



Department for International Trade

The Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP
Secretary of State for International Trade
Department for International Trade
Old Admiralty Building
London
SW1A 2DY

Angus Brendan MacNeil MP
Chair, International Trade Committee,
House of Commons,
London, SW1A 0AA

13 April 2022

Dear Angus,

Thank you for your reply to my letter of 23 March. Since your letter, the Government has shared the TAC's report with your Committee and the International Agreement Committee in strictest confidence, prior to the report being laid in Parliament today.

My officials have recently begun the process of going through the TAC's advice, which is a comprehensive and technical piece of work, in order to reflect it in the s42 report. I am not in a position to say when the s42 report will be completed, and thus when CRaG will commence. You acknowledged this yourself when you wrote "I understand that some uncertainty over exactly how long it will take to produce the section 42 report following advice from the Trade and Agriculture Commission". I do not wish to mislead your Committee by placing arbitrary dates on activities that I cannot be sure of meeting.

With regards to the New Zealand FTA, my answers are broadly the same as above. I expect to receive the TAC's advice on 16 June and will share it with you in confidence in the following weeks. The process of producing the s42 report for Australia may give us a clearer indication of likely timescales for New Zealand but for now, given the uncertainty about when this process might conclude, I cannot give dates for production of the s42 report or commencement of CRaG. I have instructed my officials to keep your clerks up to date with evolving timescales.

I do not agree with your interpretation of my letter as cutting across the right of your Committee to determine your own business. The conducting of inquiries and scrutiny is of course a matter for your Committee. I sought only to make the point out that the s42 report is an input to the CRaG process, not a separate process. CRaG is the statutory framework for scrutiny of treaties, and s42 is a statutory step prior to CRaG to ensure that parliamentarians have comprehensive information to inform the 21-day sitting day scrutiny period. I therefore disagree that the Government should commit to a fixed period of time between s42 publication and CRaG. I will, however, endeavour to ensure that you receive the s42 report prior to publication in order that you fully consider it. The timing of your own inquiry is of course a matter for you and your Committee.

Regarding your request for me to appear before you, I would be happy to speak to your Committee in the new Session, following our session on 20 April. My office will be in touch with your clerks.

I am copying this letter to the Chairs of the International Agreements Committee, the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee and the Liaison Committee; I am also copying it to the Prime Minister and Mr Speaker.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Anne Marie Trevelyan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

THE RT HON ANNE-MARIE TREVELYAN MP
Secretary of State for International Trade
& President of the Board of Trade