

Press release: UK and Palestinian Authority sign trade continuity agreement

A trade continuity agreement will see Palestinian businesses and consumers benefitting from continued trade after the UK leaves the European Union, UK International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox said today (Monday 18 February).

In Ramallah, the UK-Palestinian Authority agreement was signed by both the International Trade Secretary and Her Excellency, Abeer Odeh, Minister of National Economy.

The agreement simplifies trade and will allow businesses to trade as freely as they do now once the UK leaves the EU.

Trading on these preferential terms, rather than on World Trade Organization terms, will continue to deliver significant savings and help to further strengthen the bilateral trading relationship.

The agreement allows Palestinian businesses to continue access to the UK market tariff-free which will continue to benefit Palestinian producers in priority sectors, including exporters of fruit, nuts and vegetable fats including dates and olive oil.

Today's signing reflects the importance of bilateral relations between the UK and the Palestinian Authority. The Agreement demonstrates the UK's commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation, promoting Palestinian economic growth, and maintaining the UK's strong commitment to a two-state solution.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP said:

Today's agreement will help give UK and Palestinian businesses, exporters and consumers the certainty they need to continue trading freely as the UK prepares to leave the EU.

The agreement reflects the importance of the UK-Palestinian relationship, a thriving Palestinian economy is in all our interests. We look forward to further strengthening our trade and investment relations with the Palestinian people.

The news has been welcomed by the Palestine British Business Council.

Antoine Mattar, Chair of the Council, said;

The Palestine Britain Business Council welcomes the trade agreement between the United Kingdom and the Palestinian Authority.

This agreement avoids unnecessary tariffs which will ultimately save British consumers money on items such as dates and olive oil. Frictionless trade also helps to keep people in employment and create new jobs, supporting the Palestinian economy and helping Palestinians work towards a prosperous future.

The UK is seeking to provide continuity for around 40 existing EU trade agreements covering more than 70 countries.

Like these agreements, the new UK-Palestinian Authority agreement replicates the existing trading arrangements as far as possible. It will come into effect as soon as the implementation period ends in January 2021, or on 29 March 2019 if the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

[News story: Home Secretary visits police centres preparing for EU exit](#)

The Home Secretary has today (Monday 18 February) visited 2 police hubs to see how law enforcement is preparing for the possibility of leaving the European Union without a deal.

Sajid Javid was given a tour of the International Crime and Coordination Centre (ICCC), a unit recently established by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC).

The ICCC will act as a centre of expertise to support police forces in using alternative co-operation mechanisms with European partners should a deal not be agreed before the UK leaves the EU.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

The UK's main objective is to maintain existing levels of security co-operation and protect mutually beneficial capabilities, which is in the interests of both Britain and the EU.

It is our duty as a responsible government, however, to prepare for all scenarios.

I am reassured that our police, through the International Crime Coordination Centre and the National Police Coordination Centre, are well-prepared to respond to all scenarios.

The Home Office has provided £2.4 million for the ICCC in 2018 to 2019 and confirmed that the department will continue to fund the unit in 2019 to 2020.

The Home Secretary also went to the National Police Coordination Centre (NPoCC), where he was given an overview of its operations by Chief Constable Sara Thornton, the NPoCC's chair.

Launched in 2013, the NPoCC co-ordinates the deployment of police officers and staff across UK policing during major events and operations.

It recently oversaw police response to the visit of US President Donald Trump in July 2018. The visit constituted the largest deployment of officers since 2011 and was delivered safely and securely by police.

[Press release: Government's asset management taskforce revamped](#)

Five new senior executives from the UK's world-leading investment industry have joined the government's Asset Management Taskforce, the Economic Secretary to the Treasury announced today.

Caroline Connellan (CEO, Brooks Macdonald), Michelle Scrimgeour (CEO, Columbia Threadneedle), Cuan Coulter (Executive vice president and head of EMEA, State Street), Patrick Thomson (CEO EMEA, JP Morgan Asset Management), and Helen Dean (CEO, NEST), will join the government's Taskforce at a crucial time for the UK's £9.1 trillion asset management industry.

In addition to the Taskforce's existing priorities, the Economic Secretary challenged the refreshed Taskforce to investigate what new international opportunities the UK's asset management industry could seize after Brexit, and to explore ways to promote responsible investment.

John Glen, Economic Secretary to the Treasury said:

Asset managers own over a third of all UK-listed companies, and the sector is an essential component of the UK's economic engine. Now is the time to focus on what it is the sector needs to fully realise the global opportunities that Brexit offers.

Stewardship and responsible investment is an area the UK has yet to fully take advantage of, so I've challenged the Taskforce to find ways in which we can tap into that growing market and enhance our position as a world leader in asset management.

Established in October 2017, the Asset Management Taskforce was designed to encourage greater dialogue between the government, the industry and the FCA. Fintech was immediately identified by the Taskforce as central to the future success of industry. So, building on the Taskforce's discussions, the

Investment Association designed and launched Velocity, a Fintech Accelerator, to speed up the adoption of new emergent technologies across the asset management industry.

In December, the Chancellor of the Exchequer chaired a meeting of the Taskforce to provide assurances on the progress of Brexit and discuss the international opportunities for the industry.

Asset Management Taskforce Members

- John Glen – Economic Secretary
- Megan Butler – Director of Supervision, FCA
- Chris Woolard – Director of Strategy and Competition, FCA
- Chris Cummings – Chief Executive, Investment Association
- Sean Hagerty – Managing Director of Europe, Vanguard
- Peter Harrison – Group Chief Executive, Schroders; & Chairman, Investment Association
- Rachel Lord – CEO of EMEA, BlackRock
- Maarten Slendebroek – outgoing CEO, Jupiter Asset Management
- Andrew Formica – incoming CEO, Jupiter Asset Management
- Keith Skeoch – CEO, Standard Life Aberdeen
- Anne Richards – CEO, Fidelity International
- Catherine Howarth – CEO, ShareAction
- Patrick Thomson – CEO, EMEA JP Morgan
- Caroline Connellan – CEO, Brooks MacDonald
- Michelle Scrimgeour – CEO, Columbia Threadneedle, EMEA.
- Cuan Coulter – Executive Vice President and head of EMEA, State Street
- Helen Dean – CEO, NEST

[Press release: UK and Israel sign trade continuity agreement](#)

A trade continuity agreement will see British businesses and consumers benefitting from continued trade with Israel after we leave the European Union.

International Trade Secretary and President of the Board of Trade, the Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox MP, signed the UK-Israel agreement in Jerusalem today (Monday 18 February) with Minister of Economy and Industry, Eli Cohen.

The news has been welcomed by business groups including the Israel Britain Chamber of Commerce, who say it will help to support jobs and ensure continuity for both British consumers and businesses who will be able to continue trading without disruption.

The agreement simplifies trade and allows businesses to trade as freely as

they do now, without any additional barriers or tariffs.

Trading on these preferential terms rather than on World Trade Organization terms will deliver significant savings and help to safeguard British jobs.

This will help to further strengthen the trading relationship between the UK and Israel, which was worth £4 billion in the year ending 2018 Q3.

The British vehicles sector could avoid up to £9 million a year in tariff charges on their exports that would apply if the agreement wasn't in place, while machinery and mechanical appliance exporters could avoid up to £5 million a year.

The agreement also protects existing preferential market access for important products. Consumers in the UK will continue to benefit from more choice and lower prices on goods imported from Israel, such as pharmaceutical products, with Israeli companies acting as major suppliers to the NHS. The deal will ensure crucial protection for intellectual property rights and maintain high trading standards across industry.

International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox said:

Britain's relationship with Israel is stronger than it has ever been with record levels of bilateral cooperation in trade and investment between our two nations. Today's agreement will further help ensure UK and Israeli businesses, exporters and consumers have the certainty they need to continue trading freely and in confidence as the UK prepares to leave the EU.

We look forward to further strengthening an ambitious trade and investment relationship with Israel as we work closer together in the future.

Anita Leviant, President of the Israel Britain Chamber of Commerce (IBCC) said:

The IBCC community, both in Israel and in the UK is very pleased and encouraged by the signing of the continuity trade agreement between both countries. Bilateral Trade between the UK and Israel has been booming during the last several years and the UK is Israel's second largest trade partner, with over 300 Israeli companies choosing to set up their businesses in the UK.

Tech, science and innovation cooperation between companies and organisations of both countries keeps growing each year and the sky is the limit. Ensuring continuity for our important mutual businesses, is therefore a must and this agreement, at this time,

provides the required immediate certainty, and at the same time, serves as a solid foundation, for growth and enhancement of the already existing two-way UK-Israel trade and investment relationship.

The government's priority remains minimal disruption to our global trading relationship as we prepare to leave the European Union. We will continue to work with our trading partners as we seek continuity for existing trade agreements.

Like all of these agreements, the new UK-Israel deal replicates the existing trading arrangements as far as possible. It will come into effect as soon as the implementation period ends in January 2021, or on 29 March 2019 if the UK leaves the EU without a deal.

The UK International Trade Secretary, Dr. Liam Fox, and Israeli Minister for Economy and Industry, Eli Cohen, have agreed the text of the UK-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement. The Agreement replicates the existing EU-Israel trading relationship, as reflected by the EU-Israel Association Agreement[1], to ensure continuity in the trading relationship between Israel and the UK, when the UK ceases to be a member of the EU. In signing the Trade and Partnership Agreement, both parties have ensured certainty for businesses, consumers and investors following the UK's withdrawal from the EU. Considering that the EU-Israel Association Agreement was signed in 1995 and the world of trade has evolved since, both Ministers re-affirm their desire to see an ambitious free trade deal concluded between their countries. The Trade and Partnership Agreement will pave the way for an ambitious relationship between the UK and Israel's complementary economies. With bilateral trade already worth £4 billion, the Ministers agree that both countries should aim to develop the economic and trading relationship further, with the aim of deepening links in key sectors. In this context both ministers are committed to undertaking a review of the Trade and Partnership Agreement with a view to upgrading it, including in areas not covered therein.

[Press release: Outstanding Gateshead student awarded Lord Glenamara prize](#)

A talented Gateshead student has received national recognition for achieving top school grades and making a stand-out contribution to her local community.

Sixteen-year-old Stephanie Taylor, who studies at St Wilfrid's R.C. College, Gateshead, is the seventh winner of the annual Lord Glenamara prize, which recognises gifted students in years 11 and 12 who are also making a difference in communities across the North East of England.

Stephanie, from South Shields, was among nine young people shortlisted for the Prize and has today (Monday 18 February) been honoured by the Education Secretary Damian Hinds, who described Stephanie as “an inspiration” at an awards ceremony at University College London.

The English, Spanish and Psychology A-level student plays an active role in the National Citizen Service, is a member of South Tyneside Young People’s Parliament, and, in her role as a School Council Ambassador at St Wilfrid’s, has driven forward the ‘Make Your Mark’ campaign to highlight the issue of body image and help fellow pupils access guidance and support.

Stephanie Taylor said:

“It’s a huge honour to receive this prestigious award. I will be eternally grateful for my teachers, who saw potential in me and guided me to succeed, as well as to the judges for ultimately choosing me as the winner.

“I am looking forward to contributing more to my local area through South Tyneside Young People’s Parliament, where this year’s campaign is mental health.

“Experiences such as the National Citizen Service have been a major factor in helping me grow as a person, as well as working at baking classes for young children with learning difficulties. I will always be thankful for these opportunities.”

The runner-up of this year’s prize was Melin Sunil, an outstanding pupil who achieved a clean sweep of top grades across every subject in her GCSEs. She also takes an active role in mentoring younger students, as well as volunteering at Sunderland Royal Hospital.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

“Stephanie’s commitment to helping other people is an inspiration, and it’s so impressive that she is able to balance this with excellent grades. The Lord Glenamara Prize is a great celebration of the incredible talent in the North East.

“This stand-out talent is exactly what the Government is determined to harness through the £24 million Opportunity North East programme, which is aimed at making sure every young person in the region can fulfil their potential – anyone looking for an example to follow should look no further than Stephanie.”

The Lord Glenamara prize was established in 2012 in memory of Ted Short – a teacher who went on to serve as MP for Newcastle Central from 1951 to 1975, including two years as Education Secretary.

The prize shines a spotlight on talent from across the region, and underscores the Government’s commitment to boosting social mobility and raising aspirations for children in the North East through the £24 million Opportunity North East programme launched in October.

Opportunity North East, which is led by Schools Minister Lord Agnew, was launched to address the fact that secondary school performance in the North East is significantly below other regions in England, despite having some of the best-performing primary schools.

On top of that, fewer 18-year-olds attend the country's top universities than those from any other part of the country, and the North East also has one of the highest proportions of young people not in education, employment or training after year 11.

Minister for the School System Lord Agnew said:

"The variety of achievements among the nominees shows how much potential there is in this region – and I'm committed to helping even more young people fulfil their potential and find the right path to an exciting future.

"Delivering on that ambition is at the heart of the Opportunity North East programme and the board of local education leaders and experts that I chair are similarly determined to raise standards and aspirations for talented people in this unique part of the country."

The programme will aim to tackle issues holding young people back in the North East by:

- Investing £12 million in targeted approaches to improve the transition from primary to secondary school, drive up standards – particularly at secondary level – and improve outcomes for pupils post 16;
- Working with secondary schools and colleges to encourage young people to consider university, degree apprenticeships and other high quality technical education options;
- Partnering with local businesses to improve job prospects for young people across the region; and
- Investing a further £12 million to boost early career training for new teachers and help improve the quality of teaching and raise standards in the region's schools, ahead of roll-out in other regions.

Opportunity North East is part of a government drive to improve education and boost productivity in the North of England, and follows on from investment in the Northern Powerhouse strategy.