

# Speech: The UK's shared economic values with Sweden

Britain cares deeply about its relationship with Sweden. I am here to reinforce this message from our Prime Minister, our Parliament and our people.

Whilst in Stockholm today (13 February 2018), I will be meeting with Finance Minister Magdalena Andersson to ensure that the bonds between our citizens and businesses strengthen over the coming years.

Our two countries are linked by shared economic principles: we both aim to maximise our trade opportunities globally, and we both have deep expertise in our respective financial sectors. Our economies are closely linked: from Spotify to IKEA, we Brits consume Swedish products at an astonishing rate. Nearly 7% of all Swedish exports end up in the UK, making us Sweden's sixth most important export partner.

As you know, the British people have voted for Brexit, and the British government is committed to delivering this in a way that protects the interests of families and businesses. We will leave the EU in March 2019, but we are not leaving Europe. We want to maintain the close connections between the UK and the economies of the EU27.

In the short term, our priority is to offer certainty. To do this, we must agree a time-limited Implementation Period after we leave the EU. Again, this is in both our interests because businesses across Sweden, the UK, and Europe will have time to prepare for a single set of changes once we know what our future partnership will look like.

Of course, Sweden did not vote for Brexit, but you have a strong interest in a successful outcome. You rightly want to maintain the integrity of the Single Market and the Customs Union while avoiding damage to trade and economic growth. If we can be ambitious in agreeing a new model of cooperation, one that looks beyond models that already exist, then I am confident that we can agree a deal that is good for the UK, for Sweden and for the EU.

This future partnership must cover the length and breadth of our economies, including financial services. This will benefit all of us: in the UK and the EU. The City of London is a global financial centre, which attracts capital and people from across the world and channels finance into the European economy. London's strengths – concentration of activity, depth of expertise, and ability to channel capital – cannot be easily replicated. We can and should approach negotiations with the aim to preserve this European asset, securing a deal that benefits both our economies.

We want to establish a new economic partnership with the EU that recognises our existing deep interconnectedness. A spirit of pragmatic cooperation is vital to achieving this.

I say this because both sides need to be clear about what they want from a future relationship. The complaint from Brussels has been that the UK “hasn’t made up its mind what type of relationship it wants” but in London, many feel that we have little signal of what future relationship the EU27 would like to have with a post-Brexit Britain. I don’t believe this can be a question only for British politicians and British voters to resolve.

If we can work together on the basis that a good deal is in everybody’s interests, we can agree a future partnership preserving the best of what we have – allowing our businesses to continue trading together in goods and services.

Two weeks ago the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge came to Sweden to celebrate your energy, creativity and innovation. Let us use this same energy to agree a new, deep and special partnership that keeps our relationship growing strongly in the future.