

International Trade Secretary meets Japan's Minister of Foreign Affairs

At their meeting they launched the necessary processes ahead of negotiating a free trade agreement between the two countries, after the UK leaves the EU on 31 October.

They [signed an exchange of letters](#) to ensure continuity of effect of the EU-Japan Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) and Ms Truss launched an the [online 'call for input'](#) to prepare for trade negotiations with Japan after Brexit.

Speaking at her meeting with Mr Motegi, Liz Truss said:

First of all it is great to be here in Japan Minister Motegi on the day of the opening of the Rugby World Cup. I've made it an early priority to visit Japan as Trade Secretary because this is a very important economic relationship for our two countries. We are both island nations and we both have a free market democracy and a strong belief in free trade and the importance of an international rules-based order.

It's good that today we have been able to exchange letters to make sure that we have mutual recognition continuing and that our businesses have continuity as the UK leaves the EU which we will do by the 31 October. But what we are also doing today is we are launching the start of our process for the agreement of a separate free trade arrangement with Japan and we are launching our call for input for businesses to be able to tell us where they think the biggest opportunities are in a future trading arrangement.

We want to have an ambitious, comprehensive arrangement with Japan that covers many modern industries – for example artificial intelligence, financial services – and helps build the links between our two economies. We are also very interested in the prospect of acceding to CPTPP as well. We are keen to move forward to the future where the UK plays a full part in the WTO, is part of trade agreements that help set standards for the future and keep a free trade world.

Businesses, interest groups and members of the public across the whole of the UK will have the opportunity to tell the government what their priorities are for our future trade relationship with Japan. The call for input will be open for six weeks, until the 4th November 2019 and anyone can take part online.

The exchange of letters, which covers more than £2 billion worth of trade, ensures that UK certificates and inspections of technical regulations can continue to be recognised by Japan, saving businesses time, money and resources. Japan exporters to the UK benefit in the same way.

The exchange of letters ensures continuity of effect for almost all relevant aspects of the current EU-Japan MRA and will help facilitate trade flows between the two countries.

The UK and Japan have already committed to seeking an economic partnership which is just as ambitious, high standard and mutually beneficial as the existing EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). We expect a new partnership would go even further in areas of shared interest.