

15 May 2018

Tom Tugendhat MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Tom,

RATIFICATION OF EU THIRD COUNTRY AGREEMENTS

I am writing to inform you about the action the Government is taking on the ratification of EU Third Country Agreements (TCAs) before our exit from the EU. These are agreements with non-EU (“third”) countries which the EU has entered into on the UK’s behalf as an EU Member State. I wanted to inform you that these agreements are being ratified, given your interest in the topics covered.

Until the UK leaves the EU we retain a duty of cooperation to the EU and other Member States. During this period the Government will continue to negotiate and apply EU legislation, including ratifying EU TCAs. Ratifying these agreements also reaffirms the UK’s commitment to our partners around the world. Once ratified, the Government will consider replicating the agreements’ effects in bilateral agreements.

The agreements we intend to ratify are as follows:

- EU-**Canada** Strategic Partnership Agreement (**SPA**)
- EU-**Australia** Framework Agreement (**FA**)
- EU-**New Zealand** Partnership Agreement on Relations and Cooperation (**PARC**)
- EU-**Cuba** Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement (**PDCA**)
- EU-**Central America** Association Agreement (**AA**)
- EU-**Armenia** Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement (**CEPA**)
- EU-**Kazakhstan** Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (**ePCA**)
- EU-**Turkmenistan** Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (**PCA**)

These agreements are high level political agreements with countries that represent significant opportunities for the UK as we leave the EU. Each TCA provides for regular political dialogues intended to strengthen links and encourage convergence on areas of mutual interest. The agendas include respect for human rights, the promotion of democratic principles, and sustainable development, amongst many others.

The headline scope of the agreements is as follows:

- The **Canada SPA** is the sister political agreement to the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), and provides political support to the trading relationship.
- The **Australia FA** and **New Zealand PARC** are both precursors to EU-Australia and EU-New Zealand Free Trade Agreements.
- The **Cuba PDCA** provides for cooperation on sustainable development, human rights and trade, with a view to strengthening trade relations.
- The **Central America AA** contains extensive trade provisions which address obstacles to trade and establish a framework for future trade relations between the parties.
- The **Armenia CEPA** strengthens and replaces the existing Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, and provides a strong foundation for future political and economic cooperation.
- The **Kazakhstan ePCA** will increase the ease of doing business for UK firms, including reciprocal most-favoured nation treatment for trade in goods.
- The **Turkmenistan PCA** will contribute to progress on economic reform and social development in Turkmenistan, including human rights.

Full texts of the agreements are available at the gov.uk website.

The Government laid the **Canada SPA, Australia FA, New Zealand PARC, Cuba PDCA** and **Armenia CEPA** under the Constitutional Reform and Governance (CRaG) Act 2010 during the week of 23 April 2018. The other three agreements – **Central America AA, Kazakhstan ePCA** and **Turkmenistan PCA** – have previously been laid and approved under the CRaG Act.

The Government intends to schedule the motions for the affirmative Statutory Instruments for all eight TCAs later this year. Ahead of this I would like to offer the opportunity for you to raise any questions you may have with officials in my Department. Should you wish to raise any questions, please contact the lead official, Hannah Burden, at hannah.burden@fco.gov.uk.

Yours ever,

RT HON SIR ALAN DUNCAN MP