and coordinated government effort overseas to promote UK trade and prosperity.

In total, there will be 9 geographical areas that the HM Trade Commissioners cover:

- Africa
- Asia-Pacific
- China
- Eastern Europe and Central Asia Network
- Europe
- Latin America
- Middle East
- North America

- South Asia