

UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement: open letter from Ambassador Johnston to business in Ireland

On Christmas Eve, we all got an early present: the conclusion, after 9 months, of a [Trade and Co-operation Agreement between the UK and the EU](#), and the conclusion, after four and a half years – almost to the day – of the process begun with the UK's referendum vote to leave the EU.

At the end of this year, I'd like to thank the business community in Ireland for your engagement, support and all the contributions you have made during this period, and I want to set out how the UK government sees the prospects for the new year and beyond.

I've been delighted to see that government, political leaders and business groups across Ireland have welcomed the Agreement, while recognising that business will need ongoing advice and support to adapt to the new circumstances.

Agreeing the deal involved compromise on both sides and both sides had to accept outcomes different from those they initially wanted. In other words, it was like any negotiation, or indeed any business deal: give and take prevailed.

It's a good deal for the UK and the EU, and in particular for the UK and Ireland. It will enable strong business to business and people to people connections to flourish North-South and East-West. And it confirms the particular arrangements and advantages to be enjoyed by Northern Ireland from the Withdrawal Agreement last year, reflecting the commitments both the UK and Ireland have given with regard to the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. This also recognises and supports the depth and importance of the supply chains between Northern Ireland and Ireland, especially in the agri-food sector.

More broadly, the new UK/EU agreement enables the enormous trading and economic relationship between the UK and our European partners and friends. It provides an important degree of continuity for both the UK and EU economies by enabling businesses on both sides of the Channel – and the Irish Sea – to continue a deep and close trading relationship.

Given the huge scale of trade between the UK and Ireland – €1.4 billion a week in both directions – that really matters.

This deal delivers important outcomes for the business world in both countries. It secures:

- 100% tariff liberalisation. This is the first time the EU has agreed a zero tariff zero quota deal with another trading partner and this is the largest bilateral trade deal in the world (by volume of goods)

- continued market access across a broad scope of key service sectors, including professional and business services, supporting new and continued investment between businesses. It also means that business travellers will be able to easily move between the EU and the UK for short-term visits, and the agreement on financial services ensures financial stability and consumer protection

Beyond business, but just as important, the deal allows the UK, Ireland and the EU as a whole to work together on a range of challenges. It provides for:

- future cooperation between the UK and EU on law enforcement and judicial cooperation to help protect the public and bring criminals to justice. As well as cooperation on emerging security challenges, such as security of information, cyber security and health security, including continuing to work together on tackling the spread of COVID-19. We will build on all this in our bilateral work with Ireland
- continued partnerships between UK and European research and science experts – through not only Horizon Europe, but also the Euratom Research and Training programme, and the space programme, Copernicus

I know businesses in Ireland are well aware, not least because of the excellent work of the Irish Government, Ibec, the British Irish Chamber of Commerce, the Irish Exporters Association and, I hope, our own Embassy efforts, of the changes that are nevertheless occurring at the end of 2020 as we leave the Single Market and Customs Union.

It's important to recognise that those changes still apply even with this FTA and we will continue to work with you to support businesses and citizens adapt to them. The Embassy team are here to help with any queries and please do make us aware of any outstanding issues or concerns related to this transition that businesses are facing.

With the framework of the new UK/EU Agreement we can look forward to a new phase in our co-operation.

For reasons not only of history and geography but also of people, society, security, economics and peace, the UK/Ireland relationship is critical to us. The Prime Minister and Taoiseach have talked already of the need to develop our bilateral co-operation as we enter this new period.

That will be a big task for me and the Embassy team in 2021, and one to which I hugely look forward.

As both countries emerge from the pandemic, we can look forward to tackling new challenges and opportunities together. Everything from conflict prevention and peacebuilding as partners on the UN Security Council, to the fight for our planet's future as the UK prepares to host the historic UN conference in Glasgow in November 2021, plus building on the Embassy's

'Joining the Dots' programme to support regional economic development and our respective 'levelling-up' strategies.

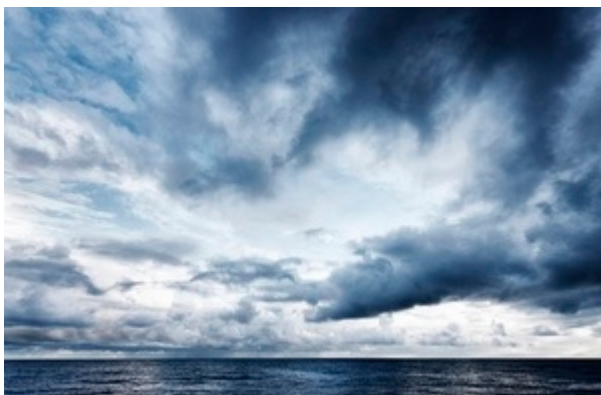
Finally, and to return to the immediate business agenda, the Irish market will remain hugely important for the UK as will the UK market to Ireland, given our proximity, the depth of integration of business ties and our shared ambitions in clean and emerging technologies and sectors. From floating offshore wind to biotech, electric vehicles to the next generation of construction, there are huge opportunities for Irish and UK businesses, and my team stands ready to support you in this.

With every best wish to you and your loved ones for a happy, healthy, peace and prosperous New Year.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Johnston

Changes to demersal trawl selectivity measures in the Celtic Sea



On 29 May 2015 the requirements will change and all vessels in the Celtic Sea using stern trawls and seines of mesh size range 70 mm to 119 mm must insert a 120 mm SMP into the trawl. The rear edge of the panel must be no further than 9 metres from the codline.

There are permitted derogations:

- vessels may use a derogated device or combination of gear and device which has been authorised by a fisheries administration where scientific evidence confirms that the configuration has the same or higher selectivity for cod, haddock and whiting; or
- vessels fishing in the area east of 8° West of the Celtic Sea and whose

catch comprises at least 55% whiting may use a SMP of at least 100mm if the codend mesh size is 100mm or greater (TR1)

A vessel is only permitted to use a derogated gear if it has been issued with an authorisation prior to going to sea. English registered UK vessels can apply for an authorisation by contacting the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) fishing vessel licensing team on 0191 376 2598 or email fishingvessellicensing@marinemanagement.org.uk.

For the purposes of the regulation the Celtic Sea is defined as ICES divisions VIIIf, VIIIg and the part of VIIj that lies north of latitude 50° N and east of 11° W.

Please contact [your local MMO office](#) if you have any queries.

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1. 31 December 2020

Updated in line with EU Exit

2. 28 May 2015

First published.

[UK-Gibraltar-Spain agreement: statement from the Foreign Secretary](#)

Press release

UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab's statement on the agreement between the UK and Spain on Gibraltar.



Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab's statement:

Today, working side by side with the Chief Minister of Gibraltar, and following intensive discussions with the Spanish government, we reached agreement on a political framework to form the basis of a separate treaty between the UK and the EU regarding Gibraltar.

We will now send this to the European Commission, in order to initiate negotiations on the formal treaty. In the meantime, all sides are committed to mitigating the effects of the end of the Transition Period on Gibraltar, and in particular ensure border fluidity, which is clearly in the best interests of the people living on both sides.

We remain steadfast in our support for Gibraltar, and its sovereignty is safeguarded. I am grateful to Foreign Minister Laya and her team for their positive and constructive approach. We have a warm and strong relationship with Spain, and we look forward to building on it in 2021.

Published 31 December 2020

[New Year's Honours acknowledge outstanding contributions](#)

Teachers, leaders and carers across the country continue to be recognised for their work during the Covid 19 pandemic in the 2021 New Year's Honours.

119 people have been recognised in this year's New Year Honours List for their outstanding contributions to the education and children's services sectors. The list includes headteachers, teachers, social workers, foster carers and many more who work with the most disadvantaged in society as well as those selected for their efforts during the pandemic.

Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson said:

The work that went in to making sure pupils could continue their vital education during national restrictions has been phenomenal. It is fantastic to see so many people being recognised with some of the highest honours this country can award.

I would like to congratulate all the recipients on the New Year's List because their work is so inspiring and deserving of

recognition.

I would also like to offer a special thank you to those who continue to dedicate their time and support during this national effort to combat Covid 19. This list highlights the many committed professionals who are working tirelessly across education and children's services to deliver better outcomes for young people and students across the country during this challenging period.

Among those honoured are foster carers Nigel and Rachel Poulton who took in 11 children during the pandemic. The couple planned each child's time carefully, making time to home school each child based on their individual needs, drawing on their own skills but also accessing online tutors to ensure no child is disadvantaged due to the exceptional situation.

Professor Edward Peck, Vice chancellor at Nottingham Trent University (NTU), has received a CBE for ensuring NTU's commitment to furthering social mobility through education by supporting students from less privileged backgrounds. A notable example of Peck's efforts was during the coronavirus lockdown when he waived accommodation fees for law students who had left the city so the financial burden of Coronavirus was not passed on to students.

Similarly Mark Siswick, headteacher at Chesterton Primary School, located in a highly deprived area of South West London, has received an MBE for his efforts during the pandemic. When the Prime Minister announced that all schools would be closed from 23 March 2020 except for vulnerable children and the children of key workers, Siswick was at the forefront of an effort to make over 140 films that teach the Government's Letters and Sounds programme available to children remotely.

A number of non-Covid 19 related nominees also feature on the list. Irene Lucas-Hayes, Chair of the Hays Travel Group has received a DBE for her passion, drive and determination to create opportunities for communities and individuals within them. She has focused consistently on creating an environment in which employment opportunities are supported by the acquisition of skills, whether it be in promoting apprenticeships in local authorities and the travel industry, or through her work on encouraging advanced manufacturing investments in the North East.

For more information on the nominations, please contact the Department for Education Press Office on 02077838300.

Nominating someone for an award:

If you know someone working to improve education, children's services, or social mobility who deserves an honour, please contact the Honours Team: honours.team@education.go.uk

Statement from the Foreign Secretary: UK-Gibraltar-Spain agreement

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