



Joint Committee on Human Rights

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From Rt Hon Harriet Harman MP, Chair

Rt Hon Liam Fox MP
Secretary of State for International Trade
King Charles Street
Whitehall
London SW1A 2AH

13 September 2016

Dear Liam,

The Joint Committee on Human Rights has decided to conduct a short inquiry into the implications for human rights of the UK's planned withdrawal from the European Union.

The Committee will announce full details of this inquiry in due course, but we are mindful of the urgency with which government policy on possible future trade deals is being formulated and wished therefore to raise with you immediately the subject of human rights protection.

As a member-state of the EU, the UK is currently party to trade deals with human rights clauses written into them. As the UK begins the process of withdrawing from the EU and begins to negotiate its own trade deals, the question arises, what human rights requirements should it write into them? Should it model them on the current wording in EU trade deals or should the UK be setting higher standards? How important do you think the existing human rights clauses in EU trade agreements are and what will be the implications of the UK no longer being a party to them?

The Committee would be grateful to receive a memorandum from your Department setting out the Government's response to the above questions and its wider policy on these issues. It would be very helpful to receive this by not later than Monday 10 October.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Harriet Harman
Chair of the Joint Committee on Human Rights