

News story: HM Trade Commissioner for Asia Pacific named

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP has named Natalie Black as Her Majesty's Trade Commissioner for Asia Pacific. Ms Black joins the Department for International Trade (DIT) from 10 Downing Street, where she was Deputy Head of the Prime Minister's Policy Unit.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP said:

Natalie's experience from working at the heart of government will be a major asset as she takes on her role in this international economic department as HM Trade Commissioner for Asia Pacific. She'll lead the government's trade and investment promotion and policy work in a region rich with opportunity.

This appointment is a crucial step forward in building stronger trading links with exciting and diverse economies as we leave the European Union.

DIT Permanent Secretary Antonia Romeo added:

I'm delighted to welcome Natalie to DIT's senior team. Her appointment follows a global competitive recruitment process to attract the best of Whitehall and private sector talent to HM Trade Commissioner roles.

Natalie's experience at the heart of government working with businesses, particularly in fast growing sectors such as tech, will be a major asset for us in leading and coordinating the government's trade and investment promotion and policy work in the important Asia Pacific region.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP and HM Trade Commissioner for Asia Pacific Natalie Black

On her ambitions for UK trade in the region, HM Trade Commissioner for Asia Pacific Natalie Black said:

I am excited to be joining DIT in this new role as HM Trade Commissioner for Asia Pacific. Stretching from Japan to New Zealand, and covering the ASEAN economies, this is a vibrant, innovative region with immense opportunity for more collaboration and new partnerships. We have a fantastic opportunity to put the UK in prime position to benefit from the opening up of new markets,

and to establish stronger trading links with trading partners such as Australia.

About Asia Pacific

The Asia Pacific region is home to some of the world's fast-emerging economies and established trading partners, such as Singapore, Australia and New Zealand, which have been a major focus of Dr Fox's international economic department.

South East Asian countries – part of ASEAN – already account for more than £32 billion of trade with the UK, 2016 figures show. Total UK trade in goods and services with the Asia Pacific region in the same year was worth £88 billion.

Her Majesty's Trade Commissioners

Black brings an excellent track-record of working with business and overseas partners, and was instrumental in developing the government's Industrial Strategy and delivering the high-profile National Cyber Security Strategy.

The new role – one of 9 HM Trade Commissioners – will see her build on the progress already made through trade working groups with Australia, New Zealand and Japan, as the UK forges ahead with its post-Brexit trade plan.

Natalie joins:

- Emma Wade-Smith (Africa)
- Simon Penney (Middle East)
- Richard Burn (China)
- Jo Crellin (Latin America)
- Crispin Simon (South Asia)
- Judith Slater (Eastern Europe and Central Asia)
- Antony Phillipson (North America)

A Commissioner for Europe will be announced shortly, completing the appointment of DIT's senior leadership team under the direction of Permanent Secretary Antonia Romeo.