

Press release: New legislation to prepare UK for future trade and customs policy

The government is making crucial progress on the domestic legislation needed for Brexit, taking forward the next two Brexit Bills to Parliament.

The Trade Bill and the Customs Bill will allow the UK to set the groundwork to becoming an independent global trading nation, providing necessary certainty for businesses and international trading partners to make the most of this opportunity.

Key measures in the Trade Bill include provisions for the UK to implement existing EU trade agreements, helping ensure that UK companies can continue to access £1.3 trillion worth of major government contracts in other countries and creating a new trade remedies body to defend UK businesses against injurious trade practices.

Further tax-related elements of the UK's trade policy will be legislated in the Treasury's Customs Bill – Taxation (Cross-border Trade) Bill – as part of the creation of a new UK tariff regime. This includes the trade remedies and unilateral trade preferences which provide preferential trade access to UK markets for developing countries.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox said:

For the first time in over 40 years the UK will be able to shape our own trade and investment agenda – and we are determined that businesses and consumers can take advantage of this opportunity.

We are getting on with delivering a successful Brexit, by seeking a deep and special partnership with the EU, and by boosting our existing trading relationships with old partners while opening up access to new and exciting markets across the world.

The Bills follow engagement with stakeholders including the Scottish and Welsh Governments and Northern Ireland leaders after the Trade and Customs White Papers were published in October.

Trade Bill

The Trade Bill laid in Parliament today will:

- create powers to assist in the transition of over 40 existing trade agreements between the EU and other countries
- enable the UK to become an independent member of the Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA) ensuring UK companies have continued access

to £1.3 trillion worth of government contracts and procurement opportunities in 47 countries

- establish a new independent UK body, the Trade Remedies Authority, to defend UK businesses against unfair trade practices
- ensure the UK Government has the legal abilities for gathering and sharing trade information

Customs Bill

The government also laid resolutions for the Customs Bill, which will enter Parliament shortly. The Bill will allow the government to create a standalone customs regime and amend the VAT and excise regimes. It will:

- charge and vary customs duty on goods
- specify which duties are payable on which goods
- set preferential or additional duties in certain circumstances – for example, to support developing countries
- maintain a functioning movement of goods from the day we leave the EU by continuing the VAT and excise regimes in line with the final deal reached in negotiations

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Further information