



Department for
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Dear Peter,

Embargoed: Launch of United Kingdom-Turkey Free Trade Agreement Negotiations

I am writing to inform you that the United Kingdom will shortly launch formal negotiations on an upgraded Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Turkey. As part of this launch, I am sending you an embargoed copy of the following documents, which will be published tomorrow:

- The strategic case for an upgraded United Kingdom-Turkey FTA;
- Our objectives for these negotiations;
- A summary of the United Kingdom's Call for Input on trade with Turkey;
- A scoping analysis, providing a preliminary economic assessment of the potential impact of an upgraded agreement.

The United Kingdom and Turkey are two powerhouse economies, with a thriving bilateral trade relationship that was worth around £26 billion in 2022. Turkey is a dynamic economy with one of the fastest GDP growth rates among OECD members. With its population of 85 million people, and rapidly modernising economy - expected to be the 12th largest in the world by 2050 – there are sizeable commercial opportunities to be seized by increasing access to the Turkish market. We want to take advantage of these by securing an upgraded FTA that is tailored to the strengths of United Kingdom businesses.

Around 8,000 United Kingdom companies already export goods to Turkey, including well-known brands such as Vodafone, HSBC and Dyson, and there is significant business interest in securing an upgraded agreement. This was evident in my department's recent Call for Input which received more than 200 responses, which is among the highest levels of public engagement of any United Kingdom FTA to date. An overview of these responses and the United Kingdom's policy response to them is a key part of the public bundle we have shared with you and will be publishing on GOV.UK tomorrow.

An upgraded FTA with Turkey will aim to reduce and remove barriers in key sectors for the United Kingdom like services and digital. Addressing these barriers could unlock opportunities for United Kingdom businesses and support the United Kingdom's trade priorities and interests.

However, as in any negotiation, there will be some areas where we have different viewpoints, and we will only recommend a final agreement to Parliament that is in the United Kingdom's interest. The United Kingdom will continue to uphold its high environmental, labour, food safety and animal welfare standards through our trade agreement with Turkey, and we will not negotiate a deal that undermines the UK's points-based immigration system.

In addition to the clear business opportunities an upgraded FTA will bring, a modernised FTA has wider benefits that we should prize. Turkey is a close NATO ally in a strategically important location and is an indispensable partner for the United Kingdom on some of the most important global challenges. By strengthening this partnership and growing trade and investment between us, we will strengthen economic security for both our countries.

An enhanced FTA will provide the opportunity to promote trade with an expanding market that benefits British businesses, strengthen ties with a region crucial to British strategic priorities, and support high-quality employment opportunities across our nations.

We are committed to providing as much transparency as possible throughout these negotiations, whilst also ensuring we protect our negotiating positions. I want to reiterate my Department's longstanding pledge to offer the Chief Negotiator's availability to brief the Committee privately, if you would find that helpful. I am pleased that such a briefing took place last week and my office is ready to assist should you wish to take up this offer again in the future.

I look forward to discussing this agreement with you further in due course.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dominic', with a horizontal line underneath it.

Lord Johnson of Lainston CBE
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