

The Rt Hon Greg Hands MP
Minister of State for Trade Policy
Department for International Trade

23 March 2021

Dear Minister,

Ministerial Forum on Trade and the Concordat

As we approach the end of the Fifth Senedd, and the point at which the External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee will be dissolved, I wanted to write to you in relation to the concordat on international trade and engagement with the Welsh Government on international trade agreements more generally.

We have been pleased to hear from Welsh Ministers and the Counsel General for Wales that intergovernmental relations and engagement in the field of trade is markedly better than in some other areas of policy.

That said, work to develop and agree a concordat on international trade between the governments appears to have been stalled for some time.

Whilst we acknowledge the positive experience of consultation reported to us by the Welsh Government, we have some concerns that the Welsh Government is only being consulted on those areas of a trade agreement that you consider to be strictly related to a devolved area of policy, not those areas of a trade agreement that could significantly affect a devolved area of policy. For example, market access tariffs relating to a devolved area of policy.

We hope that you are able to consider extending the level of engagement currently offered to the Welsh Government to include aspects of a potential trade agreement that have a material impact on devolved areas of policy.

In December 2019, we published a report on UK international agreements after Brexit: a role for the Assembly [Senedd]. As we come to the end of our time as a committee, we have recommended that a relevant future Senedd committee continues to develop this work and we have also identified the need for the next Senedd to continue assessing the implications for Wales and devolution arising from all future UK international agreements, including trade agreements.

In closing, I would like to thank you for your past engagement with the External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee.



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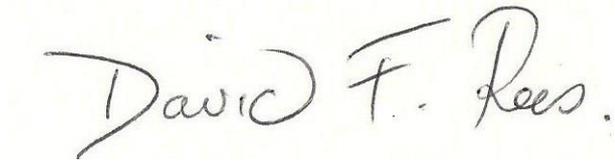
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If possible, a response to this letter by the end of the month would be much appreciated as the Committee will, effectively, cease to operate shortly thereafter.

A later reply will be held by Senedd officials and communicated to a relevant committee of the Sixth Senedd, once established.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David F. Rees." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large 'D' and 'R'.

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.

