



Craig Whittaker MP

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Trade Bill - Global Justice Now campaign

Thank you for sending me the Global Justice Now campaign letter on the Trade Bill.

Contrary to the content of the letter, the Trade Bill, currently on its passage through Parliament, does not legislate for powers that could be used when implementing new Free Trade Agreements (FTA) with countries with whom the EU does not already have a FTA before exit day. The UK is already party to these trade agreements by virtue of our membership of the EU.

The Trade Bill is about preserving and ensuring continuity with the agreements we already have to prevent disruption to our existing trade environment. In addition, we want to protect the access to global markets for thousands of British businesses and our citizens alike as we leave the EU. It is important that we to abide by our obligations to those economies that have already negotiated FTAs and other trade agreements with the European Union.

We agree that Parliamentary scrutiny is essential and we thoroughly understand the need for democratic accountability. The trade agreements within the scope of this Bill and which we are intending to transition will have already been scrutinised by Parliament's EU Committees. Those free trade agreements which the UK has already ratified have also been through the normal Parliamentary scrutiny process for international treaties under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 (CRaG2010).

When we have left the European Union the UK can begin to forge new trading relationships across the world and strike new FTAs, building a truly global, outward-facing Britain; a country at the very heart of international trade.

The Department for International Trade's White Paper 'Preparing for a Future UK Trade Policy' commits the Government to a transparent and inclusive trade policy so that concerns are heard and understood, and the right facts are available. It states that:

'Parliament, the devolved administrations, devolved legislatures, local government, business, trade unions, civil society, consumers, employees and the public from every part of the UK will have the opportunity to engage with and contribute to our trade policy, to develop an approach which maximises the benefits felt across UK society and its regions. We will also take into account the views of the Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories, including Gibraltar.'

On public services and standards, the UK Government ensures that decisions about how public services and outcomes are delivered for UK citizens are made by UK governments, including the Devolved Administrations, not our trade partners. As we leave the EU, the UK will continue to ensure that rigorous protections, including for the NHS and other public services, are included in all trade agreements to which it is party.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Whittaker', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Craig Whittaker MP