



International Trade Committee

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Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox MP
Secretary of State
Department for International Trade
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Dear Liam

On 14 December 2018, your Department announced in a press release that “The UK Government and the Swiss Federal Council have approved the transition of a trade agreement”. It was further stated that “The agreement replicates the existing EU-Switzerland arrangements as far as possible and will come into effect as soon as the implementation period ends in January 2021, or on 29 March 2019 if the UK leaves the EU without a deal.”

You subsequently told the House that “we have now initialled the first of those major [EU] trade agreements [to be rolled over], with Switzerland, which is responsible for almost a fifth of the total trade within those agreements” (H C Deb, 20 December 2018, col. 964).

As my Committee is well aware, the complex bilateral relationship between the EU and the Swiss Confederation rests on a myriad of trade and trade-related agreements. These allow the Confederation access to the EU Single Market for industrial goods on terms comparable to those of EU members, while requiring Switzerland to accept the free movement of people and to approximate significant proportions of the EU *acquis*.

I would be grateful if you could: confirm exactly which aspects of this relationship are replicated in the text of the recently initialled UK-Switzerland agreement; and state whether the agreement will allow UK-based firms to continue trading into Switzerland on the same basis as they do currently.

Angus Brendan MacNeil

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Chair of the International Trade Committee