

UK Statement to the WTO Council for Trade in Goods – Item 9

UNITED KINGDOM – DRAFT GOODS SCHEDULE AND PROPOSED UK TRQ COMMITMENTS: SYSTEMIC CONCERNS – REQUEST FROM AUSTRALIA, BRAZIL, CANADA, CHINA, NEW ZEALAND, THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, SWITZERLAND, THE UNITED STATES, AND URUGUAY

Thank you, Chair.

I want to thank Members for their statements under this item.

As Members will be aware, on 1 February 2020 the United Kingdom circulated document WT/GC/206, which sets out the main implications arising from the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union in the WTO.

The United Kingdom has undertaken its transition in the WTO with the aim of maintaining the existing balance of rights and obligations between the United Kingdom and its trading partners. The United Kingdom has set out its Goods Schedule, circulated in document G/MA/TAR/RS/570, on that basis.

The United Kingdom has engaged extensively with Members on that Schedule, and we remain open to discussions to ensure that conditions remain no less favourable to trade after the end of the Transition Period agreed between the European Union and the United Kingdom, which will end on 31 December 2020.

Recognising that, the United Kingdom is currently undergoing a process under Article XXVIII to seek agreement with relevant WTO Members on how to extract the United Kingdom's TRQ commitments from those of the EU28.

The United Kingdom's last round of Article XXVIII negotiations took place in February 2020 in Geneva, and we hope to have the next round of negotiations in July.

On AMS, we note some Members asked about whether the European Union's AMS will reduce proportionally in line with the commitment set out in the UK's Schedule XIX. The United Kingdom cannot comment on the European Union's ongoing processes. However, we would recall that it was clear in the joint UK-EU letter of 11 October 2017 that the final bound commitment level for domestic agricultural support would be apportioned between the EU and the UK. This was also restated in the explanatory note to the United Kingdom's Goods Schedule in document G/MA/TAR/RS/570, and is a clear commitment. We would also remind members that this explanatory note contains details on how the AMS apportionment was calculated.

Turning to other points raised: As some Members will be aware, the United Kingdom announced the 'UK Global Tariff' on 19 May 2020. This is the applied Most Favoured Nation tariff regime that the United Kingdom will apply from 1 January 2021, following the end of the Transition Period, and it will be expressed in the United Kingdom's national currency.

As a consequence of this change, and to ensure stability and transparency between the UK's bound and applied Schedules, the United Kingdom has circulated document G/MA/TAR/RS/570/Add.1, rectifying its bound goods Schedule to redenominate all currency components in Part I and Part IV – Section I of the Schedule from Euros to pound Sterling. This brings the United Kingdom into line with most other WTO Members, who denominate their schedules in their own currency. In order to provide Members with complete transparency on the steps we are taking to effect this currency conversion, the UK introduced this matter as a standalone technical rectification of Schedule XIX with no additional changes being made at this time. This currency rectification process has been submitted without prejudice to already ongoing discussions on the broader certification of Schedule XIX.

The United Kingdom looks forward to continuing engagement with members on these important issues

Thank you.

UK Statement to the WTO Council for Trade in Goods – Item 7

PROCEDURES TO ENHANCE TRANSPARENCY AND STRENGTHEN NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS UNDER WTO AGREEMENTS – ARGENTINA, AUSTRALIA, CANADA, COSTA RICA, THE EUROPEAN UNION, ISRAEL, JAPAN, NEW ZEALAND, THE SEPARATE CUSTOMS TERRITORY OF TAIWAN, PENGHU, KINMEN AND MATSU, AND THE UNITED STATES (JOB/GC/204/REV.3-JOB/CTG/14/REV.3)

Thank you Chair.

The United Kingdom welcomes continued discussion on this important issue. While disputes and negotiations might sometimes dominate the headlines, the role of transparency in supporting the WTO's work is every bit as important.

Transparency brings certainty and predictability to trade. It underpins the process of members monitoring each other's compliance with the WTO agreements and supports evidence-based negotiations.

That is why the United Kingdom supports and intends to co-sponsor this proposal to improve compliance around transparency and notifications. We see it as a pragmatic response to the challenges that the WTO is facing in this area.

Nonetheless, the United Kingdom is alive to the capacity constraints that some developing members, in particular LDC members, face. That is why we welcome the changes made with respect to LDCs in the latest version of the proposal, and we remain interested in further discussions on mechanisms to

provide technical assistance, and notifications guidance, to developing countries who struggle to meet their notification requirements.

In that vein I would recall the announcement I made at the General Council on 15 May, setting out the support the UK is now providing to eligible developing country members to notify COVID-related measures to the WTO's monitoring exercise, through our Trade and Investment Advocacy Fund.

The United Kingdom looks forward to engaging further with WTO members on this proposal.

[Crime news: secure file exchange 'sign-up' guidance available](#)

News story

We have new guidance and advice about our secure file exchange platform for the online transfer of information and documents.



Secure file exchange is already being used widely for crime billing work and we're encouraging providers to register now to prepare for further rollouts.

New guidance is available on GOV.UK with resources and information to help you understand the platform.

What is secure file exchange?

The platform allows for the secure submission of large files, discs or USB sticks through the platform instead of post or email.

Who is using it now?

Providers are currently able to upload files and evidence in support of the following crime billing areas:

- Advocates Graduated Fee Scheme
- Litigators Graduated Fee Scheme
- Criminal Cases Unit – Special Preparation
- Criminal Finance – CRM7, 18 and 18A claims)

The plan is to bring more areas of work on board, which is why we need all crime providers to register so they can access the system.

How do I register?

Guidance on how to register and access support is available on our Secure File Exchange page on GOV.UK.

You can also find browser recommendations and contact points depending on your area of work.

Further information

[Secure file exchange](#) – for guidance and advice on the platform

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[Merger of viagogo and StubHub raises competition concerns](#)

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is concerned that the loss of competition brought about by the merger could result in customers who buy and resell tickets losing out as a result of higher prices and fewer options.

viagogo purchased StubHub in February 2020. Both companies have a significant presence in the UK's secondary ticketing market. Together, they have a combined market share of more than 80% and are the number 1 and number 2 players respectively in the UK.

After completing its initial Phase 1 investigation, the CMA found that viagogo and StubHub are close competitors in an already very concentrated market with limited alternatives. It is particularly concerned that the merger would raise the prices for customers, including fans, who resell and buy secondary tickets to live events.

As part of its investigation, the CMA undertook extensive market testing and looked at evidence from a number of third-party stakeholders including consumer groups, customers and competitors. It also examined the companies' internal documents.

The CMA is mindful of the heavy impact that the Coronavirus (COVID-19) is currently having on the live events industry. However, it anticipates viagogo and StubHub will remain important competitors in the online secondary ticketing market in the longer term. The CMA has seen no evidence that either company would be more adversely affected by the current market climate in comparison to other competitors.

Andrea Gomes da Silva, CMA's Executive Director for Markets and Mergers said:

viagogo is already the largest secondary ticketing company in the UK by some considerable margin and has purchased an established rival, with no other significant competitors in the market. We are therefore concerned that this transaction could lead to customers losing out through higher prices, less innovation and a lack of real choice.

viagogo now has 5 working days to address the CMA's concerns by offering remedial undertakings in lieu of a reference to a 'Phase 2' investigation. For the CMA to accept undertakings, viagogo would need to deliver a clear-cut solution that will preserve effective competition in the UK market. If viagogo is unable to do so, the deal will be referred for an in-depth (Phase 2) investigation.

For more information, [visit the case page](#).

For media enquiries, contact the CMA press office on 020 3738 6460 or press@cma.gov.uk.

[Illegal fishing net recovered at North East beauty spot](#)

On Tuesday 9 June Fisheries Enforcement Officers received information from the [Northumberland Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority \(NIFCA\)](#) that the 50-metre unlicensed illegal gill net had been set on the beach at Holy Island.

It's suspected the net had been set to take salmon and sea trout as well as any other sea fish. Migratory fish were entangled in the net when it was recovered.

The Environment Agency is investigating where the nets have come from and the whereabouts of any migratory fish and sea bass that were taken from the nets.

It's the fourth net of its kind that the [Environment Agency](#) has seized in recent weeks.

Last week (1 June) they recovered two illegal and unlicensed gill nets – one measuring 75 metres and the other 15 metres – from the River Blyth Estuary at East Sleekburn. And at the end of May (27 May) they recovered a 40-metre net at Skinningrove in Redcar and Cleveland.

And NIFCA also previously seized a similar 100-metre gill net on the beach at Lynemouth, Northumberland on 21 May.

One of the fish caught in the illegal net

Nets are indiscriminate

John Crowl, Enforcement Team Leader for the Environment Agency, said:

These nets are indiscriminate in nature and are illegal for a reason which is why we take these recoveries so seriously.

We've had a series of reports and recoveries over recent weeks from across the area and our Fisheries Enforcement Officers are investigating.

Not only are they capable of catching and killing fish indiscriminately they are also capable of causing awful injury to sea birds and mammals.

Fisheries is very carefully managed to protect the future of the industry and ensure fish can get to their breeding grounds to spawn. I'd urge people to report information about illegal fishing activity to us so we can take action.

Actively patrolling

Fisheries Enforcement Officers are actively patrolling the North East rivers and coastline and responding to reports of illegal fishing.

Environment Agency officers are wearing the appropriate protective equipment and adhering to social distancing measures.

A licensed, strictly regulated and managed sea trout fishery operates off the coast of Northumberland, but the use of illegal nets have a serious impact on sea trout and salmon returning to rivers to spawn.

Those who operate unlicensed nets risk prosecution, with unlimited fines and possible prison sentences available to the courts, and Environment Agency

officers can seize equipment and vehicles.

Information about illegal fishing can be reported to the Environment Agency's 24-hour incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.