



Department for International Trade

Rt Hon Greg Hands MP

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David Rees AM
Chair of the External Affairs and Additional
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Dear David,

Thank you for your letter dated 16 May regarding the implications of future trade policy for Wales. I would be delighted to attend the meeting of the External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee.

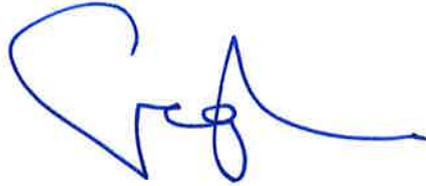
Firstly, let me assure you that we are committed to ensuring that the devolved administrations and legislatures have the opportunity to engage with and contribute to our trade policy.

We have established 14 Trade Working Groups across 21 countries, to explore the best ways of progressing our trade and investment relationships across the world. These working groups include engagement with the United States, the Andean Community (covers Peru, Colombia and Ecuador), Australia, Canada, China, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC – comprising Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE), Israel, India, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Turkey and South Korea. In addition to seeking continuity for our existing EU trade agreements (where these are in place), these working groups also provide a forum to prepare for the negotiation of wholly new Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with key partners as we leave the EU.

International relations is of course a reserved matter. That is why these working groups are delivered by the UK Government on behalf of the whole of the UK. Having said that, we are keen that the Devolved Administrations have a role supporting preparations for the negotiation of future trade agreements. It is precisely for this reason that my Department has established a programme of work with the Devolved Administrations to facilitate how your Government and the other Devolved Administrations can inform the development of an independent UK trade policy over the course of 2018, particularly where trade interacts with areas of devolved competence.

I welcome the opportunity to attend the External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee to discuss this further. Given the Committee's role in examining the Trade Bill, I would also welcome the opportunity to discuss this Bill with the Committee in more detail. My officials will be in contact with the Committee clerks to make arrangements.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Greg Hands', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

RT HON GREG HANDS MP

Minister of State for Trade Policy
Department for International Trade