



Elizabeth Truss MP
Secretary of State for International Trade

7 October 2020

Dear Secretary of State,

Trade envoys

In your letter of 29 May, in response to our questions about the trade envoys programme, set out in my letter dated 13 February,¹ you informed us that:

“The Prime Minister’s Trade Envoy Programme is currently undergoing a review, with changes expected to be made to ensure that the programme fully supports Departmental and HMG’s current priorities. To this extent, rather than expand on the questions which refer to how the programme currently operates, I will write to you to outline the new programme as soon as it is up and running.”²

We note that on 5 October you informed the House of Commons that the Prime Minister has made 15 new appointments, taking the total number of trade envoys to 31 parliamentarians covering 69 markets.³

In the context of these new appointments, we request that you write to us to outline the new programme. In particular, we would welcome information on the following points, as raised in my letter of 13 February:

1. What is the process for the appointment of trade envoys? How are possible conflicts of interest identified and mitigated?
2. By what means are trade envoys held accountable for the delivery of their roles? Are they accountable to Parliament, the Secretary of State for International Trade, or the Prime Minister? The terms of reference you previously provided stated 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

¹ <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/248/documents/1109/default/>

² <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/1387/documents/12766/default/>

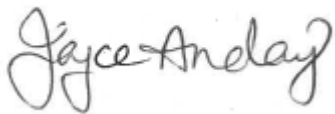
³ <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-10-05/debates/2010059000012/PrimeMinisterSTradeEnvoyProgramme>

envoys are accountable to you? Could you please set out the ways in which trade envoys are “managed” by the DIT?

3. What is the relationship between a trade envoy and the resident ambassador?
4. How is the impact of each trade envoy measured and 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?
5. Is there a formally established review process to consider the reappointment of trade envoys? Was a review undertaken 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.
6. 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, slightly slanted style.

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