

Press release: UK and Palestinian Authority sign trade continuity agreement

A trade continuity agreement will see Palestinian businesses and consumers benefitting from continued trade after the UK leaves the European Union, UK International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox said today (Monday 18 February).

In Ramallah, the UK-Palestinian Authority agreement was signed by both the International Trade Secretary and Her Excellency, Abeer Odeh, Minister of National Economy.

The agreement simplifies trade and will allow businesses to trade as freely as they do now once the UK leaves the EU.

Trading on these preferential terms, rather than on World Trade Organization terms, will continue to deliver significant savings and help to further strengthen the bilateral trading relationship.

The agreement allows Palestinian businesses to continue access to the UK market tariff-free which will continue to benefit Palestinian producers in priority sectors, including exporters of fruit, nuts and vegetable fats including dates and olive oil.

Today's signing reflects the importance of bilateral relations between the UK and the Palestinian Authority. The Agreement demonstrates the UK's commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation, promoting Palestinian economic growth, and maintaining the UK's strong commitment to a two-state solution.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP said:

Today's agreement will help give UK and Palestinian businesses, exporters and consumers the certainty they need to continue trading freely as the UK prepares to leave the EU.

The agreement reflects the importance of the UK-Palestinian relationship, a thriving Palestinian economy is in all our interests. We look forward to further strengthening our trade and investment relations with the Palestinian people.

The news has been welcomed by the Palestine British Business Council.

Antoine Mattar, Chair of the Council, said;

The Palestine Britain Business Council welcomes the trade agreement between the United Kingdom and the Palestinian Authority.

This agreement avoids unnecessary tariffs which will ultimately save British consumers money on items such as dates and olive oil. Frictionless trade also helps to keep people in employment and create new jobs, supporting the Palestinian economy and helping Palestinians work towards a prosperous future.

The UK is seeking to provide continuity for around 40 existing EU trade agreements covering more than 70 countries.

Like these agreements, the new UK-Palestinian Authority agreement replicates the existing trading arrangements as far as possible. It will come into effect as soon as the implementation period ends in January 2021, or on 29 March 2019 if the UK leaves the EU without a deal.