



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

MEETING

# Trade Policy Advisory Group meeting: 4 June 2020

Summary of the Trade Policy Advisory Group meeting via video conference on 4 June 2020.

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## Present

Eluned Morgan MS Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language  
- Chair

Emma Edworthy Deputy Director Trade Policy

## Trade Policy Division officials

Aileen Burmeister - National Co-ordinator Fair Trade Wales

Deborah Laubach - representing the Life Sciences sector

Chris Meadows – representing the electronic and software technologies sector

Prys Morgan - in his capacity as Wales' rep on UK government's Strategic Trade Advisory Group

Madeline Pinder – representing the aerospace sector

Gavin Powell – representing the FinTech sector

Andy Richardson – representing the food and drink sector

Richard Rumbelow - representing the manufacturing sector

Shavanah Taj – General Secretary of Wales TUC

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Tim Williams – representing the automotive sector

## Apologies

Kevin Roberts representing the primary producers sector

# 1. Welcome and introductions

Eluned Morgan MS, Minister for International Relations and the Welsh Language opened the meeting by welcoming attendees to the first meeting of the newly established Trade Policy Advisory Group.

The minister explained that as the UK government has recently opened trade negotiations with the USA and others are planned to follow-on shortly, she had decided to establish the Trade Policy Advisory Group.

The remit of the group is to provide expert input into how the Welsh Government can maximise the opportunities and minimise the threats these new deals could bring to Wales and the Welsh economy.

The minister noted that the Welsh Government is committed to the development of free trade agreements with trading partners across the globe, adding that these trade deals should complement a comprehensive free trade agreement with the EU and not be a substitute for it.

The minister observed that Wales has a real ability to influence the UK's trade negotiations and had already had an impact. In looking to influence UK international trade policy, the minister's preferred approach is to focus attention on those areas where Wales's needs are different from England and the rest of the UK.

The minister observed that Wales has so much to offer as both a trading partner and as a place to do business, adding that Wales is a globally responsible nation that believes in trading fairly.

## 2. Update on UK government trade deal negotiations

Officials from the Trade Policy Division gave a brief overview of each team's areas of responsibility and highlighted how Welsh Government is engaging with the UK government and inputting into discussions on international trade policy and trade negotiations.

## 3. Roundtable of group members: Opportunities and threats posed by trade deals prioritised by the UK government

The minister invited each member in turn to highlight the main opportunities and threats the planned trade deals pose to their sector. These discussions revealed a range of issues, many common across sectors:

- A number of members noted the damaging impact that Covid-19 has had on sectors of the Welsh economy including automotive and aerospace.
- Members noted the dominance of SMEs and microbusinesses in the Welsh economy. The need to upskill SMEs with the necessary 'export skills' to capitalise on the benefits offered was recognised as an important issue.
- The importance of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to Wales was discussed. It was suggested that not agreeing a trade deal with the EU would impact heavily on some FDI companies and members stressed the need for Government to engage with parent companies to understand their concerns. Members also raised the importance of engaging with parent companies in relation influencing to future investment decisions.
- A number of members highlighted the importance of decisions around regulatory alignment to their sectors. If changes to systems are made in relation to the EU, then business will need sufficient warning to allow them to forecast these changes into business plans. The impact of other technical barriers to trade and Rules of Origin was also raised.
- Members stressed having a 'level playing field', in terms of issues such as animal welfare, product standards and sharing and protecting Intellectual

Property as an important factor in any future trade deals.

- Members raised the significant challenge to some sectors posed by losing tariff free access to the EU market and the limited additionally offered by the trade deals being prioritised by the UK government.
- Ensuring that impact assessments of trade deals consider cross cutting issues such as gender, sustainability, the environment and labour rights was raised. The potential damage bilateral trade agreements may pose to developing countries and the impact of preference erosion were also highlighted.
- The need to exclude public services such as the NHS, transport services and education from trade deals was stressed in discussions. It was also suggested that cultural activities should be excluded. The need to ensure that trade deals uphold international agreements in terms of labour rights and climate change was emphasised.
- A number of members raised the potential negative impact on Wales from decisions on Investor State Dispute Settlement arrangements in future trade deals.
- Turning to the trade deal with the USA, members observed that agriculture, pharmaceuticals and product standards are areas where US is likely to pursue its own interests vigorously in negotiations with the UK. The complexity that the federal system of government in the USA poses to exporters was also discussed.

## 4. Closing remarks

The minister ended the meeting by thanking attendees for their contribution to discussions. The group will next meet on 1 October 2020.

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