

UK applies to join Pacific free trade area where Chile is a member

The UK government is formally applying to join one of the world's largest free-trade areas, to position the UK at the heart of emerging economies in the Pacific and support jobs across the UK.

UK International Trade Secretary Liz Truss spoke with Ministers in Japan and New Zealand on Monday morning (1 February 2021) to request to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), the first formal step before negotiations start later this year.

UK membership would enhance trade with CPTPP nations, including Chile, by opening up new markets and opportunities for UK businesses while encouraging greater inward investment and strengthening the UK's ties with the Indo-Pacific region and the Americas. Membership would also help the UK go further and faster in areas like digital trade and services. Last year trade from the UK to CPTPP member nations in these fields hit £18.7 billion and joining now would create an opportunity to unleash other sectors of the UK's economy.

The UK's accession would increase CPTPP's combined GDP from £9 trillion to £11 trillion. Last year, trade between the UK and the 11 member countries was worth more than £111 billion and has grown on average at 8% each year since 2016.

More specifically, trade between the UK and the three Latin American CPTPP member countries was over £7 billion in the final four quarters to the second quarter of 2020, (Chile £1.8 billion, Mexico £4.5 billion, Peru £764 million) and its accession will increase its opportunities in the fastest growing sectors in these countries: agriculture, manufacturing, healthcare and life sciences and in a vast majority of other sectors such as automotive, food and drink, mining, digital and financial services.

The UK's membership to CPTPP is a key part of the UK's Government's plan to position the UK at the centre of a network of modern free trade deals that drive jobs and economic growth.

UK Prime Minister, Boris Johnson said:

One year after our departure from the EU we are forging new partnerships that will bring enormous economic benefits for the people of Britain.

Applying to be the first new country to join the CPTPP demonstrates our ambition to do business on the best terms with our friends and partners all over the world and be an enthusiastic champion of global free trade.

International Trade Secretary Liz Truss said

Our ambition, as an independent trading nation, is to champion free trade, fight protectionism and remove barriers to trade at every opportunity – all of which are values that CPTPP member countries promote.

CPTPP is an exclusive club of fast-growing countries who trade together, and our accession would secure increased trade and investment opportunities for all members and put the UK at the centre of a dynamic, free-trade area.

Spencer Mahony, Her Majesty's Trade Commissioner for Latin America and the Caribbean, said:

I am delighted that the UK has officially notified CPTPP members of its intention to join. CPTPP membership will complement the bilateral trade deals the UK has across Latin America and support our efforts to increase UK trade with this exciting region.

Latin America is a dynamic, innovative and increasingly open region, with huge growth potential. Chile, Mexico, and Peru, just like the UK, are advocates for free trade and a rules based global trade system. CPTPP represents a further opportunity to work closely with them on this agenda.

Notes to Editors

- CPTPP is a trade agreement between 11 countries (Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam), covering 500 million people, and representing 13% of global GDP in 2019; rising to 16% if the UK were to join
- The UK will publish its negotiation objectives, scoping analysis, and consultation response in advance of negotiations expected to start later this year
- Data sources: ONS UK trade: all countries, non-seasonally adjusted, Q2 2020 ; IMF World Economic Outlook, October 2020 ; ONS, Modes of Supply, 2019

Further information

If you want to know more about the UK's accession to the CPTPP and Chile, please contact [Gabriel Henriquez](#), Trade and Economic Policy Officer, British Embassy Santiago.

For more information about the activities of the British Embassy in Santiago, follow us on:

Russia: UK responds to Navalny sentencing

Press release

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab has called for the immediate release of Alexey Navalny after his sentencing in Moscow.



Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

The UK calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Alexey Navalny and all of the peaceful protesters and journalists arrested over the last two weeks. Today's perverse ruling, targeting the victim of a poisoning rather than those responsible, shows Russia is failing to meet the most basic commitments expected of any responsible member of the international community.

Published 2 February 2021

Letter on COVID-19 vaccine rollout in Scotland, 2nd February 2021

[unable to retrieve full-text content] Letter from Secretary of State for Scotland, Alister Jack, to Scottish First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, on the COVID-19 vaccine rollout.

Greece: Foreign Secretary meets Foreign Minister Dendias

Press release

The Foreign Secretary has held talks in London with Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias.



Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab met Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias today in London to discuss deepening UK-Greece bilateral ties, enduring solutions in Cyprus and co-operation on global issues, including climate change.

Both Ministers reaffirmed the strength of the UK-Greece relationship, noting 2021 marks 200 years since the beginning of the struggle that led to the foundation of the modern Greek state, in which the UK played a key role. The Ministers also discussed proposals for new initiatives to deepen UK-Greece co-operation, including in the fields of education, cultural exchange and defence.

The Foreign Secretary and Minister Dendias shared perspectives on prospects for an enduring solution in Cyprus, looking forward to upcoming talks under United Nations stewardship. The two Ministers also agreed on the importance of ambitious global action on climate change, an area where the UK and Greece continue to share knowledge and expertise.

Published 2 February 2021

Myanmar military coup: Minister Adams' statement, 2 February 2021

I would like to update the House on the situation in Myanmar.

On Sunday evening, Myanmar's armed forces, the Tatmadaw, seized control of the country, declaring a state of emergency in the early hours of Monday morning. The country is now under the effective control of the Commander in Chief and the military Vice President Myint Swe.

At around 2am local time on 1 February, the Tatmadaw began detaining politicians and civil society leaders across the country, including the democratically elected Aung San Suu Kyi and President U Win Myint.

The Tatmadaw has said that this state of emergency will continue for a year. The army has taken control of the airports. Only military broadcasters are still on air and phone lines and the internet remains at risk of being disconnected again.

The military's actions follow on from their accusations of fraud during November's elections. Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy won by a landslide, and the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party's share was drastically reduced. While there were significant concerns about the disenfranchisement of minority groups such as the Rohingya, there are no suggestions of widespread irregularities. International observers, such as the Carter Centre and the Asian Network for Free Elections, found no evidence of significant irregularities in the elections.

As such, the UK considers the election result to credibly reflect the will of the people, and that Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party are the rightful winners of the election.

The Commander-in-Chief has indicated that they intend to hold new elections to replace the results of those in November 2020. Any dispute regarding the election results should be resolved through peaceful and lawful mechanisms.

The Myanmar Supreme Court is hearing a case on alleged irregularities but has not yet decided whether it has jurisdiction. The reports today of the arrest of the Chair of the Union Election Commission are deeply concerning.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the events of Sunday night have filled us all with a profound sense of revulsion and sadness. Our thoughts are with the people of Myanmar who have once again been robbed of their inherent democratic rights.

The elections in 2020, though by no means perfect, were an important step on Myanmar's path to democracy. We, and others, welcomed them as a strong endorsement of Myanmar's desire for a democratic future.

Myanmar's transition has been troubled; a constitution rigged in favour of the military, a campaign of atrocities and systematic discrimination against

the Rohingya and other minorities, and a faltering peace process. This coup threatens to set Myanmar's progress back by years, potentially decades.

As such, we are clear in our condemnation of this coup, of the state of emergency imposed in Myanmar, and the unlawful detention of democratically elected politicians and civil society by the military.

The Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary both issued statements to this effect on Monday morning. It is essential that Aung San Suu Kyi, and all those unlawfully detained, are released.

We must receive assurances that their safety, wellbeing, and their rights are being respected. The state of emergency must be repealed, arbitrary detentions reversed, the outcome of the democratic elections respected, and the National Assembly peacefully reconvened.

We are aware that there is a risk that demonstrations could provoke a violent response, taking Myanmar back to the dark days of the 1988 uprising or the 2007 Saffron Revolution, in which scores of civilians were killed.

As to the UK response, we are pursuing all levers to ensure a peaceful return to democracy.

Firstly, we have made representations at the highest level within Myanmar to encourage all sides to resolve disputes in a peaceful and legal manner.

The Foreign Secretary had a call scheduled for later this week with Aung San Suu Kyi prior to her detention. We are clear in our demands that this call goes ahead, and we hope it will serve as an opportunity to confirm her safety.

I formally summoned Myanmar's Ambassador to the UK to the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office yesterday. In the meeting, I condemned the military coup and arbitrary detention of civilians, including Aung San Suu Kyi, and made clear the democratic wishes of the people of Myanmar must be respected, and the elected National Assembly peacefully re-convened.

We are doing all we can, working with those in Myanmar, to support a peaceful resolution to this crisis.

Secondly, the international community has a role to play. We are engaging with partners, globally and in the region, to help align objectives and find a resolution to the crisis. We will work through multilateral fora to ensure a strong and coordinated international response.

As President, the Foreign Secretary is coordinating G7 partners on its response, aiming to build on its quick statement last week on Navalny.

The UK has urgently convened the UN Security Council who will meet later today. As a champion of the rules based international order, and democratic government, we are driving the international response, including in our role as President of both the G7 and UNSC, urging the military to immediately hand back power to the Government that was legitimately elected in November 2020.

ASEAN also has an important role to play, as do the principles of the ASEAN Charter, including the rule of law, good governance, and the principles of democracy and constitutional government. We continue to engage with ASEAN partners to support a regional response, including a meeting with the Thai Vice Foreign Minister this morning.

Third, it is the military's actions that instigated this coup. The UK already had a number of measures in place in response to the military's past, and ongoing atrocities: on 19 September 2017 the UK announced the suspension of all defence engagement and training with the Myanmar military by the Ministry of Defence until there is a satisfactory resolution to the situation in Rakhine.

The MOD no longer has a Defence Section in Yangon. The UK has also already imposed sanctions on 16 individuals responsible for human rights violations in Myanmar. We sanctioned all 6 individuals named by the UN Fact Finding Mission report, including the Commander-in-Chief and his Deputy. The Commander-in-Chief and his Deputy are the architects of the current political situation.

They also have the power to de-escalate the crisis and restore democracy. We will assess how best to engage with the military, if at all.

We have also enhanced private sector due diligence to prevent UK funds going to military owned companies.

The UK does not provide direct financial aid to the Government of Myanmar, but we do provide some targeted support, working through other international organisations and multilateral bodies.

In light of the coup, the Foreign Secretary has today announced a review of all such indirect support to the Myanmar government, with a view to suspending it unless there are exceptional humanitarian reasons.

It is important that our response holds the military accountable. We continue to support the people of Myanmar.

We will continue leading the international response to this crisis and calling on the military leaders in Myanmar to relent, revoke the state of emergency, release members of the civilian Government and civil society, including State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint, to reconvene the elected National Assembly, to respect the results of the November 2020 general election, and accept the expressed wishes of the people of Myanmar.

I commend this statement to the House.