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Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP
House of Commons
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Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your email of 24 July to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Michael Gove MP, on behalf of your constituents, raising several concerns about the EU negotiations. Your email has been passed to me and I am responding as the Paymaster General. I sincerely apologise for the delay in replying to you.

Firstly, I want to assure your concerned constituents that we want a relationship with the EU which is based on friendly cooperation between sovereign equals, centred on free trade and inspired by our shared history and values.

The question for the rest of this year is whether we can agree a deeper trading relationship with the EU, along the lines of the free trade agreement (FTA) the EU has with Canada, or whether we have a trading relationship based on the 2019 deal, without an FTA, similar to Australia's relationship with the EU.

We believe it is still possible to agree a suite of agreements with a FTA at the core, and that this could be done quickly. The obstacles to this are the EU's insistence on including a set of novel and unbalanced proposals on the so-called "level playing field" which would bind us into EU law or standards, and their proposals on fisheries arrangements and access to UK fishing waters, which are incompatible with our future status as an independent coastal state.

We are not asking for a special, bespoke or unique deal. There are large areas of convergence in many areas and we will keep working to bridge the gaps.

Recognition of professional qualifications

As you are aware, we have left the European Union but remain in a transition period until the end of 2020. During the transition period, the EU's Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive will continue to apply to UK nationals. We recommend that during this time, UK professionals and businesses check the European Commission's Regulated Professions Database to find information on regulation of their profession in EEA States, then contact the single point of contact for the relevant EEA country to find out how to get their professional qualification recognised. The UK also has a dedicated National Assistance Centre which can provide advice and guidance for professionals seeking qualification recognition to provide services abroad.

It should also be noted that the UK has secured specific rights on recognition of professional qualifications for residents and frontier workers under the Withdrawal Agreement. Professionals in regulated professions who are within scope of the Withdrawal Agreement and have had their qualifications permanently recognised in an EU Member State before the end of the Transition Period, will have that recognition continued in the respective state in which the qualification was recognised.

Businesses have told us that it is important for them to be able to send their employees to deliver services on a temporary basis - we will be open to negotiating reciprocal arrangements to facilitate this, building on the provisions that are standard in trade agreements.

A reciprocal agreement based on best precedent will mean that UK citizens will be able to undertake some business activities in the EU without a work permit, on a short-term basis. The same would apply for EU citizens making business visits to the UK. The precise details, including range of activities, documentation needed, and the time limit, will be negotiated.

UKCA

Regarding the concerns of your constituents about the European Conformity (CE) regulations, I can inform them that the Government has recently updated guidance on this topic, which has been published on GOV.UK. In short, from 1 January 2021, the UK government is putting in place a domestic legal framework that will allow UK conformity assessment bodies to continue operating for most products being placed on the Great Britain market. Most conformity assessment bodies in the UK will automatically have their status converted under the new UK framework.

Further information on this topic can be found using the following links:

Conformity assessment bodies: status from 1st January 2021:

www.gov.uk/guidance/conformity-assessment-bodies-change-of-status-from-1-january-2021

Placing UKCA and CE marked goods on the GB market from 1st January 2021:

www.gov.uk/guidance/placing-manufactured-goods-on-the-market-in-great-britain-from-1-january-2021

Placing manufactured goods on the EU market from 1st January 2021:

www.gov.uk/guidance/placing-manufactured-goods-on-the-eu-market-from-1-january-2021

Prepare to use the UKCA marking from 1st January 2021:

www.gov.uk/guidance/using-the-ukca-mark-from-1-january-2021

I hope this reply is helpful to your constituents. Please pass on my thanks to them for taking the time to write and share their concerns.



Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP
PAYMASTER GENERAL