

# Press release: New laws to set out UK and Wales trading future

The UK Government took an important step to minimise disruption and offer certainty to Welsh businesses and trading partners today taking forward the next two Brexit Bills to Parliament.

The UK Government has been working closely with the Welsh Government at all levels to ensure trade policy works for Wales and that businesses there will continue to benefit from existing trade deals after the UK leaves the EU.

The Bills will look to support Wales' growing exports, 61% of which went to non-EU countries in 2016, and foreign investment. In the last year alone, foreign investment created over 2,500 jobs from 85 new projects.

Key measures in the Trade Bill include provisions for the UK to implement existing EU trade agreements, ensuring UK companies can continue to access major government contracts in other countries and creating a new trade remedies body to defend UK businesses against unfair and injurious trade practices.

Further tax-related elements of the UK's trade policy will be legislated in the Treasury's Customs Bill – Taxation (Cross-border Trade) Bill – as part of the creation of a new UK tariff regime. This includes the trade remedies and unilateral trade preferences which provide preferential trade access to UK markets for developing countries.

Following a recent meeting with the Welsh Government in Cardiff, the International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox welcomed the commitments as part of the new legislation to work with the Welsh Government to create trade policies which work for Wales' businesses and consumers.

## **Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:**

There has never been a better time for Welsh companies to trade and export overseas and this Bill will provide businesses with stability and certainty to continue doing so.

We now have the opportunity to shape our own ambitious trade and investment opportunities in Europe and beyond, and put Wales and Britain firmly at the forefront of global trade and investment.

## **International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox said:**

This Bill will ensure that we support Wales' extensive global trade, reaching out to growing international markets, with 61% of its exports going beyond the EU, while supporting its existing

trade partners.

We want Wales to trade across the world on a level playing field and this Bill provides that, enabling us to continue our existing trade agreements and manage our own customs for the whole of the UK.

## **Trade Bill**

The Trade Bill laid in Parliament today will:

- Create powers to assist in the transition of over 40 existing trade agreements between the EU and other countries;
- Enable the UK to have continued access to £1.3 trillion worth of government contracts and procurement opportunities in 47 countries – by becoming an independent member of the Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA);
- Establish a new independent UK body, the Trade Remedies Authority, to defend UK businesses against trade fluctuations and unfair trade practices; and
- Ensure the UK Government has the legal abilities for gathering and sharing trade information, as evidence to support UK businesses against surges in imports and unfair practices.

## **Customs Bill**

The government also laid resolutions for the Customs Bill, which will enter Parliament shortly. The Bill will allow the government to create a standalone customs regime and amend the VAT and excise regimes including allowing the government to:

- Charge and vary customs duty on goods;
- Specify which goods pay what duty;
- Set preferential or additional duties in certain circumstances – for example, to support developing countries; and
- Maintain a functioning movement of goods from the day we leave the EU by continuing the VAT and excise regimes in line with the final deal reached in negotiations.