



Department for
International Trade



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel, Kt
Minister of State for Investment

Department for International Trade
King Charles Street
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AH

T +44 (0) 20 7215 5000
E grimstone.correspondence@trade.gov.uk
W www.gov.uk/dit

The Rt Hon Lord Goldsmith QC
Chairman
International Agreements Committee
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

1 February 2021

Dear Peter,

Update on plans for CPTPP accession

Following on from my last letter I am writing to inform you and your committee that today I will be making a Written Ministerial Statement to update Parliament on the Government's notification of intent to begin the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) accession process.

This notification of intent is our first step in accession to CPTPP which is an important part of the plan to grow our economy post-Brexit, by lowering trade barriers for exporters of British goods, deepening access for our services and bolstering industries that support hundreds of thousands of jobs in all parts of the UK as we recover from coronavirus. Membership will benefit the UK by hitching us to fast-growing economies, creating new opportunities for industries of the future like tech, services, and advanced manufacturing – and strengthening ties with 11 dynamic Pacific nations in a free-trade area covering £9 trillion of GDP.

CPTPP membership is a key pillar of the Government's trade strategy, which aims to put the UK at the centre of a network of modern free trade deals that support jobs and economic growth at home, while also positioning us as a champion of free trade and a fierce proponent of reform of the rules-based system. Membership will complement the bilateral FTAs we have already concluded or are negotiating with nine of the CPTPP members. Moreover, joining the £9 trillion free trade area will cut tariffs for vital UK industries and create new opportunities for future industries like tech and services, ultimately supporting and creating high-value jobs across the United Kingdom and helping the country build back better from Covid.

Over the last two years, we have engaged with all 11 member countries at both ministerial and official level to discuss UK accession to CPTPP. All CPTPP members have welcomed the UK's interest in accession. As part of one of the largest consultation exercises run by the UK Government in 2018, we sought views on potential UK accession to CPTPP and are using these responses to inform our preparations. We continue to engage business, civil society, and trade unions where we will update stakeholders and they can outline their priorities. We also look forward to contributing to your committee's recently opened inquiry into CPTPP.

Following our notification of intent, we will publish our negotiation objectives, initial scoping analysis, and consultation response for public and parliamentary scrutiny in accordance with what we have done for other new trade negotiations, and in advance of the start of formal negotiations. The Government has been clear that the NHS and the price it pays for drugs is not for sale in any trade negotiations, including CPTPP. We will not sign trade deals that compromise our high environmental protections, animal welfare and food standards and we will only accede to CPTPP on terms compatible with the UK's broader interests and domestic priorities.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grimstone', written in a cursive style.

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel, Kt
Minister of State for Investment
Department for International Trade