



Elizabeth Truss MP  
Secretary of State for International Trade

13 February 2020

Dear Secretary of State,

### **Trade envoys**

Thank you for your letter, dated 5 February 2020, in response to our questions about the trade envoys programme.

Your letter and the attached terms of reference answered some of our questions. However, there are a number of areas where the letter did not provide a full answer, to which we request a further response.

First, we asked about the process for the appointment of trade envoys (question 1). Your response does not set out a process for their appointment. You state that the Government “aims to find the best person for each market”, but do not set out how it does this. We would also be interested to hear how possible conflicts of interest are identified and mitigated?

Second, we asked by what means trade envoys are held accountable for the delivery of their roles, and whether they are accountable to Parliament, the Secretary of State for International Trade, or the Prime Minister (question 4). Your letter states that “selection is a matter for No 10”, which does not explain the means by which trade envoys are held accountable. The terms of reference state that, while appointed by the Prime Minister, “Trade Envoys are managed by the Department for International Trade (DIT) and report directly to The Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss, Secretary of State for International Trade.” Could you please confirm that this means that trade envoys are accountable to you? Could you please set out the ways in which trade envoys are “managed” by the DIT?

Third, we asked about the relationship between a trade envoy and the resident ambassador (question 5). Given that trade envoys are appointed by the Prime Minister, we remain concerned about the potential ambiguity in the relationship, and who speaks for the Government in that country.

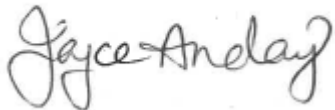
Fourth, the Committee asked how the impact of each trade envoy is measured and assessed (question 6). Your response details how the trade envoys are supported and deployed, but it does not answer how (or whether) trade envoys' impact is measured or assessed. The terms of reference state that "formal reviews" take place at the end of a Parliament, as well as "more informal reviews of the programme at 2 yearly intervals". Was the impact of individual trade envoys reviewed at the end of the 2017-19 Parliament?

Fifth, we asked whether there is a formally established review process to consider the reappointment of trade envoys (question 7). Your response states that "all roles are considered carefully before any reappointments are made", and that the DIT submitted a paper to No 10 after the 2017 election on the trade envoy programme. This does not answer the question of whether this constitutes a formal, established process to be followed after each election/change of Prime Minister. It also does not inform us whether such a paper was produced either when Boris Johnson MP became Prime Minister in 2019, or after the 2019 election. If such a review has been undertaken, we would welcome sight of it, or a summary of its findings.

Sixth, does the Government aim to have a balance between the political parties when appointing trade envoys?

We look forward to your response to these points.

Yours, as ever

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jayce Anelay". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Baroness Anelay of St Johns  
Chair, International Relations and Defence Committee