

Jeremy Miles MS
Counsel General and Minister for European Transition

30 March 2021

Dear Jeremy,

International Agreements

Since January 2021, the External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee has considered a number of international agreements, including the:

- Agreement on Trade Continuity between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Canada;
- Agreement on Trade in Goods between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Iceland and the Kingdom of Norway;
- Free Trade Agreement between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Republic of Turkey;
- Agreement between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of Iceland concerning Air Services; and
- Agreement between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Kingdom of Norway concerning Air Services.

Following the Committee's routine assessment of UK international agreements in 2021, the Committee decided to seek further information from you on a number of issues which are outlined below.

As the Committee has held its final meeting, I would be grateful if you would send any response to the Committee's Clerk. The Clerk will hold the correspondence and ensure that it is brought to the attention of a relevant committee in the Sixth Senedd.

Review clauses

A number of the aforementioned agreements contain review clauses which means negotiations will be reopened again in the future. The review clauses included in each agreement vary in their scope. For example, the Free Trade Agreement between the UK and Singapore commits both parties to review their investment protection commitments within two years, whereas the Free Trade Agreement between the UK and Turkey includes more comprehensive review clauses covering a wide-range of areas such as trade in services, agricultural goods, investment and labour issues.



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The Committee agreed to seek information as to what preparatory work the Welsh Government is undertaking to assess how these agreements could be enhanced further in the interests of businesses in Wales. Additionally, what role the Welsh Government will have in any new round of negotiations and how does this compare to the level of engagement provided during the continuity agreement negotiations.

Free Trade Agreement between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Republic of Turkey

As a result of Turkey's close trading relationship with the EU, existing arrangements could not be fully transitioned. For example, the UK-Turkey Agreement converts the EU-Turkey customs union agreement into a free trade agreement. As a result, rules of origin requirements on industrial goods traded between the UK and Turkey have been introduced. The Parliamentary Report to the agreement states that the "change from a Customs Union to a Free Trade Agreement could have more substantive impacts on trade in goods that were previously traded within the Customs Union."

The Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) provisions in the UK-Turkey Agreement were agreed to be based temporarily on the WTO Agreement on TBT, until provisions can be updated in line with those agreed in the UK-EU Trade Cooperation Agreement. This is the result of Turkey's existing commitments to harmonise with EU law for most products to allow for frictionless trade within the EU customs union.

Given the importance of trade between Wales and Turkey, the Committee agreed to seek further information as to whether the Welsh Government has assessed the impact of the change in the UK-Turkey relationship on businesses and supply chains.

Agreements between the UK and other countries concerning Air Services

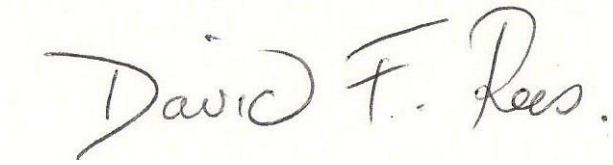
The UK has recently concluded separate air services agreements with Iceland and Norway. Their purpose is to replace previous arrangements from when the UK was an EU Member State - ensuring the continuity of air services rights and providing the framework in international law for air services between, beyond and within the UK-Iceland and UK-Norway. On the UK Government's consultation with the devolved administrations, both Explanatory Memorandums state that the devolved administrations have been "kept aware" of the programme to transition EU-negotiated air services agreements.

The Committee agreed to seek further information on the form that this arrangement takes and whether the Welsh Government expects future similar agreements. Additionally, the Committee agreed to seek the view of the Welsh Government on whether it is satisfied that this approach adequately takes into account its views and the impact of renegotiated agreements on Wales' air services.



Thank you for considering these requests for further information. Your response will be of assistance to the Sixth Senedd committee responsible for considering international agreements.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David F. Rees." The signature is written in a cursive style and is set against a light yellow rectangular background.

David Rees MS

Chair of the External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

