

Press release: UK and Switzerland agree to transition trade agreement after Brexit

The UK Government and the Swiss Federal Council have approved the transition of a trade agreement, allowing businesses to continue trading freely after the UK leaves the European Union.

This is the first and one of the most significant existing trade agreements to the UK to have been agreed as part of the government's preparations to ensure continuity for businesses and consumers as we leave the EU.

There are around 40 existing EU trade agreements that the UK government is seeking to provide continuity for and a number of other agreements are at an advanced stage.

The agreement replicates the existing EU-Switzerland arrangements as far as possible and 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. It has now been initialled by both countries.

Britain has a major trade surplus with Switzerland, with exports worth £19.04 billion last year. British exports have grown by 41.1% in the last 5 years.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox said:

This is one of the most significant existing trade agreements, with British companies exporting £19 billion worth of goods and services last year, and it will provide the certainty that businesses need to continue trading freely.

This is the first of around 40 trade agreements that we will provide continuity for and many other agreements are also close to being agreed. It is a vital part of our no deal planning and it means that businesses and consumers can continue to benefit from our close trading relationships with the world beyond the European Union.

Carolyn Fairbairn, CBI Director-General, said:

It's good news that a transition to a trade agreement with Switzerland has been agreed.

A great deal with the EU needs to be delivered alongside continuity of the trade agreements the UK already enjoys through single market membership. The opportunity now is to reach agreement on the

remaining deals.

British jewellery, precious stones and metal are the largest goods exports to Switzerland, worth £10.7 billion in 2017. Pharmaceutical products also continue to be one of the UKs biggest exports to Switzerland, worth over £500m in 2017.

Once the agreement is signed, both the UK and Switzerland will seek parliamentary approval for the agreement.