



Business and Trade Committee

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

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Rt Hon Douglas Alexander MP
Minister of State for Trade Policy and Economic Security
Department for Business and Trade
Old Admiralty Building
Admiralty Place
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2DY
[By email]

25 March 2025

Dear Douglas,

I write to follow up on the Committee's recent visit to the Export Control Joint Unit (ECJU). I would like to thank you and ECJU officials for facilitating the visit. The briefings we received, and the demonstration of the new LITE IT system, will be beneficial to our work going forward.

During our discussions, officials agreed to provide us with further information on the points below:

1. Data on the outcomes of each type of licence application for 2024 (as per Table 2.1 in the Strategic Export Controls Annual Report 2023).
2. Data on the value of export licences for each type of export licences for the last three years.
3. ECJU's performance in 2024 against its targets to complete 70% of applications for SIELs and SITCLs within 20 working days, and 99% within 60 working days and information matters that are impacting the attainment of these targets.
4. A roadmap and timeline for moving all types of export licence application onto the LITE IT system.
5. Further information on the functionality of LITE, including:
 - a. the interaction with Companies House databases;
 - b. why applicants are required to state whether they are based in the GB or Northern Ireland;
 - c. the proposed interaction with HMRC's Customs Declaration System; and
 - d. will it include functionality to flag when an export licence applicant or named end-user has been subject to previous compliance or enforcement action?
6. What action is being taken to improve the transparency of OIELs and OGELs, including data on the precise equipment and quantities exported, the companies

exporting the equipment and its intended destination and how this will be incorporated into LITE?

7. What progress has been made on ensuring the continuation of a public facing export licensing database where stakeholders and the public can interrogate the official export licensing data according to their own parameters?
8. The processes and checks undertaken for the licensing of the export of intangible assets such as intellectual property, fundamental research and applied research.

I would also like to use this opportunity to raise some further issues regarding the transparency of export controls, on which I would be grateful for your response.

First, your latest update on the implementation of the LITE IT system on 16 December 2024 highlighted that it would be necessary to further reduce what is published from LITE in the official statistics and reclassify the statistics to 'Official Statistics in Development'. We are pleased that the Department "will retrospectively publish all LITE data that has been omitted during the transition period", but would be grateful if you could clarify if it will be clearly signposted which figures have changed so users are not required to go through the laborious process of comparing and contrasting two datasets. It would also be helpful if you could set out any plans you have to update any information given to this Committee, Parliament or the public (such as in response to FoI requests) which is based on the "In Development" statistics and is subsequently altered.

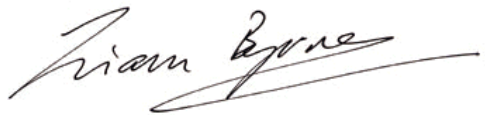
Second, in response to requests by this committee, the department helpfully published ad-hoc Export control licensing management information for Israel on 31 May 2024 and 6 December 2024. Given the continuing concerns over arms exports to Israel, we request that you to commit to publishing updated information on a quarterly basis.

Third, I understand that Committee staff have asked your officials for a copy of the Government's "Grounds of Resistance" in the Al-Haq judicial review case, but that this has not been provided. While I understand that there are methods for members of the public to obtain copies of court documents, I am sure you will recognise that the court's access to publicly available information should not supersede Parliamentary access. The document in question has already been extensively cited in the High Court Judgment (Case No: AC-2023-LON-003634) given on 30 January. If there are compelling public interest reasons for withholding the full document from the Committee, other options can be explored for the Government sharing it with us, and Committee staff can discuss these options with your officials. I would therefore be grateful if you could ensure the Committee receives this document, or a full explanation of why you consider it cannot be disclosed.

In conclusion, please can I reiterate my thanks for an informative visit. We would be keen to arrange a similar event with a focus on public bodies involved in compliance and enforcement. Committee staff are available to explore this with your officials.

I would be grateful for a response by 2 April 2025.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Liam Byrne". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Chair of the Business and Trade Committee