

Outside the EU, a bright future awaits Britain

Leaving the European Union is, I've often argued, a bit like moving house. Instead of being lodgers under someone else's roof we are choosing a new place in the world where we're in control. Four years after we made the decision to leave the EU, the reasons for moving are stronger than ever. Taking back control of our economy means we can put in place the right measures for our Covid recovery.

Taking back control of the money we send to Brussels means we can spend it on our priorities: investing in the NHS, spreading opportunity more equally across the UK and strengthening our Union. We can build a trading relationship with our European neighbours that serves all our interests and develop new economic partnerships across the world.

The deal the Prime Minister struck last year, and which the country backed in the general election, ensured we left the EU in January and means we can look forward with confidence to the end of the transition period on December 31. But, just like a house move, we need to make sure all the practical arrangements for our new future are in place.

Everyone has their part to play, starting with the government.

That's why on Sunday we're investing £705 million to make sure our borders are ready for full independence. We're investing in new infrastructure, more jobs and better technology to help goods move smoothly, make our country more secure and our citizens safer. The money will ensure that Great Britain's new borders will be ready when the UK takes back control on January 1 2021, and will also lay the foundations for us to build the world's most effective border by 2025.

Modernising our border means we can introduce a migration policy that ensures we're open to the world's best talent. A new points-based immigration system will ensure we can attract the scientists, innovators and entrepreneurs who can power future economic growth. It will also help us ensure our NHS has the very best professionals from across the world working in our hospitals. And the new technology we're introducing will allow us to monitor with far greater precision exactly who, and what, is coming in and out of the country, enabling us to deal more effectively with organised crime and other security threats.

Alongside the investment we are making in infrastructure we're also launching a major new public information campaign, "The UK's new start: let's get going" to give everyone the facts we need to be ready for January 1 2021. Whether you're the managing director of a multinational conglomerate or a family business; a UK citizen resident in the EU or planning to work abroad, the new campaign will clearly set out the steps that will help this big change go as smoothly as possible.

A straightforward checker tool at gov.uk/transition will quickly identify the specific steps any business or individual needs to take to be ready, and will allow companies and citizens to sign up for bespoke updates. Taking these steps will equip everyone for this new chapter in our country's story.

Helping businesses adjust to life outside the EU Customs Union will enable them to more easily access the new opportunities being an independent trading nation will bring, such as those presented by trade deals with the Japan, Australia, New Zealand and other growing Pacific economies as well as deeper ties with North America and the developing world.

We're negotiating hard, of course, to get the best possible trading relationship with our neighbours in the EU but we won't back down on the essential principles the country voted for when we chose to leave. We won't accept control of our laws by the EU or allow our new-found independence to be compromised. Whatever the nature of our trading relationship with the EU we'll be outside the single market and the customs union – and that means the preparations for new export arrangements and new border processes will be needed whatever the negotiations bring.

These have been challenging times for our country, but, as the Chancellor reminded us this week, government can help lay the foundations for recovery and future growth. That's what we're doing this week as we prepare for our new life fully outside the EU. We're building the border that allows us to take back control. Let's get going.