



Department for Business & Trade

Lord Johnson of Lainston CBE
**Minister for Investment and Minister for
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30 April 2024

Dear Peter,

Thank you for your letter dated 16 April regarding the launch of the formal negotiations on an upgraded Free Trade Agreement with Turkey.

As you know, the UK is a leading advocate for human rights around the world. We are committed to the promotion of universal human rights. We encourage all states to uphold international human rights obligations and hold those who violate or abuse human rights to account. We will continue to speak frankly about these issues with all of our partners, through Ministerial and diplomatic channels where they arise. This is undertaken separately to negotiations on Free Trade Agreements.

You will also be aware that Turkey is an indispensable partner for the UK and sits on the front line of some of the most difficult and serious challenges we face. The UK is working to strengthen our partnership with Turkey and make both countries safer and more prosperous. We also continue to urge Turkey, including at Ministerial level, to abide by European Court of Human Rights judgements and encourage greater progress on wider human rights reforms.

It is our experience that having secure and growing trading relationships can increase UK influence and help us to have open conversations with partners on a range of issues, including human rights. While aspects of trade policy can provide the opportunity to address other issues in a bilateral relationship, Free Trade Agreements are not generally the most effective or targeted tool to advance human rights issues.

The Government makes decisions on future trade deals based on a range of factors, including the potential benefit to our economy; stakeholder views; global economic trends; and whether we are confident that we can negotiate a quality agreement supporting the UK's national interests. The UK will continue to assess appropriate action in response to human rights violations. This goes wider than trade, drawing on all levers at our disposal.

Thank you for your interest and engagement on this FTA to date and I look forward to discussing this agreement further with you in due course.

Best wishes,

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

Lord Johnson of Lainston CBE
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Department for Business and Trade