

Making trade agreements fair & transparent - Brief for External Affairs and Legislation Committee, National Assembly of Wales

Trade is one of the most important parts of the UK's withdrawal from the EU. Whilst Trade and Customs Bills have been laid in Parliament it is still unclear what the process of negotiating new trade deals might be, and what the impact of not having or of transferring trade deals across from the EU will have on both the UK and other countries.

Whatever the outcome is, there will be a large impact on Wales and on Wales' international relationships. As it currently stands, Wales will have no say in future trade deals made by the UK Government, may also have some of its current legislative areas impinged upon by deals made, and may have to pay private companies recompense for certain legislative decisions made by the Senedd.

Trade is a central element of countries relationships with each other, and when done fairly is a fundamental element of creating long-term and sustainable ways to tackle poverty. Unfortunately many trade deals end in creating unfair rules which continue poverty cycles.

Wales's cultural and current heritage of mainly trading in primary industries such as farming, mining and artisanal crafts is very similar to other parts of the world that Wales already has strong relationships with. For example cultural ties with Patagonia and the Wales for Africa programme. Wales has long known the importance of how beneficial trade can be to all and became the world's first Fair Trade Nation in 2008.

Trade is now on the agenda and 2018 is the 10th anniversary of Wales becoming a Fair Trade Nation. Wales also has multiple commitments to think holistically and sustainably with regard to the Well-Being and Future Generations (Wales) Act and The Modern Slavery Act.

Fair Trade Wales is working with partners across the UK to research ways to make sure that new trade deals can benefit everyone. Through our network, our key suggestions to the Westminster Government are to:

- **Secure and improve market access for developing countries** in ways that support their development priorities - in line with SDGs
- **Ensure trade deals are negotiated with a proper democratic process** - including scrutiny from Parliament, devolved administrations, civil society and the public
- **Carry out impact assessments of each negotiated trade deal with larger economies**, and how it will affect smaller economies, not just economically but also environmentally and socially.

Fair Trade Wales and our partners would be happy to come to a future Committee to outline these issues and discuss them in more depth. We would like to propose some speakers to contribute to your meetings in the new year.

- Aileen Burmeister, Programme Manager, Fair Trade Wales,
 - Overview of the main issues from a Welsh context
- Helen Dennis, Fairtrade Foundation
 - Addressing these issues from a development perspective
- Matt Grady, Senior Policy Advisor, Traidcraft
 - International rules of trade and their impact on developing countries
- Sophie Hardefeldt, Senior Network Advisor, Trade Justice Movement
 - Transparency and democracy in trade processes
- Nick Dearden, Director, Global Justice Now
 - Corporate influences on trade negotiations