

# Press release: Alun Cairns: “The EU referendum delivered a golden opportunity to recast our place in the world”

The outcome of the EU referendum delivered a golden opportunity for us to recast our place in the world. An opportunity where Wales can sell itself on a global stage and where our businesses can forge new lucrative relationships with the millions of people around the world looking for their skills, expertise, goods and services.

In our ongoing effort to support their ambitions, the UK Government has convened a Board of Trade to meet the modern needs of businesses, exporters and inward investors across the country. The second meeting of the Board will take place in Preston today – an area playing an integral part in the success of the Northern Powerhouse which stretches from North Wales to Newcastle.

I will take my place at the table with two key aims – to show that Wales is open for business and to underline the fact that there has never been a better time for Welsh companies to export overseas.

Wales is already punching above its weight on the global stage. Exports from Wales rose by 12.3% to £16.4 billion in the latest year on year figures, and is home to nearly 4,000 exporters with an average value per exporter of more than £4.2million.

North Wales’ companies are making a significant contribution to that success.

Products made in North Wales are proudly sold right around the globe. One of the first Board of Trade award winners announced today, Halen Mon Sea Salt is now sold in over 17 countries, and over half of the world’s commercial aircraft are now flying on wings made by Airbus in Broughton.

I was also delighted to welcome Snowdonia Cheese Company to London earlier this month at a UK Government celebration of international Welsh trade at the Foreign Office. This is a company scaling the heights of export ambition, actively infiltrating markets across Europe, North America, Asia and the Pacific nations.

And international companies are also showing confidence in the Welsh economy. Only last month, Toyota announced its commitment to building the next generation Auris vehicle at their plant in Derbyshire, confirming that the majority of the engines will be sourced from Deeside.

This is testament to the confidence there is in Wales’ credentials as a prime destination for international investment, and the UK Government’s commitment to creating the conditions to make these deals happen.

And as we mark the one-year anniversary of the triggering of Article 50, we can take confidence in the fact that – for the first time in 40 years – we will soon be in charge of our own trade policy. One that puts all regions of the United Kingdom at its heart.

We will be able to take a fresh look at our approach to trade and investment and how we do business. And every choice we make will be in the interests of the UK.

There has never been a better time for Welsh companies to start exporting to new markets.

We are on the verge of a bright, prosperous future. The opportunities are there for the taking. We need only the courage to seize them.

**ENDS**