

North Macedonia and UK sign Partnership, Trade and Cooperation Agreement

The Agreement strengthens the trading relationship between the UK and North Macedonia, worth £1.8bn in 2019, by securing continued preferential access and paving the way for increased trade in future.

The UK has today (3 December) signed a Partnership, Trade and Cooperation Agreement with North Macedonia, the UK's largest trading partner in the Western Balkans.

The preferential terms secured by this Agreement will enable British business to continue to trade as they do today after the Transition Period and in turn will help protect North Macedonia's economic stability and prosperity.

The Agreement also sets out the UK and North Macedonia's ambitions for our future relationship including the strengthening of our political, economic, security and cultural ties.

FCDO Minister for the European Neighborhood and the Americas Wendy Morton said:

I welcome the signing of the UK-North Macedonia Partnership, Trade and Cooperation Agreement which sets the foundations for an even more ambitious relationship between our countries. This includes future cooperation in tackling climate change, improving education, and standing up for human rights.

The Agreement will also strengthen our already substantial ties in trade and investment. North Macedonia is the UK's largest trading partner in the Western Balkans and the UK is North Macedonia's second largest import market. The signing of this Agreement gives exporters and consumers the certainty they need to continue trading freely and with confidence as the Transition Period ends.

International Trade Minister Ranil Jayawardena said:

Free and fair trade is vital as we work to recover from the economic impact of coronavirus, and so I am delighted that today we've secured our trading relationship with North Macedonia.

Today's agreement gives certainty for business in both countries and demonstrates our commitment to building on our strong trade ties with North Macedonia and the Western Balkans region.

Her Majesty's Ambassador to North Macedonia Rachel Galloway signed the Agreement with Minister of Foreign Affairs Bujar Osmani in Skopje.

Her Majesty's Ambassador to North Macedonia, Rachel Galloway said:

Following North Macedonia's accession to NATO, this Agreement is another positive step in strengthening UK-North Macedonia relations. North Macedonia offers great opportunities for UK companies and investors across a variety of industries and the signing of the Agreement marks a new era of increased investment in both our economies. The UK remains committed to North Macedonia's Euro-Atlantic path and we will continue to stand together as NATO Allies.

The Agreement provides a framework for closer political dialogue and increased cooperation on important issues such as the environment, education, and human rights. By signing the Agreement, the UK has reaffirmed its commitment to a close relationship with North Macedonia and to playing a continued positive role in the region.

When the Agreement enters into effect at the end of the Transition Period, British businesses and consumers will continue to benefit from existing trading terms with North Macedonia, including the tariff-free trade of industrial products.

Trade between the UK and North Macedonia was worth £1.8 billion in 2019. Top UK exports to North Macedonia last year were non-ferrous metals (£1.1 billion), inorganic chemicals (£77 million) and textiles (£4 million). Meanwhile top imports to the UK from North Macedonia were metal ores & scrap (£49m), clothing (£16m) and furniture (£13 million).

Background

- Statistical sources: ONS, UK trade release (non-seasonally adjusted)
- This Agreement will now be subject to domestic parliamentary procedures in both the UK and North Macedonia.
- In under two years, the UK Government has signed or agreed in principle trade agreements with 54 countries. Total UK trade with these countries was worth £166 billion in 2019.
- This accounts for 90% of the value of trade with non-EU countries that we set out to secure agreements with at the start of the trade continuity programme.
- Source of trade statistics: UK total trade: all countries, non-seasonally adjusted April to June 2020