

# [Press release: Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson meeting with Chief Executive of Afghanistan Dr Abdullah Abdullah](#)

FCO spokesman said:

The Foreign Secretary today [7 June] hosted Dr Abdullah Abdullah, Chief Executive of Afghanistan, for talks at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The Foreign Secretary reiterated UK commitment to Afghanistan and support for a sustainable Afghan-owned and Afghan-led peace process with the Taliban. They discussed today's announcement by President Ghani on a temporary ceasefire over Eid al-Fitr and the progress that had been made in Afghanistan since 2001, particularly in the fields of human rights and girls' education, while acknowledging that challenges remained.

They discussed Afghanistan-Pakistan relations and the importance of building trust between the two sides in support of lasting peace in Afghanistan. They also discussed the upcoming Afghan parliamentary and presidential elections. Dr Abdullah raised his concerns about the impact on Afghanistan of sanctions on Iran.

Finally, the Foreign Secretary urged Afghanistan to attend the special conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention taking place on 26-27 June as a clear signal of the global commitment to uphold the global ban on chemical weapons.

## **Further information**

- Follow the Foreign Secretary on Twitter [@BorisJohnson](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

## **Media enquiries**

For journalists

Email

[newsdesk@fco.gov.uk](mailto:newsdesk@fco.gov.uk)

Newsdesk  
020 7008 3100

---

## **News story: Government extends Public Lending Right scheme to ebook authors**

From July 1, the Public Lending Right Scheme will cover ebooks and e-audiobooks that are loaned from public libraries across Great Britain. The change means that authors are eligible for payment in the same way if their works are borrowed electronically or as physical books.

E-lending in public libraries has risen dramatically in the past six years. Last year more than 6,750,000 works were borrowed electronically, compared to just 750,000 in 2011/12.

The UK is one of the first countries to extend its library lending compensation scheme to remote e-lending.

Libraries Minister Michael Ellis said: "We want to help our libraries thrive in the digital age.

"This legislation fulfils a manifesto commitment and recognises the exciting increase in e-lending. By extending the scheme we are ensuring authors are properly compensated as the ebook industry continues to grow into the future."

Tom Holland, chair of the PLR Advisory Committee, said: "It is excellent news that the Government is backing a PLR fit for the 21st century. This will be hugely to the benefit of authors, who are fully aware that printed books these days are not the only way of reaching their readers."

The Public Lending Right scheme is managed by the British Library on behalf of the Government, with more than £6 million of payments made to 22,000 authors, illustrators, photographers, translators and rights holders each year.

---

## **Speech: An enduring home for German**

# investment

It's a rare treat to share a dinner with people who love Germany like me.

It's been more than 3 decades since the first time I moved to Berlin, when I spent the best part of a year working in a variety of student roles: in Sommerbad Kreuzberg, in McDonalds and in the Kaufhaus des Westens.

It was a perfect time to be in West Berlin, in the late 1980's: a chance to see a unique environment and a soon-to-become unique opportunity to visit the old Eastern Bloc, as an impressionable 19-year-old.

These days, it's a long way for a 19-year-old to travel to Pyongyang, Havana or Caracas.

But I digress. Returning to Germany, I've now got a German wife and 2 half-German children, and I still speak a lot of German at home – which is lucky, as I'll be in Hamburg later this month giving a German-language speech!

So I'd like to thank our hosts tonight for the work they do to strengthen Anglo-German relations.

And I'd like to thank everyone here, as trade and business are at the heart of that relation. And that means you – you're the ones who trade; I just facilitate you trading.

And you do trade a lot – £50 billion worth of British exports go to Germany. More than half as much again comes the other way – in fact, Germany's trade surplus with the UK has increased by 75% in just 5 years.

But I know some of you are worried about the future: that maybe, after Brexit, Britain and Germany won't be so close, and investing and trading won't be so easy.

Well I'd like to offer you some reassurance. I can promise you that, regardless of Brexit, the UK will remain one of the most business-friendly places on earth.

There's a lot of governments who, frankly, are starting to take business and free markets for granted.

We don't and we won't.

We're independently ranked seventh in the world for ease of doing business. That's something we're proud of, and it didn't happen overnight – it comes from decades of business-friendly policies.

And I am certain that once we leave the European Union, British businesses will still have good access to the German market, and vice versa.

We've already made progress – on citizens' rights, the budget, the transition

period, on third-party trade agreements. And soon we'll be publishing a Brexit White Paper – that's precisely to give more clarity and therefore more certainty.

Yes there are areas of difficulty like the Irish border, and yes sometimes the devil is in the detail.

But I think back to when I worked in finance, in New York and London. Many business deals I traded on involved haggling on detail. And if I'd have interpreted every difficulty to mean the deal would be called off I'd have lost the shirt off my back.

Let's take a cool look instead, at the facts.

Fact 1: a good deal is in everyone's interest. On the day we leave we'll become, overnight, the EU's second-largest export market – only slightly behind the US, but well ahead of China, Japan, or Russia.

Fact 2: this will be the only trade deal in history where the 2 sides start from a position of regulatory alignment. That's a unique advantage, and in technical terms makes the agreement much more straightforward.

Fact 3: we've already reached agreement in a lot of places. Over three-quarters of the draft withdrawal text is coloured green – and much of the rest is agreed in principle.

That bodes well for a future trade agreement, too. It's easy to take what's agreed for granted and focus on what isn't – easy, but misleading.

Finally, Fact 4: this isn't just about mutual self-interest. The EU and the UK are and will remain close partners.

A couple of weeks ago I was at an EU Trade Ministers' Council. We are getting close to signing trade agreements with Singapore and Japan.

And Britain supported that – more trade is good for everyone, and we'll continue to engage constructively while we're a member state.

As the recent US tariffs have shown, those of us who do believe in the global free-trading system have a shared interest in upholding it – and that means showing leadership by approaching our own trade negotiations constructively.

Right at the heart of that partnership is the bilateral relation between Britain and Germany – Europe's 2 largest economies, and 2 of its most business-friendly.

That's a relationship we should cherish. So I'm really glad to be here tonight to celebrate it with you all.

---

## [News story: CIC Webinar: Wednesday 20 June 2018 11:00am – 11:30am](#)

*Updated:* link update

This is the latest topic in a series of CIC webinars. To take part please [signup](#)

---

## [Speech: Why UK-ASEAN trade ties are thriving](#)

It's been 50 years since the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) came together as a group of like-minded nations to promote regional trade and the benefits it delivers to all.

ASEAN has come a long way in the last half century, representing some of the world's most dynamic and fast-growing economies. Boosted by a young and growing population, the ASEAN region is already equivalent to the world's seventh largest economy with a growth rate of around 5%, which means that it is on course to be the fourth biggest by 2030.

Recently, I attended the UK ASEAN Business Council (UKABC) summer reception, a forum for trade representatives to discuss our rapidly growing trade ties.

Southeast Asia is a vital cog in the movement of goods and is essential for international trade to flourish. As such, ASEAN matters to Britain and is a key component in the UK's drive to increase trade with countries around the world. In 2016, UK-ASEAN alone trade increased by 9.1% and went above £30 billion (about \$40 billion) for the first time – and I expect this figure to continue to grow dramatically in the years to come.

Supporting and improving Britain's global trade links is a central priority as Britain leaves the EU, moving toward an independent trading future. In response, the Department for International Trade was created to support UK businesses to sell their goods and services trade around the world. And opportunities in fast growing markets are a key part of our future potential.

Highlighting the UK's commitment to growing our trade ties with ASEAN, so far, this year we've had 3 planned visits to the region by trade ministers: International Trade Secretary Liam Fox visited Thailand last month, a few weeks ago our Trade Policy minister, Greg Hands, went to Singapore for the ASEAN Leadership Forum a few weeks ago.

Today, nearly 25,000 UK businesses export to ASEAN-4 (Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam) alone – making the grouping the UK's second-largest global export destination after the United States. But, whilst this shows the significant scale of our current trade connections with ASEAN, there is still scope for much more scope for growth.

British businesses start from a strong base: we're already the second-biggest European investor in the region, supporting growth and jobs on both sides. In Singapore alone there are 4,000 British companies employing 50,000 people.

Today, services make up 44% of our total value of exports, a higher proportion of our GDP than any other major economy. Meanwhile, ASEAN countries imported \$311 billion of services in 2015, up almost 30% on 2010. The demand is there, and making it easier for firms here in London to work in cities like Singapore, Bangkok and Jakarta will bring huge benefits.

But trade is key to the mutual progress of both sides of our ties, which is why the UK is determined to improve and develop trading relations, and we are making progress. Last year, UK global exports rose 9.2% (£52.8 billion) to £628.8 billion in the year between April 2017 and the end of March 2018, driven in large part by increased trade with fast-growing nations outside the EU, such as those in ASEAN.

Opportunities for increased trade between the UK and ASEAN will offer benefits to both our economies. That is why I am determined to help ensure that the people of both ASEAN and the UK continue to benefit over the next 50 years.