



Department for
Business & Trade

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Darren Jones MP
Chair, Business and Trade Committee
House of Commons
London
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14 June 2023

Dear Darren,

I am writing to give you further notice on North Macedonia's formal accession to the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA) on 7 June 2023. This follows on from the letter sent in confidence by the Secretary of State to the Chair of the former International Trade Committee on 10 March 2023, where we informed the Committee of the UK's intention to accept North Macedonia's Market Access offer and their accession.

Summary of the WTO Agreement on Government Procurement

The GPA is a plurilateral agreement between 22 Parties (49 Members) at the WTO which includes the UK, which joined as an independent member in January 2021.

The purpose of the GPA is to allow its members to mutually access each other's government procurement markets, estimated to be worth £1.3tn in total and will include North Macedonia's markets once all formal steps have been taken. Accordingly, the non-discrimination obligations in the GPA include that the goods, services, and suppliers of Parties are not treated less favourably than the goods, services, and suppliers of another Party.

Benefits and Risks of North Macedonia's Accession to British Businesses and Multilateralism

In March 2017, North Macedonia began the process of acceding to the GPA. This was followed by a revised Market Access offer in September 2022. DBT officials had completed their analysis of North Macedonia's final offer and were satisfied that it met UK expectations and the commonly held GPA standards.

The UK has an existing Trade Continuity Agreement with North Macedonia which includes government procurement. However, North Macedonia's accession to the GPA will allow British suppliers access to North Macedonia's government procurement markets under the standards set by the GPA rules.

Supporting North Macedonia's accession to the GPA is in line with the UK's wider interests at the WTO. Part of the strategy for the UK, as a newly independent member to the WTO, is to establish the UK as a bridge-builder to drive multilateral progress and strengthening the relationship with countries like North Macedonia. Supporting its accession to the GPA is a key component of this strategy.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Huddleston', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nigel Huddleston MP
Minister of State for International Trade
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