

News story: Defence Secretary and Prince Harry Award Gold to Supportive Employers

The award is the Ministry of Defence's prestigious badge of honour for organisations who have demonstrated outstanding support for the Armed Forces community. Hosted by Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon, the award presentation took place on Monday 9 October at the Imperial War Museum.

HRH Prince Harry thanked this year's winners and heard about successful initiatives providing veterans with a fair chance of starting a second career in diverse industries following military service. Other support measures in the workplace include flexibility for Reservists and mentoring and job opportunities for military spouses.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

This year's Gold award winners should be extremely proud of the work they are doing to live up to the Armed Forces Covenant pledge and to promote the pledge to others.

I'm delighted to recognise employers who make it crystal clear that regardless of size, location, or sector, employing people with military skills is good for business. I hope others follow their example, thereby delivering a better deal for veterans and armed forces families.

Welcoming their Gold Award, Mike Brown MVO, Commissioner Transport for London said:

The technical expertise and skills that ex-service personnel have developed during their military service, such as problem-solving and working under pressure, are ideal for a number of roles within the transport industry and we are proud to count them amongst our employees.

The employers recognised with the ERS Gold distinction in 2017 for going above and beyond their pledges under the Armed Forces Covenant:

Airbus	Inverclyde Council	Shropshire Council
Balfour Beatty	Kuehne + Nagel	Skanska UK Plc
City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust	Laing O'Rourke	Sodexo UK & Ireland

Combat Pest Control	Liverpool City Council	South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust
DHL	Mabway Ltd	Transport for London
DXC Technology	ManpowerGroup UK	West Midlands Fire Service
ER Systems Global	Metropolitan Police Service	Wiltshire Council
FDM	Morson Group	Wolferstans Solicitors
Forth Valley Chamber of Commerce	Network Rail	X-Forces
General Dynamics UK	NHS Golden Jubilee Foundation	
Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	North West Ambulance Service	
Hull City Council	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	

The Employer Recognition Scheme encompasses three award tiers: Bronze, Silver and Gold. Gold Award winning employers have to first make pledges under the Armed Forces Covenant, then demonstrate and advocate their support for the Armed Forces. So far, 79 employers have been recognised with a Gold award.

[Press release: PM meeting with business advisory council: 9 October 2017](#)

The Prime Minister this afternoon chaired the latest meeting of the [government's business advisory council](#) at Downing Street.

At the meeting, the Prime Minister set out the importance of the range of government's engagements with businesses to date, and that these have informed our proposal of an implementation period and commitment to continue to attract the right talent to the UK workforce.

The Prime Minister [reiterated the position set out in her Florence speech](#) – that the government's goal is for a smooth, orderly exit in which there is only one set of changes for businesses and people.

The importance of seeking an ambitious future trading partnership with the EU was also discussed, as well as forging new trade relationships around the world. The discussions on trade covered the publication of two White Papers today, outlining our approaches to trade and customs legislation after we leave the EU.

In addition, the council considered wider issues of importance to the UK economy including business and infrastructure investment, building consumer confidence, boosting productivity, further strengthening the UK's skilled workforce and the huge potential for UK businesses to export.

The Prime Minister emphasised the benefits of meeting with employers at all levels over the past year and said she will continue to have regular engagement with a wide variety of voices right across business.

News story: Education Secretary opens new high speed rail college

Education Secretary Justine Greening today (9 October) helped launch the new National College for High Speed Rail (NCHSR) in Doncaster.

The college is the largest of five new national colleges created by the government to ensure young people can learn world-class technical skills, including, engineering, design, planning, manufacturing and construction.

Education Secretary Justine Greening said:

It has been great to attend the official launch of the NCHSR. It is part of how we are steadily transforming technical education in this country, training up a new generation of skilled young people and the existing workforce so that British business has the skills it needs and people have the opportunities they want – a win-win for everyone.

We can only do this in partnership with employers – the NCHSR is just one great example of this. The impressive new building and training facilities are at the forefront of our ambitions to create a world class system of technical education.

Doncaster is also one of the 12 Opportunity Areas that will benefit from a share of £72 million to raise attainment and aspirations. NCHSR is part of this work, making sure Doncaster's local talent gets the opportunity to fulfil its potential and ensuring a prosperous future for the UK.

Statement to Parliament: PM statement on leaving the EU: 9 Oct 2017

With permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to update the House on our plans for leaving the European Union.

Today the fifth round of negotiations begins in Brussels and this government is getting on with the job of delivering the democratic will of the British people.

As I set out [in my speech in Florence](#) we want to take a creative and pragmatic approach to securing a new, deep and special partnership with the European Union which spans both a new economic relationship and a new security relationship.

So let me set out what each of these relationships could look like – before turning to how we get there.

Economic partnership

Mr Speaker, I have been clear that when we leave the European Union we will no longer be members of its single market or its customs union.

The British people voted for control of their borders, their laws and their money. And that is what this government is going to deliver.

At the same time we want to find a creative solution to a new economic relationship that can support prosperity for all our peoples.

We do not want to settle for adopting a model enjoyed by other countries.

So we have rejected the idea of something based on European Economic Area membership. For this would mean having to adopt – automatically and in their entirety – new EU rules over which, in future, we will have little influence and no vote.

Neither are we seeking a Canadian-style free trade agreement. For compared with what exists today, this would represent such a restriction on our mutual market access that it would benefit none of our economies.

Instead I am proposing a unique and ambitious economic partnership. It will reflect our unprecedented position of starting with the same rules and regulations. We will maintain our unequivocal commitment to free trade and high standards. And we will need a framework to manage where we continue to align and where we choose to differ.

There will be areas of policy and regulation which are outside the scope of our trade and economic relations where this should be straightforward.

There will be areas which do affect our economic relations where we and our

European friends may have different goals; or where we share the same goals but want to achieve them through different means.

And there will be areas where we want to achieve the same goals in the same ways, because it makes sense for our economies.

And because rights and obligations must be held in balance, the decisions we both take will have consequences for the UK's access to the EU market – and EU access to our market.

But this dynamic, creative and unique economic partnership will enable the UK and the EU to work side by side in bringing shared prosperity to our peoples.

Security relationship

Let me turn to the new security relationship.

As I said when I visited our troops serving on the NATO mission in Estonia last month, the United Kingdom is unconditionally committed to maintaining Europe's security.

And we will continue to offer aid and assistance to EU member states that are the victims of armed aggression, terrorism and natural or manmade disasters.

So we are proposing a bold new strategic agreement that provides a comprehensive framework for future security, law enforcement and criminal justice co-operation: a treaty between the UK and the EU.

We are also proposing a far reaching partnership on how together we protect Europe from the threats we face in the world today.

So this partnership will be unprecedented in its breadth and depth, taking in cooperation on diplomacy, defence and security, and development.

Implementation

Let me turn to how we build a bridge from where we are now to the new relationship that we want to see.

When we leave the European Union on 29th March 2019 neither the UK, nor the EU and its Members States, will be in a position to implement smoothly many of the detailed arrangements that will underpin this new relationship we seek.

Businesses will need time to adjust and governments will need to put new systems in place. And businesses want certainty about the position in the interim.

That is why I suggested in my speech at Lancaster House there should be a period of implementation – and why I proposed such a period in my speech in Florence last month.

During this strictly time-limited period, we will have left the EU and its

institutions, but we are proposing that for this period access to one another's markets should continue on current terms and Britain also should continue to take part in existing security measures.

The framework for this period, which can be agreed under Article 50, would be the existing structure of EU rules and regulations.

Now I know some people may have some concerns about this. But there are two reasons why it makes sense.

First, we want our departure from the EU to be as smooth as possible – it wouldn't make sense to make people and businesses plan for two sets of changes in the relationship between the UK and the EU.

Second, we should concentrate our negotiating time and capital on what really matters – the future long-term relationship we will have with the EU after this temporary period ends.

During the implementation period, people will continue to be able to come and live and work in the UK; but there will be a registration system – an essential preparation for the new immigration system required to re-take control of our borders.

And our intention is that new arrivals would be subject to new rules for EU citizens on long term settlement.

We will also push forward on our future independent trade policy, talking to trading partners across the globe and preparing to introduce those deals once this period is over.

How long the period is should be determined simply by how long it will take to prepare and implement the new systems we need.

As of today, these considerations point to an implementation period of around two years.

And as I said in Florence – because I don't believe that either the EU or the British people will want us to stay longer in the existing structures than necessary, we could also agree to bring forward aspects of that future framework, such as new dispute resolution mechanisms, more quickly if this can be done smoothly.

At the heart of these arrangements, there should be a clear double lock: guaranteeing a period of implementation giving businesses and people the certainty they will be able to prepare for the change; and guaranteeing this implementation period will be time-limited, giving everyone the certainty this will not go on forever.

Negotiations

Mr Speaker, the purpose of the Florence speech was to move the negotiations forward and that is exactly what has happened.

As Michel Barnier said after the last round, there is a “new dynamic” in the negotiations. And I want to pay tribute to my Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union for all he has done to drive through real and tangible progress on a number of vital areas.

On citizens’ rights, as I have said many times this government greatly values the contributions of all EU citizens who have made their lives in our country. We want them to stay.

In Florence, I gave further commitments that the rights of EU citizens in the UK – and UK citizens in the EU – will not diverge over time, committing to incorporate our agreement on citizens’ rights fully into UK law and making sure the UK courts can refer directly to it.

Since Florence there has been more progress including reaching agreement on reciprocal healthcare and pensions, and encouraging further alignment on a range of important social security rights.

So I hope our negotiating teams can now reach full agreement quickly.

On Northern Ireland, we have now begun drafting joint principles on preserving the Common Travel Area and associated rights. And we have both stated explicitly we will not accept any physical infrastructure at the border.

We owe it to the people of Northern Ireland – and indeed to everyone on the island of Ireland – to get this right.

Then there is the question of the EU budget.

As I have said, this can only be resolved as part of the settlement of all the issues that we are working through.

Still I do not want our partners to fear that they will need to pay more or receive less over the remainder of the current budget plan as a result of our decision to leave. The UK will honour commitments we have made during the period of our membership.

And as we move forwards, we will also want to continue working together in ways that promote the long-term economic development of our continent.

This includes continuing to take part in those specific policies and programmes which are greatly to our joint advantage, such as those that promote science, education and culture – and those that promote our mutual security.

And as I set out in my speech at Lancaster House, in doing so, we would want to make a contribution to cover our fair share of the costs involved.

Mr Speaker, I continued discussions on many of these issues when I met with European leaders in Tallinn at the end of last month.

And in the bi-lateral discussions I have had with Chancellor Merkel, Prime

Minister Szydlo, President Tusk and the Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, they welcomed the tone set in Florence and the impact this was having on moving the negotiations forwards.

Legislation

Mr Speaker, preparing for life outside the EU is also about the legislative steps we take.

Our EU Withdrawal Bill will shortly enter Committee Stage, carrying over EU rules and regulations into our domestic law from the moment we leave the EU.

And today we are publishing two White Papers on trade and customs. These pave the way for legislation to allow the UK to operate as an independent trading nation and to create an innovative customs system that will help us achieve the greatest possible tariff and barrier-free trade as we leave the EU.

And while I believe it is profoundly in all our interests for the negotiations to succeed, it is also our responsibility as a government to prepare for every eventuality. So that is exactly what we are doing.

These White Papers also support that work, including setting out steps to minimise disruption for businesses and travellers.

Conclusion

Mr Speaker, a new, deep and special partnership between a sovereign United Kingdom and a strong and successful European Union is our ambition and our offer to our European friends.

Achieving that partnership will require leadership and flexibility, not just from us but from our friends, the 27 nations of the EU.

And as we look forward to the next stage, the ball is in their court. But I am optimistic it will receive a positive response.

Because what we are seeking is not just the best possible deal for us – but I believe that will also be the best possible deal for our European friends too.

So while, of course, progress will not always be smooth; by approaching these negotiations in a constructive way – in a spirit of friendship and co-operation and with our sights firmly set on the future – I believe we can prove the doomsayers wrong.

And I believe we can seize the opportunities of this defining moment in the history of our nation.

Mr Speaker, a lot of the day to day coverage is about process. But this, on the other hand, is vitally important.

I am determined to deliver what the British people voted for and to get it right.

That is my duty as Prime Minister.

It is our duty as a Government.

And it is what we will do.

And I commend this Statement to the House.

[Press release: Government sets out vision for post EU trade and customs policy](#)

- Government lays the ground for the UK's exit from the EU.
- Separate trade and customs white papers pave the way for legislation to allow the UK to operate as a trading nation as we leave the EU and prevent disruption to trading arrangements.
- The UK Government will work closely with the Welsh Government so future trade policy is transparent and secures best possible outcome for whole of the UK.

The Government has taken a significant step in preparing to leave the EU by setting out arrangements for post-Brexit trade and customs policy.

Trade and Customs White Papers published today pave the way for legislation that will ensure the UK is ready for the first day after exit.

The Trade White Paper published by the Department for International Trade establishes the principles that will guide future UK trade policy as well as laying out the practical steps that will support those aims.

These include:

- Taking steps to enable the UK to maintain the benefits of the World Trade Organisation's Government Procurement Agreement.
- Ensuring the UK can support developing economies by continuing to give them preferential access to UK markets.
- Preparing to bring across into UK law existing trade agreements between EU and non-EU countries.
- And creating a new, UK trade remedies investigating authority.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox said:

We want to build a future trade policy that delivers benefits for the UK's economy and for businesses, workers and consumers alike.

Welsh businesses and exporters are already seizing opportunities and proudly selling products around the globe. As an international economic department we are preparing for an independent trade policy to help Welsh businesses make the most of new trade opportunities, contributing to a growing economy and creating prosperity for communities up and down the UK.

The Secretary of State for Wales, Welsh Government and the other devolved administrations will all be involved to ensure trade policy works for Wales and secures the best possible outcomes for the whole of the UK.

Wales is also an attractive place for inward investment, with latest figures showing that 85 foreign direct investment projects were secured in Wales, creating 2,581 new jobs and safeguarding almost 9,000 more.

Secretary of State for Wales, Alun Cairns said:

There has never been a better time for Welsh companies to trade and export overseas and this paper is a step towards providing businesses with stability and certainty.

Welsh products are proudly known across the world – from our famous foodstuffs to our engineering excellence. We export everything from the creative output of Aston Martin to the aircraft wings used by a number of global airlines.

We now have the opportunity to shape our own ambitious trade and investment opportunities in Europe and beyond, and put Wales and Britain firmly at the forefront of global trade and investment.

The UK Government is committed to working with stakeholders, including Welsh Government, in Wales to ensure we deliver an EU exit that works for the whole of the UK”.

Wales already holds strong trading relationships with markets across the world. There are currently more than 3,800 businesses in Wales that export, with a combined value of £13 billion in the first quarter of 2017. Products made in Wales are proudly sold right around the globe:

- Dawnus, a civil engineering solution company trading in West Africa had exports worth over £80 million in 2012 alone;
- In the technology sector, Newport based SPTS Technologies exports over 90% of its products to global customers worldwide and has surpassed £1 billion in export sales; and
- Over half of the world’s commercial aircraft are now flying using wings made by Airbus in Broughton;

The UK Government supports trade and investment in all parts of the UK, to share trade promotion activity to support Welsh businesses.

Wales and the whole of the UK is continuing to be an attractive destination for foreign investors and in 2016/17 Wales attracted 85 foreign direct investment projects, creating 2,581 new jobs and safeguarding 8,965 jobs.

Also published today is the UK Government's Customs Bill White Paper, which sets out plans to legislate for the standalone customs, VAT and excise regimes the UK will need once it leaves the EU.

In August the UK Government set out its proposals for an ambitious new customs relationship with the EU and confirmed that, regardless of the outcome of negotiations, the UK would need new customs laws in place by March 2019. Responding to calls from businesses for continuity, today's White Paper confirms that the UK's new legislation will, as far as possible, replicate the effect of existing EU customs laws.

In addition, while the Government has repeatedly said that we are confident that a positive deal can be reached with the EU, it is only prudent we prepare for every possible outcome. Therefore, the paper covers provisions for the implementation of customs, VAT and excise regimes in the event that no deal is reached, and sets out the steps the Government would take to minimise disruption for businesses and travellers. It also enables the UK to prepare for a range of negotiated outcomes including an implementation period.

The Customs Bill will give the UK the power to:

- Charge customs duty on goods; define how goods will be classified, set and vary the rates of customs duty and any quotas.
- Amend the VAT and excise regimes so that they can function effectively post-exit
- Set out the rules governing how HMRC will collect and enforce the taxes and duties owed.
- Implement tax-related elements of the UK's future trade policy.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond said:

Investment and trade are crucial to the economic future of this country. This White Paper sets out our plan to keep trade with the EU as frictionless as possible, and reaffirms the government's commitment to deliver a smooth transition.

Further information

- As we prepare to leave the EU, we will seek to transition existing EU trade agreements and other EU preferential arrangements, ensuring that the UK maintains the maximum certainty and continuity in trade and investment relationships for businesses, citizens and our trading partners.
- Our total trade with the world is equivalent to over half our GDP – exports and imports were each equivalent to about 30% of GDP in 2016.
- The UK Government has worked successfully alongside the Scottish

Government, Welsh Government, and Northern Ireland Executive and their agencies in promoting trade and investment activity and we intend to continue this collaborative approach as we develop the UK's future trade policy.

- The Wales Export Guide, sets out the full range of support available to Welsh businesses from the UK Government and contains inspiring stories of companies based in Wales that are successfully exporting.