



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Trade Policy Advisory Group meeting: 1 October 2024

Summary of the Trade Policy Advisory Group meeting held in person on 1 October 2024.

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Attendees

- Chair: Rebecca Evans MS, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning.

TPAG members and stakeholders

- Andy Richardson (Food and Drink Board Wales)
- Cath Smith (Hybu Cig Cymru)
- Dana Williams (Welsh Automotive Forum)
- Gwyn Tudor (MediWales)
- Henry Clarke (RDP Law)
- Kerry Owens (Unite the Union)
- Leighton Jenkins (CBI)
- Madeleine Pinder (Aerospace Wales)
- Paul Brooks (Institute of Export and International Trade)
- Richard Rumbelow (Make UK)
- Sarah Stone (Fair Trade Wales)
- Shavannah Taj (TUC Cymru)

Welcome and introductions

Rebecca Evans MS, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning opened the meeting by thanking the members for their valuable contribution to date. The Cabinet Secretary also thanked members for their pivotal role in shaping the Welsh Government's Approach to Trade Policy paper which was published in July. The Cabinet Secretary stated that she was looking forward to working closely with the new UK government to help ensure that trade agreements will enable the people and businesses of Wales to prosper whilst

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acting as a platform for constructive engagement around the environment, consumer standards, human rights, health, and equality.

The Cabinet Secretary went on to say that her attention is also increasingly focused on the trading relationship with the EU and the Welsh Government will need to work with UK government to understand where improvements in this trading relationship could be sought.

Update on trade deals under negotiation by the UK government

The Welsh Government's Head of Trade Policy provided an overview of the work to date regarding the UK government's free trade agreements. It was highlighted that the Welsh Government is engaging with the UK government and inputting into discussions on international trade policy and trade negotiations.

The group discussed and provided opinions on the following matters:

- The new UK government's commitment to resuming negotiations with the GCC (Gulf Co-operation Council), India, Israel, South Korea, Turkey and Switzerland.
- The balance between exporting opportunities with Wales' approach to trade policy.
- The priorities for different sectors.
- The importance of innovation.

The UK/EU and EAEC: Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) – Priorities roundtable discussion

The Welsh Government's Head of Trade Policy provided an overview of how the Trade Policy team is undertaking some work to look at where improvements in the current UK-EU trading relationship could be made and how. This work has focused on:

- Changes that could be made through the existing EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement (TCA) governance architecture, such as the existing committees that govern the implementation of the TCA.
- Changes that could be made as part of the future review of the TCA, due by 2026.

The group discussed and provided opinions on different areas the existing agreement could be improved.

The Women in Export Research Project

A member of the Welsh Government's Trade Policy team provided an update on the Welsh Government's research project on "Women in Export".

The purpose of the project is to examine whether there were any factors inhibiting women-led firms in Wales from trading internationally and to identify actions to overcome them.

The first step was to listen to women exporters, both experienced and new, about the difficulties they face when doing business abroad and what kind of support they would have found useful. Recommendations have been drawn

based on those discussions which are being considered. They range from practical ideas for increasing women's participation in trade missions, to more strategic solutions around accessing finance, trade-related training and networking opportunities.

The second phase of the project will involve consulting external organisations on how to implement some of these actions, and on how to improve the evidence base on women in trade in Wales.

Following this project, the Trade Policy team will be looking at barriers to trade for other protected characteristics including LGBTQ+, ethnic minorities, disability and youth.

The group discussed the project and suggested how their organisations could help contribute towards removing barriers to trade for women in Wales.

Closing remarks

The Cabinet Secretary closed the meeting by thanking attendees for their wide-ranging contributions to discussions.

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