

Vital Industries to benefit from post-Brexit Britain

International Trade Secretary, Liz Truss, has today (Friday 17 January) set out how vital industries will benefit from free trade after Brexit.

Ms Truss met with key industry figures including the British Ceramic Confederation (BCC) in Stoke-On-Trent to discuss how the UK ceramics industry can reap the rewards of an independent trade policy. The Secretary of State also visited world renowned ceramics manufacturer Steelite International.

The Trade Secretary's discussion with businesses in Stoke focused on how new trade agreements will benefit the city, and what measures the government is taking to ensure local industry is protected from injury caused by unfair trading practices like dumping, where overseas firms sell goods to the UK market at below their fair market price.

The ceramics industry is vital to the UK economy – employing over 20,000 people – and is one industry that could benefit from reduced tariffs in a new US-UK free trade agreement. Currently, the simple average US tariff on ceramic imports is 6.7%, but for ceramic tableware tariffs can go as high as 28%. Removing or lowering these tariffs would be a boost for the industry.

International Trade Secretary Liz Truss said:

British businesses such as the fantastic ceramics companies I have visited today have everything to gain when we leave the EU. They will be able to realise the brilliant opportunities that will come from securing new free trade agreements with countries around the world. And this government will ensure that UK industries will continue to compete on a level playing field.

People across the country in towns and cities like Stoke-on-Trent have put their faith in this government to deliver Brexit and improve both the local economy and the level of opportunity available to them. An independent trade policy that protects traditional northern industries like ceramics will help us repay that faith.

The government has already established its own trade remedies system, currently operating as part of the department as the Trade Remedies Investigations Directorate (TRID). TRID will be responsible for investigating claims of harmful and unfair trading practices, such as dumping and subsidies after we leave the EU, protecting various UK industries.

As the UK takes back control of its independent trade policy, promoting

British exports overseas and protecting key industries like the ceramics sector from unfair global trading practices remains high on the government's agenda.

Dr Laura Cohen MBE, Chief Executive, British Ceramic Confederation said:

We and our members want to help Government achieve their ambitious timescale for an UK-EU trade agreement by the end of the year, as 57% of our members' exports are sent to the EU. We appreciate the opportunity to raise this and other important issues on trade with the Secretary of State.

Steelite president and CEO Josh Miles said:

I have been in this industry for more than 30 years and am truly passionate about our employees and products – which I love taking to markets across the world.

As Steelite and the ceramics industry look at our next chapter of global expansion, we welcome the comments made by the Secretary of State and the government's continued support for our industry.