Press release: Charity Commission confirms statutory inquiry following convictions for “horrendous” terrorist abuse

The Charity Commission has today confirmed that a statutory inquiry into the Essex Islamic Academy (also known as Ripple Road Mosque) (1131755) is underway, having started in October 2017. The announcement, which confirms the Commission has been in regulatory engagement with the charity since 2017, follows the conclusion of the criminal trial today of Umar Ahmed Haque, a former religious teacher at the charity.

The Commission did not previously make the opening of the inquiry or its prior regulatory engagement with the charity public to avoid prejudicing the police investigation and subsequent criminal trial.

At the start of the trial, Mr Haque pleaded guilty to disseminating terrorist material to children at the Essex Islamic Academy. Following a 6 week trial at the London Central Criminal Court, Mr Haque has today been convicted of further offences, including the preparation of terrorist acts also relating to the Essex Islamic Academy.

Now the criminal proceedings are over, the regulator will resume its investigation in full. Once the Commission has completed its investigatory enquiries, it will deal with any failings or evidence of misconduct or mismanagement by taking appropriate regulatory action.

As part of the inquiry into the Essex Islamic Academy, the Commission will consider how Mr Haque was able to attempt to radicalise children, and what the trustees and others at the charity knew about this. The regulator will examine the level of supervision, due diligence and oversight the charity had over Mr Haque, and its adherence to safeguarding policies and procedures.

The Commission has liaised closely with multiple agencies including the police, educational regulators and the local authority on this matter since information was shared with the regulator by the Metropolitan Police’s Counter Terrorism Command about Mr Haque in 2017.

Michelle Russell, Director of Investigations, Monitoring, and Enforcement at the Charity Commission said:

> The crimes that Mr Haque has been convicted of today are horrendous, and are likely to have a devastating effect on many of the young people exposed to this harm.
>
> This is one of the worst cases we have seen with children, as young as 11, being exposed to harm through attempted radicalisation and

> terrorist material by this man. The welfare of these children is of utmost importance to all agencies involved. Mr Haque’s abhorrent actions don’t just affect these children, but their families and the community as a whole. It is important that those affected have the appropriate support made available to them, and the Commission will continue to do all it can to support the statutory agencies to ensure that this is the case.
>
> The vast majority of mosques and supplementary schools including madrassahs do good work and are an important resource in local communities. What happened clearly damages the trust and confidence the children’s parents had in the charity he was employed at, as well as wider public confidence. We and the public expect charities, particularly those working with children and young people, to be safe places, free from abuse or harm. This was not the case here, where Mr Haque grossly abused the trust placed in him because of his position and teaching role.
>
> Today’s conviction will reassure the public that such abuse is not tolerated, and that those responsible will be held accountable for their actions. We will continue to work closely with the police and other authorities to tackle the threat terrorism and extremism poses to charities, their beneficiaries and their work.

Essex Islamic Academy

The Commission opened a statutory inquiry into the Essex Islamic Academy on 2 October 2017 to investigate serious regulatory concerns relating to Mr Haque’s time at the charity and the charity’s safeguarding practices. The inquiry is examining the administration, governance and management of the charity, including the management and supervision of staff with access to children or young people and the charity’s adherence to its policies and procedures including its Child Protection Policies. The inquiry is also examining the charity’s financial controls. The regulator’s engagement with the Essex Islamic Academy prior to opening the inquiry included corresponding with the trustees and conducting a compliance visit to the charity’s premises in September 2017.

In January 2018, as part of the inquiry, the Commission exercised its temporary and protective powers and issued an order under section 84A of the Charities Act 2011 to direct the trustees of the Essex Islamic Academy not to provide educational classes or any recreational activities which involved regulated activity with those under the age of 18. This restriction and order will apply until the trustees are able to demonstrate that they have complied with a number of urgent actions required by the regulator.

The trustees gave assurances that they had voluntarily stopped regulated activity at the charity. However, given the seriousness of what happened, the regulator exercised its powers and issue an order in any event especially in light of its role to act in the public interest and the need to protect the charity’s beneficiaries.

Further information

The Commission has also exercised its powers, under sections 47 and 52 of the Charities Act 2011, to compel the provision of information and records relating to Mr Haque, and the general governance of the charity more generally.

No complaints were previously raised with the Commission regarding Mr Haque or his roles or employment at any charity.

The Commission is not a prosecuting authority. The investigation of criminal offences is a matter for the police and/or other authorities.

The lead on protecting children at risk are Children's Services and law enforcement agencies. The Commission is encouraging anyone who may be affected by this case to contact Children's Services for further advice on 020 8227 3811 in Barking and Dagenham. Social services, supported by the police, are delivering a comprehensive and long-term safeguarding plan to protect and support them.

It is the Commission's intention, in accordance with its policy, to publish a report after it has concluded the inquiry, detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken and what the outcome was. Reports of previous inquiries by the Commission are available on GOV.UK.

If there has been misconduct or mismanagement in a charity or the charity's beneficiaries, staff, property or assets are at risk, the Commission will take robust action to both protect these and deal with the failings either of its own motion and/or in collaboration with other agencies.

The charity's details can be viewed on the Commission's online charity search tool: Essex Islamic Academy.

Ends

Notes to editors

1. The Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see our annual report.
2. Search for charities on our online register.
3. The Commission's role is as charity regulator to oversee charity trustees' compliance with charity law duties and responsibilities. Regulation of the standards of education in supplementary schools is not within the Commission's legal remit. In 2015, the Department for Education ran a consultation on registration and inspection of out-of-school educational settings providing intensive tuition, training or instruction to children outside of school.
4. Section 46 of the Charities Act 2011 gives the Commission the power to institute inquiries. The opening of an inquiry gives the Commission access to a range of investigative, protective and remedial legal powers.
5. Mr Haque was employed at the Essex Islamic Academy from 2014 to the date

of his arrest (May 2017).
6. The Commission issued the order under section 84A of the Charites Act 2011 on 19 January 2018.
7. Regulated activity is work which involves close and unsupervised contact with vulnerable groups including children. The full legal definition of regulated activity is set out in Schedule 4 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

News story: Military support for snow relief

The military has been using vehicles and personnel to transport essential NHS staff to hospitals and vulnerable people in the community. The military has also been supporting local police forces to assist people stranded on motorways.

The Defence Secretary has met with soldiers from 1 Royal Irish, who have been carrying out vital work transporting health workers in the Shropshire area, which has been hit by heavy snow.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

> Our Armed Forces are doing an incredible job up and down the country, helping the emergency services, local authorities, and the NHS supporting those in need.
>
> From Scotland to Cornwall, more than 100 personnel from across the forces are making a real difference in getting nurses and doctors to vulnerable and elderly patients, and helping rescue those left stranded in freezing conditions.
>
> I pay tribute to their professionalism, dedication and sense of duty. They are proving once again that Britain can always depend on our troops to protect us no matter the time, no matter the place, and no matter the problem.
>
> I witnessed for myself the vital role they are playing in helping the British people during the treacherous weather which has caused so much difficulty for so many people.
>
> I am extremely grateful for all that our personnel are doing and will continue to do over the weekend – and I want to thank them for answering calls for help across the country.

Military assistance to date:

- 20 RAF personnel and 10 4×4 RAF vehicles are transporting health staff to hospitals and communities in Lincolnshire
- 20 Army soldiers and 10 4×4 vehicles are transporting NHS Scotland staff needed to deliver critical care services to and from Edinburgh Royal Infirmary and the Western General Hospital.
- 20 Army soldiers and 10 4x4s are transporting health staff to hospitals and support health workers in visiting vulnerable people in the community in Shropshire.
- 20 Royal Marines and 10 4×4 vehicles are transporting health staff to hospitals and communities in Devon and Cornwall
- The military is assisting Greater Manchester Police to enable them to access and assist motorists on the M62

Military assistance will continue as necessary during the current adverse weather conditions, and will be regularly reviewed in line with the requirement.

There are three UK standby battalions held at high readiness to respond to UK contingencies and emergencies, including support to local authorities. We have the right people with the right training to respond to a range of contingencies.

News story: Defra non-executive board member appointments

Defra has today announced the appointment of new non-executive board members to join the departmental Board.

Henry Dimbleby takes on the role of lead non-executive board member with Elizabeth Buchanan, Lizzie Noel, Ben Goldsmith and Colin Day appointed as non-executive board members.

Colin Day will chair the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee from July 2018.

Non-executive board members are senior figures from outside government, appointed to provide challenge to government departments.

As set out in the government’s Code of Practice, non-executive board members should be appointed directly by the Secretary of State and are not civil servants.

Henry Dimbleby

Henry Dimbleby was co-founder of the Leon restaurant chain. He is also co-founder and Director of The Sustainable Restaurant Association and of London Union, which runs some of London's most successful street food markets. He co-authored The School Food Plan (2013), which set out actions to transform what children eat in schools and how they learn about food.

Henry previously worked as a Strategy Consultant at Bain & Company (1995-2002) where he advised businesses on strategy, performance improvement and organisational design.

Colin Day

Colin Day recently retired as Chief Executive of Essentra plc, a FTSE 250 global business with over 10,000 employees. He was previously Chief Financial Officer at Reckitt Benckiser plc for over 10 years and prior to that at Aegis Group plc.

Colin is currently a non-executive director and Audit Committee Chair at Meggitt plc, a non-executive director and member of the Audit Committee at FM Global Inc., and a member of the Board and Finance Committee of Cranfield University. He has served as a non-executive director on the boards of major UK plcs including Amec Foster Wheeler, WPP, Cadbury, Imperial Brands and Easyjet.

Colin is a Fellow of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants and has an MBA from Cranfield School of Management.

Ben Goldsmith

Ben Goldsmith is CEO of Menhaden Capital Management LLP which manages London-listed investment trust Menhaden Capital plc which invests in business opportunities arising from the efficient use of energy and resources. Sectors of focus include industrial process and material efficiency, energy efficiency and storage, power generation and waste and water. Previously Ben co-founded and built WHEB Asset Management, now one of Europe's leading sustainability-focused fund management businesses.

Ben chairs the Goldsmith family's philanthropic foundation, the JMG Foundation, which has a focus on the environment. Ben is also a Trustee of one of the UK's largest philanthropic foundations, the Children's Investment Fund Foundation. In 2003 Ben co-founded the UK Environmental Funders' Network.

Lizzie Noel

Lizzie Noel has over 20 years' experience of senior roles in both the commercial and public sectors. She is Chief Executive of Hemera Data Science Ltd, a training and consulting provider. She was on the founding team of training, consulting and technology firm Tribal Group plc, where she was Director of Communications from start up to annual revenues of £200 million and from five to 2,000 employees.

Lizzie was appointed a non-executive board member of the Ministry of Justice in August 2015. She was a former expert advisor at the Department for Education, as well as developing and delivering the Team London programme for the Mayor of London between 2008 and 2012. She is currently a non-executive director of the Sports and Recreation Alliance.

Elizabeth Buchanan

Elizabeth Buchanan is currently a Special Adviser to Waitrose, Dairy Crest plc and the Chime Group, a global sports marketing and communications company. She also manages the family's 200 acre organic livestock farm in East Sussex which produces pedigree Sussex beef and has been owned by the family since 1976. She is a Trustee of the Prince's Countryside Fund.

She is a Fellow of the Royal Agricultural Societies, sits on the BBC Rural Affairs Committee, is a Senior Associate of the Cambridge Institute of Sustainability Leadership and a trustee of the Smith School for Enterprise and the Environment at Oxford University.

Elizabeth was formerly Press Secretary to Lady Thatcher (1992-98) and worked for TRH the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall (1998-2008) handling interests in agriculture and the environment, relations with the business community and work through The Prince's Trust. She was Private Secretary to the Prince of Wales from 2005-2008.

Non-executive board members are Secretary of State appointments drawn from the commercial private sector in accordance with Cabinet Office guidelines.

The appointments are confirmed following a public recruitment exercise.

The Defra Board provides strategic, corporate leadership to the department and has particular responsibility for monitoring performance and delivery. More details about the Defra Board

Recruitment process

A process to recruit new non executives began as incumbents neared the end of their terms.

A fair and open competition for the posts was conducted, with the recruitment and selection process overseen by Sir Ian Cheshire, the Government's lead non-executive.

An advertisement for the non-executive board members was published on 14 September 2017. Recruitment of non-executive board members followed the procedures set out in the Government's Code of Good Practice for Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments, and its supporting guidance.

The guidance makes clear:

- Non-executive board members in Whitehall will be appointed by the Secretary of State. The appointment of lead non-executives will be on the approval of the Prime Minister.
- Non-executives on departmental boards are not employees and they do not

benefit from temporary civil service status.
- Previous or current political activity should not be an automatic bar to appointment.

Board movements

- Current non-executive board member Paul Rew’s term of office runs until the end of June. He will be replaced by Colin Day, with a period of overlap to ensure continuity on our Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.
- Catherine Doran’s second three-year term expired on 30 November 2017.
- Steve Holliday stepped down from the Defra Board in November and will be replaced by Henry Dimbleby as lead non-executive board member.
- Peter Bonfield remains on the Board.

Political declarations

All appointees have declared any political activity as required.

Ben Goldsmith has made donations to the Conservative Party and the Green Party on an irregular basis since 2004. This has included to the constituency parties of the Environment Secretary (2005) and the Green Party (2009).

Full details are available from the Electoral Commission website.

He is Chairman of the Conservative Environment Network, which promotes environmental issues and their solutions amongst Conservatives. The Conservative Environment Network is not formally affiliated with the Conservative Party.

Lizzie Noel was a Conservative candidate in the 1997 General Election.

Speech: PM speech on our future economic partnership with the European Union

I am grateful to the Lord Mayor and all his team at the Mansion House for hosting us this afternoon.

And in the midst of the bad weather, I would just like to take a moment before I begin my speech today to thank everyone in our country who is going the extra mile to help people at this time.

I think of our emergency services and armed forces working to keep people safe; our NHS staff, care workers, and all those keeping our public services going; and the many volunteers who are giving their time to help those in need.

Your contribution is a special part of who we are as a country – and it is all the more appreciated at a moment like this.

Five tests

Now I am here today to set out my vision for the future economic partnership between the United Kingdom and the European Union.

There have been many different voices and views in the debate on what our new relationship with the EU should look like. I have listened carefully to them all.

But as we chart our way forward with the EU, I want to take a moment to look back.

Eighteen months ago I stood in Downing Street and addressed the nation for my first time as Prime Minister.

I made this pledge then, to the people that I serve:

I know you're working around the clock, I know you're doing your best, and I know that sometimes life can be a struggle.

The government I lead will be driven not by the interests of the privileged few, but by yours.

We will do everything we can to give you more control over your lives.

When we take the big calls, we'll think not of the powerful, but you.

When we pass new laws, we'll listen not to the mighty but to you.

When it comes to taxes, we'll prioritise not the wealthy, but you.

When it comes to opportunity, we won't entrench the advantages of the fortunate few.

We will do everything we can to help anybody, whatever your background, to go as far as your talents will take you.

We are living through an important moment in our country's history. As we leave the European Union, we will forge a bold new positive role for ourselves in the world, and we will make Britain a country that works not for a privileged few, but for every one of us.

That pledge, to the people of our United Kingdom is what guides me in our negotiations with the EU.

And for me that means five things: First, the agreement we reach with the EU must respect the referendum. It was a vote to take control of our borders, laws and money. And a vote for wider change, so that no community in Britain would ever be left behind again. But it was not a vote for a distant relationship with our neighbours.

Second, the new agreement we reach with the EU must endure. After Brexit both the UK and the EU want to forge ahead with building a better future for our people, not find ourselves back at the negotiating table because things have broken down.

Third, it must protect people’s jobs and security. People in the UK voted for our country to have a new and different relationship with Europe, but while the means may change our shared goals surely have not – to work together to grow our economies and keep our people safe.

Fourth, it must be consistent with the kind of country we want to be as we leave: a modern, open, outward-looking, tolerant, European democracy. A nation of pioneers, innovators, explorers and creators. A country that celebrates our history and diversity, confident of our place in the world; that meets its obligations to our near neighbours and far off friends, and is proud to stand up for its values.

And fifth, in doing all of these things, it must strengthen our union of nations and our union of people.

We must bring our country back together, taking into account the views of everyone who cares about this issue, from both sides of the debate. As Prime Minister it is my duty to represent all of our United Kingdom, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland; north and south, from coastal towns and rural villages to our great cities.

So these are the five tests for the deal that we will negotiate.

Implementing the decision of the British people; reaching an enduring solution; protecting our security and prosperity; delivering an outcome that is consistent with the kind of country we want to be; and bringing our country together, strengthening the precious union of all our people.

A crucial moment

We are now approaching a crucial moment.

There is no escaping the complexity of the task ahead of us. We must not only negotiate our exit from an organisation that touches so many important parts of our national life. We must also build a new and lasting relationship while, given the uncertainty inherent in this negotiation, preparing for every scenario.

But we are making real progress.

At the end of last year, we agreed the key elements of our withdrawal.

We are in the process of turning that agreement into draft legal text. We have made clear our concerns about the first draft the Commission published on Wednesday – but no-one should be in any doubt about our commitment to the Joint Report we agreed in December.

We are close to agreement on the terms of an implementation period which was a key element of December’s deal.

Of course some points of difference remain – but I am confident these can be resolved in the days ahead.

Both the UK and the EU are clear this implementation period must be time-limited and cannot become a permanent solution. But it is vital to give governments, businesses and citizens on both sides the time they need to prepare for our new relationship.

With this agreed, I want both sides to turn all our attention and efforts to that new relationship.

But before we can do that, we need to set out in more detail what relationship we want, building on my Lancaster House and Florence speeches.

So last month, I spoke in Munich about the security partnership we seek.

And today, I want to talk about the other pillar of that relationship: how we build our economic partnership.

Existing models will not work

In my speech in Florence, I set out why the existing models for economic partnership either do not deliver the ambition we need or impose unsustainable constraints on our democracy.

For example, the Norway model, where we would stay in the single market, would mean having to implement new EU legislation automatically and in its entirety – and would also mean continued free movement.

Others have suggested we negotiate a free trade agreement similar to that which Canada has recently negotiated with the EU – or trade on World Trade Organisation terms.

But these options would mean a significant reduction in our access to each other’s markets compared to that which we currently enjoy.

And this would mean customs and regulatory checks at the border that would damage the integrated supply chains that our industries depend on and be inconsistent with the commitments that both we and the EU have made in respect of Northern Ireland.

This is a wider issue in our negotiations and I want to dwell on this for a minute.

Successive British governments have worked tirelessly – together with all the parties in Northern Ireland and with the Irish Government – to bring about the historic achievement of peace.

This is an achievement that we should all be proud of, and protect. That is why I have consistently put upholding the Belfast Agreement at the heart of the UK’s approach.

Our departure from the EU causes very particular challenges for Northern Ireland, and for Ireland. We joined the EU together 45 years ago. It is not surprising that our decision to leave has caused anxiety and a desire for concrete solutions.

We have been clear all along that we don't want to go back to a hard border in Ireland. We have ruled out any physical infrastructure at the border, or any related checks and controls.

But it is not good enough to say, 'We won't introduce a hard border; if the EU forces Ireland to do it, that's down to them'. We chose to leave; we have a responsibility to help find a solution.

But we can't do it on our own. It is for all of us to work together.

And the Taoiseach and I agreed when we met recently that our teams and the Commission should now do just that.

I want to make one final point. Just as it would be unacceptable to go back to a hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland, it would also be unacceptable to break up the United Kingdom's own common market by creating a customs and regulatory border down the Irish Sea.

My personal commitment to this is clear.

As Prime Minister of the whole United Kingdom, I am not going to let our departure from the European Union do anything to set back the historic progress that we have made in Northern Ireland – nor will I allow anything that would damage the integrity of our precious Union.

Facing up to some hard facts

So existing models do not provide the best way forward for either the UK or the EU. But before I turn to what a new and better model might look like, I want to be straight with people – because the reality is that we all need to face up to some hard facts.

We are leaving the single market. Life is going to be different. In certain ways, our access to each other's markets will be less than it is now. How could the EU's structure of rights and obligations be sustained, if the UK – or any country – were allowed to enjoy all the benefits without all of the obligations?

So we need to strike a new balance. But we will not accept the rights of Canada and the obligations of Norway.

The second hard fact is that even after we have left the jurisdiction of the ECJ, EU law and the decisions of the ECJ will continue to affect us.

For a start, the ECJ determines whether agreements the EU has struck are legal under the EU's own law – as the US found when the ECJ declared the Safe Harbor Framework for data sharing invalid.

When we leave the EU, the Withdrawal Bill will bring EU law into UK law. That means cases will be determined in our courts. But, where appropriate, our courts will continue to look at the ECJ’s judgments, as they do for the appropriate jurisprudence of other countries’ courts.

And if, as part of our future partnership, Parliament passes an identical law to an EU law, it may make sense for our courts to look at the appropriate ECJ judgments so that we both interpret those laws consistently.

As I said in Munich, if we agree that the UK should continue to participate in an EU agency the UK would have to respect the remit of the ECJ in that regard.

But, in the future, the EU treaties and hence EU law will no longer apply in the UK. The agreement we reach must therefore respect the sovereignty of both the UK and the EU’s legal orders. That means the jurisdiction of the ECJ in the UK must end. It also means that the ultimate arbiter of disputes about our future partnership cannot be the court of either party.

The next hard fact is this. If we want good access to each other’s markets, it has to be on fair terms. As with any trade agreement, we must accept the need for binding commitments – for example, we may choose to commit some areas of our regulations like state aid and competition to remaining in step with the EU’s.

The UK drove much of the policy in this area and we have much to gain from maintaining proper disciplines on the use of subsidies and on anti-competitive practices.

Furthermore, as I said in Florence, we share the same set of fundamental beliefs; a belief in free trade, rigorous and fair competition, strong consumer rights, and that trying to beat other countries’ industries by unfairly subsidising one’s own is a serious mistake.

And in other areas like workers’ rights or the environment, the EU should be confident that we will not engage in a race to the bottom in the standards and protections we set. There is no serious political constituency in the UK which would support this – quite the opposite.

Finally, we need to resolve the tensions between some of our key objectives.

We want the freedom to negotiate trade agreements with other countries around the world. We want to take back control of our laws. We also want as frictionless a border as possible between us and the EU – so that we don’t damage the integrated supply chains our industries depend on and don’t have a hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland.

But there are some tensions in the EU’s position too – and some hard facts for them to face as well.

The Commission has suggested that the only option available to the UK is an ‘off the shelf’ model.

But, at the same time, they have also said that in certain areas none of the EU’s third country agreements would be appropriate.

And the European Council’s Guidelines aspire to a balanced, ambitious, and wide-ranging deal, with common rules in a number of areas to ensure fair and open competition.

This would not be delivered by a Canada-style deal – which would not give them the breadth or depth of market access that they want.

And it is hard to see how it would be in the EU’s interests for the UK’s regulatory standards to be as different as Canada’s.

Finally, we both need to face the fact that this is a negotiation and neither of us can have exactly what we want.

Future economic partnership

But I am confident we can reach agreement.

We both want good access to each other’s markets; we want competition between us to be fair and open; and we want reliable, transparent means of verifying we are meeting our commitments and resolving disputes.

But what is clear is that for us both to meet our objectives we need to look beyond the precedents, and find a new balance.

As on security, what I am seeking is a relationship that goes beyond the transactional to one where we support each other’s interests.

So I want the broadest and deepest possible partnership – covering more sectors and co-operating more fully than any Free Trade Agreement anywhere in the world today. And as I will go on to describe we will also need agreements in a range of areas covering the breadth of our relationship.

I believe this is achievable because it is in the EU’s interests as well as ours.

The EU is the UK’s biggest market – and of course the UK is also a big market for the EU. And furthermore, we have a unique starting point, where on day one we both have the same laws and rules.

So rather than having to bring two different systems closer together, the task will be to manage the relationship once we are two separate legal systems.

To do so, and to realise this level of ambition, there are five foundations that must underpin our trading relationship.

First, our agreement will need reciprocal binding commitments to ensure fair and open competition.

Such agreements are part and parcel of any trade agreement. After all, why would any country enter into a privileged economic partnership without any means of redress if the other party engaged in anti-competitive practices?

But the level of integration between the UK and EU markets and our geographical proximity mean these reciprocal commitments will be particularly important in ensuring that UK business can compete fairly in EU markets and vice versa.

A deep and comprehensive agreement with the EU will therefore need to include commitments reflecting the extent to which the UK and EU economies are entwined.

Second, we will need an arbitration mechanism that is completely independent – something which, again, is common to Free Trade Agreements.

This will ensure that any disagreements about the purpose or scope of the agreement can be resolved fairly and promptly.

Third, given the close relationship we envisage, we will need to have an ongoing dialogue with the EU, and to ensure we have the means to consult each other regularly.

In particular we will want to make sure our regulators continue to work together; as they do with regulators internationally. This will be essential for everything from getting new drugs to patients quickly to maintaining financial stability. We start from the place where our regulators already have deep and long-standing relationships. So the task is maintaining that trust; not building it in the first place.

Fourth, we will need an arrangement for data protection.

I made this point in Munich in relation to our security relationship. But the free flow of data is also critical for both sides in any modern trading relationship too. The UK has exceptionally high standards of data protection. And we want to secure an agreement with the EU that provides the stability and confidence for EU and UK business and individuals to achieve our aims in maintaining and developing the UK's strong trading and economic links with the EU.

That is why we will be seeking more than just an adequacy arrangement and want to see an appropriate ongoing role for the UK's Information Commissioner's Office. This will ensure UK businesses are effectively represented under the EU's new 'one stop shop' mechanism for resolving data protection disputes.

And fifth, we must maintain the links between our people.

EU citizens are an integral part of the economic, cultural and social fabric of our country. I know that UK nationals are viewed in entirely the same way by communities across the EU. And this is why at every stage of these negotiations, I have put the interests of EU citizens and UK nationals at the heart of our approach.

We are clear that as we leave the EU, free movement of people will come to an end and we will control the number of people who come to live in our country.

But UK citizens will still want to work and study in EU countries – just as EU citizens will want to do the same here, helping to shape and drive growth, innovation and enterprise. Indeed, businesses across the EU and the UK must be able to attract and employ the people they need. And we are open to discussing how to facilitate these valuable links.

Reciprocal commitments to ensure fair and open competition, an independent arbitration mechanism, an ongoing dialogue, data protection arrangements and maintaining the links between our people. These are the foundations that underpin the ambition of this unique and unprecedented partnership.

It will then need to be tailored to the needs of our economies.

This follows the approach the EU has taken with its trade agreements in the past – and indeed with its own single market as it has developed.

The EU's agreement with Ukraine sees it align with the EU in some areas but not others. The EU's agreement with South Korea contains provisions to recognise each others' approvals for new car models, whereas their agreement with Canada does not. Equally, the EU's agreement with Canada contains provisions to recognise each others' testing on machinery; its agreement with South Korea does not.

The EU itself is rightly taking a tailored approach in what it is seeking with the UK. For example, on fisheries, the Commission has been clear that no precedents exist for the sort of access it wants from the UK.

The fact is that every Free Trade Agreement has varying market access depending on the respective interests of the countries involved. If this is cherry-picking, then every trade arrangement is cherry-picking.

Moreover, with all its neighbours the EU has varying levels of access to the Single Market, depending on the obligations those neighbours are willing to undertake.

What would be cherry-picking would be if we were to seek a deal where our rights and obligations were not held in balance.

And I have been categorically clear that is not what we are going to do.

I think it is pragmatic common sense that we should work together to deliver the best outcome for both sides.

Goods

Let me start with how we do this for goods.

This is the area where the single market is most established and both the UK and the EU have a strong commercial interest in preserving integrated supply chains that have built up over forty years of our membership.

When it comes to goods, a fundamental principle in our negotiating strategy should be that trade at the UK-EU border should be as frictionless as possible.

That means we don’t want to see the introduction of any tariffs or quotas. And – as the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union set out in his speech in Vienna last week – we must ensure that, as now, products only need to undergo one series of approvals, in one country, to show that they meet the required regulatory standards.

To achieve this we will need a comprehensive system of mutual recognition.

The UK will need to make a strong commitment that its regulatory standards will remain as high as the EU’s. That commitment, in practice, will mean that UK and EU regulatory standards will remain substantially similar in the future.

Many of these regulatory standards are themselves underpinned by international standards set by non-EU bodies of which we will remain a member – such as the UN Economic Commission for Europe, which sets vehicle safety standards. Countries around the world, including Turkey, South Africa, South Korea, Japan and Russia, are party to the agreement.

As I said in my speech in Florence this could be achieved in different ways.

Our default is that UK law may not necessarily be identical to EU law, but it should achieve the same outcomes. In some cases Parliament might choose to pass an identical law – businesses who export to the EU tell us that it is strongly in their interest to have a single set of regulatory standards that mean they can sell into the UK and EU markets.

If the Parliament of the day decided not to achieve the same outcomes as EU law, it would be in the knowledge that there may be consequences for our market access.

And there will need to be an independent mechanism to oversee these arrangements.

We will also want to explore with the EU, the terms on which the UK could remain part of EU agencies such as those that are critical for the chemicals, medicines and aerospace industries: the European Medicines Agency, the European Chemicals Agency, and the European Aviation Safety Agency.

We would, of course, accept that this would mean abiding by the rules of those agencies and making an appropriate financial contribution.

I want to explain what I believe the benefits of this approach could be, both for us and the EU.

First, associate membership of these agencies is the only way to meet our objective of ensuring that these products only need to undergo one series of approvals, in one country.

Second, these agencies have a critical role in setting and enforcing relevant rules. And if we were able to negotiate associate membership we would be able to ensure that we could continue to provide our technical expertise.

Third, associate membership could permit UK firms to resolve certain challenges related to the agencies through UK courts rather than the ECJ.

For example, in the case of Switzerland, associate membership of the European Aviation Safety Agency means that airworthiness certifications are granted by its own aviation authority, and disputes are resolved through its courts. Without its membership, Swiss airlines would need to gain their certifications through another member state or through the Agency, and any dispute would need to be resolved through the ECJ.

Fourth it would bring other benefits too. For example, membership of the European Medicines Agency would mean investment in new innovative medicines continuing in the UK, and it would mean these medicines getting to patients faster as firms prioritise larger markets when they start the lengthy process of seeking authorisations. But it would also be good for the EU because the UK regulator assesses more new medicines than any other member state. And the EU would continue to access the expertise of the UK’s world-leading universities.

And, of course, Parliament would remain ultimately sovereign. It could decide not to accept these rules, but with consequences for our membership of the relevant agency and linked market access rights.

Lastly to achieve as frictionless a border as possible and to avoid a hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland, we also need an agreement on customs.

The UK has been clear it is leaving the Customs Union.

The EU has also formed a customs union with some other countries.

But those arrangements, if applied to the UK, would mean the EU setting the UK’s external tariffs, being able to let other countries sell more into the UK without making it any easier for us to sell more to them, or the UK signing up to the Common Commercial Policy. That would not be compatible with a meaningful independent trade policy. It would mean we had less control than we do now over our trade in the world. Neither Leave nor Remain voters would want that.

So we have thought seriously about how our commitment to a frictionless border can best be delivered. And last year, we set out two potential options for our customs arrangement. Option one is a customs partnership between the UK and the EU. At the border, the UK would mirror the EU’s requirements for imports from the rest of the world, applying the same tariffs and the same rules of origin as the EU for those goods arriving in the UK and intended for the EU. By following this approach, we would know that all goods entering the EU via the UK pay the right EU duties, removing the need for customs processes at the UK-EU border.

But, importantly, we would put in place a mechanism so that the UK would also be able to apply its own tariffs and trade policy for goods intended for the UK market. As we have set out previously, this would require the means to ensure that both sides can trust the system and a robust enforcement mechanism.

Option two would be a highly streamlined customs arrangement, where we would jointly agree to implement a range of measures to minimise frictions to trade, together with specific provisions for Northern Ireland.

First, measures to ensure the requirements for moving goods across borders are as simple as possible.

This means we should continue to waive the requirement for entry and exit declarations for goods moving between the UK and the EU.

And we should allow goods moving between the UK and the rest of the world to travel through the EU without paying EU duties and vice versa.

Second, measures to reduce the risk of delays at ports and airports. For example, recognising each other's "trusted traders" schemes and drawing on the most advanced IT solutions so that vehicles do not need to stop at the border.

Third, we should continue our cooperation to mitigate customs duty and security risks.

And fourth, measures to reduce the cost and burden of complying with customs administrative requirements, including by maximising the use of automation.

And recognising the unique circumstances in Northern Ireland, and our shared commitments to avoiding a hard border, we should consider further specific measures.

80% of North-South trade is carried out by micro, small and medium sized businesses.

So for smaller traders – who as members of the community are most affected but whose economic role is not systemically significant for the EU market – we would allow them to continue to operate as they do currently, with no new restrictions.

And for larger traders we would introduce streamlined processes, including a trusted trader scheme that would be consistent with our commitments.

Both of these options for our future customs arrangement would leave the UK free to determine its own tariffs with third countries – which would simply not be possible in a customs union.

I recognise that some of these ideas depend on technology, robust systems to ensure trust and confidence, as well as goodwill – but they are serious and merit consideration by all sides.

So to conclude on goods, a fundamental principle in our negotiating strategy is that trade at the UK-EU border should be as frictionless as possible with no hard border between Northern Ireland and Ireland.

We believe this can be achieved via a commitment to ensure that the relevant UK regulatory standards remain at least as high as the EU's and a customs arrangement.

We recognise this would constrain our ability to lower regulatory standards for industrial goods. But in practice we are unlikely to want to reduce our standards: not least because the British public would rightly punish any government that did so at the ballot box.

Agrifood and fisheries

This approach to trade in goods is important for agriculture, food and drinks – but here other considerations also apply.

We are leaving the Common Agricultural Policy and will want to take the opportunity that brings to reform our agriculture and fisheries management.

The UK has among the highest environmental and animal welfare standards of any nation on earth. As we leave the EU we will uphold environmental standards and go further to protect our shared natural heritage. And I fully expect that our standards will remain at least as high as the EU's.

But it will be particularly important to secure flexibility here to ensure we can make the most of the opportunities presented by our withdrawal from the EU for our farmers and exporters.

We are also leaving the Common Fisheries Policy.

The UK will regain control over our domestic fisheries management rules and access to our waters.

But as part of our economic partnership we will want to continue to work together to manage shared stocks in a sustainable way and to agree reciprocal access to waters and a fairer allocation of fishing opportunities for the UK fishing industry.

And we will also want to ensure open markets for each other's products.

Services

Just as our partnership in goods needs to be deeper than any other Free Trade Agreement, so in services we have the opportunity to break new ground with a broader agreement than ever before.

We recognise that certain aspects of trade in services are intrinsically linked to the single market and therefore our market access in these areas will need to be different.

But we should only allow new barriers to be introduced where absolutely necessary. We don’t want to discriminate against EU service providers in the UK. And we wouldn’t want the EU to discriminate against UK service providers.

So we want to limit the number of barriers that could prevent UK firms from setting up in the EU and vice versa, and agree an appropriate labour mobility framework that enables UK businesses and self-employed professionals to travel to the EU to provide services to clients in person and that allows UK businesses to provide services to the EU over the phone or the internet. And we want to do the same for EU firms providing services to the UK.

And given that UK qualifications are already recognised across the EU and vice versa – it would make sense to continue to recognise each other’s qualifications in the future.

There are two areas which have never been covered in a Free Trade Agreement in any meaningful way before – broadcasting and, despite the EU’s own best efforts in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, financial services.

But we have some ideas for how we can do this – and it is in all our interests to explore these.

On broadcasting, we recognise that we cannot have exactly the same arrangements with the EU as we do now. Currently, because of the “country of origin” principle, a company based in the UK can be licenced by Ofcom and broadcast into any EU member state and vice versa. The relevant directive will not apply to the UK, as we leave the EU, and relying solely on precedents will hurt consumers and businesses on both sides.

The UK’s creative hub leads to the development of products that European consumers want – the UK currently provides around 30% of the channels available in the EU. But equally, many UK companies have pan-European ownership, and there are 35 channels and on-demand services, which are offered in the UK but licensed in the EU.

So we should explore creative options with an open mind, including mutual recognition which would allow for continued transfrontier broadcasting – recognising the enriching role that British broadcasters and programme makers play, not only in British – but more broadly in our common European – culture.

Similarly, on financial services, the Chancellor will be setting out next week how financial services can and should be part of a deep and comprehensive partnership. We are not looking for passporting because we understand this is intrinsic to the single market of which we would no longer be a member. It would also require us to be subject to a single rule book, over which we would have no say.

The UK has responsibility for the financial stability of the world’s most significant financial centre, and our taxpayers bear the risk, so it would be unrealistic for us to implement new EU legislation automatically and in its entirety.

But with UK located banks underwriting around half of the debt and equity issued by EU companies and providing more than £1.1 trillion of cross-border lending to the rest of the EU in 2015 alone, this is a clear example of where only looking at precedent would hurt both the UK and EU economies.

As in other areas of the future economic partnership, our goal should be to establish the ability to access each others' markets, based on the UK and EU maintaining the same regulatory outcomes over time, with a mechanism for determining proportionate consequences where they are not maintained. But given the highly regulated nature of financial services, and our shared desire to manage financial stability risks, we would need a collaborative, objective framework that is reciprocal, mutually agreed, and permanent and therefore reliable for businesses.

There are many other areas where the UK and EU economies are closely linked – including energy, transport, digital, law, science and innovation, and education and culture.

On energy, we will want to secure broad energy co-operation with the EU. This includes protecting the single electricity market across Ireland and Northern Ireland – and exploring options for the UK's continued participation in the EU's internal energy market. We also believe it is of benefit to both sides for the UK to have a close association with Euratom.

On transport, we will want to ensure the continuity of air, maritime and rail services; and we will want to protect the rights of road hauliers to access the EU market and vice versa.

On digital, the UK will not be part of the EU's Digital Single Market, which will continue to develop after our withdrawal from the EU. This is a fast evolving, innovative sector, in which the UK is a world leader. So it will be particularly important to have domestic flexibility, to ensure the regulatory environment can always respond nimbly and ambitiously to new developments.

We will want our agreement to cover civil judicial cooperation, where the EU has already shown that it can reach agreement with non-member states, such as through the Lugano Convention, although we would want a broader agreement that reflects our unique starting point. And our agreement will also need to cover company law and intellectual property, to provide further legal certainty and coherence.

The UK is also committed to establishing a far-reaching science and innovation pact with the EU, facilitating the exchange of ideas and researchers. This would enable the UK to participate in key programmes alongside our EU partners. And we want to take a similar approach to educational and cultural programmes, to promote our shared values and enhance our intellectual strength in the world – again making an ongoing contribution to cover our fair share of the costs involved.

In all these areas, bold and creative thinking can deliver new agreements that are in the very best interests of all our people – both in the UK and across the EU.

And in the face of a worrying rise in protectionism, I believe such agreements can enable us to set an example to the world.

Post-Brexit Britain

For the world is watching.

We should not think of our leaving the EU as marking an ending, as much as a new beginning for the United Kingdom and our relationship with our European allies.

Change is not to be feared, so long as we face it with a clear-sighted determination to act for the common good.

Nor is Brexit an end in itself.

Rather, it must be the means by which we reaffirm Britain's place in the world and renew the ties that bind us here at home. And I know that the United Kingdom I treasure can emerge from this process a stronger, more cohesive nation.

A United Kingdom which is a cradle for innovation; a leader in the industries of the future; a champion of free trade, based on high standards; a modern, outward-looking, tolerant country, proud of our values and confident of our place in the world.

This is an optimistic and confident future which can unite us all.

A Global Britain which thrives in the world by forging a bold and comprehensive economic partnership with our neighbours in the EU; and reaches out beyond our continent, to trade with nations across the globe.

The approach I have set out today would: implement the referendum result, provide an enduring solution, protect our security and prosperity, helps us build the kind of country we want to be, and bring our country together by commanding the confidence of those who voted Leave and those who voted Remain. It is an approach to deliver for the whole of our United Kingdom and our wider family of overseas territories.

I am in no doubt that whatever agreement we reach with the EU, our future is bright. The stability and continuity of centuries of self-government, our commitment to freedom under the rule of law, our belief in enterprise and innovation, but above all, the talent and genius of all our people – and especially our young people – are the seeds of our success in the future, as they have been the guarantors of our success in the past.

I look forward to discussing our future partnership with our European friends. Because although we are leaving the EU – and in that regard we will become separate – we are all still European and will stay linked by the many ties and values we have in common. And because it is only by working together that we will find solutions that work for all our peoples.

Yes, there will be ups and downs in the months ahead. As in any negotiation, no-one will get everything they want. We will not be buffeted by the demands to talk tough or threaten a walk out. Just as we will not accept the counsels of despair that this simply cannot be done. We will move forward by calm, patient discussion of each other's positions. It is my responsibility as Prime Minister to provide that leadership for our country at this crucial time. By following the course I have set out today, I am confident we will get there and deliver the right outcome for Britain and the EU.

A generation from now what will be remembered is not the rough and tumble of negotiation but whether we reached an enduring solution cast in the interests of the people we are all here to serve. So my message to our friends in Europe is clear.

We know what we want.

We understand your principles.

We have a shared interest in getting this right.

So let's get on with it.

News story: DRS braves the Beast from the East

The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's specialist rail freight subsidiary is hard at work keeping its locomotives running in the atrocious weather conditions that have been sweeping the nation.

DRS' Commercial Director, Beverley Stothart, said:

> Providing support to Network Rail in keeping the UK's train services running is already an important part of our work, but when we face such a severe spell of weather, that threatens to disrupt the UK's infrastructure, it's even more important that we get DRS services out to help keep the lines open so the train services that we rely on can get back to normal.

The DRS loco's are supporting Network Rail with its effort to return the rail network to normal, patrolling important routes to keep them open and driving snow ploughs to battle through the many drifts that 'The Beast from the East' has brought with it.

The severe snow and record-breaking low temperatures have resulted in massive disruption to the rail network and train services all over the UK, in particular across Scotland.

Large parts of the busy rail network are still unavailable for train services and, without clearing snow from the network, it would be impossible for normal rail services to restart on these key routes.

DRS, Network Rail and other rail freight operators are keen to win this battle with the ‘Beast’ so normal services can resume for both freight and passengers.