



Rt Hon Nick Thomas-Symonds MP
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Lord Ricketts GCMG GCVO
Chair
European Affairs Committee
House of Lords
London SW1A 0PW

By email: Hleuroaffairs@parliament.uk

Dear Lord Ricketts,

25th June 2025

5985/25 + Add 1 - COM (2025) 45 + Annexes: European Commission work programme 2025: Moving forward together: A Bolder, Simpler, Faster Union

Thank you for your letter of 11 June, with questions arising from the Explanatory Memorandum (EM) I submitted on the Commission's Work Programme on 12 March. As you note, some of your questions relate to the outcomes of the UK-EU Summit, on which I look forward to speaking to the Committee on 1 July. I have responded to your queries below and hope you find this additional information helpful.

Competitiveness

You asked about the legislative steps the Government is considering to implement the commitments set out in the Common Understanding to work towards an agreement to link the UK and EU Emissions Trading schemes. The precise details of legislative arrangements including timings are subject to the outcome of further, more detailed, negotiations with the EU on a linking agreement. We intend to commence these detailed negotiations as quickly as possible, with full respect to the EU's own internal processes. I agree that it is important that Parliament has its say. We are considering our approach and I will keep the Committee updated.

European Defence and Security

I welcome your continued interest in security and defence cooperation between the UK and the EU. As your letter notes, since the EM on the Commission's Work Programme was submitted, we have agreed a new and ambitious Security and Defence Partnership with the EU, creating a strong basis to strengthen our cooperation on these matters. The Partnership will enable us to boost our cooperation on a wide range of areas including

support to Ukraine, tackling hybrid threats, mobility of military personnel and materiel, space security, and the resilience of our critical infrastructure. It also sets the framework for closer UK-EU defence industrial cooperation, paving the way for potential UK participation in the EU's new SAFE defence procurement instrument. I would be happy to explore these issues further with your Committee on 1 July.

Social and Workers Rights

I note your interest in the EU's New Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights and recognise its relevance to our own Make Work Pay measures. We are closely monitoring the EU's legislation and assessing how it aligns with our own objectives and priorities. The UK is committed to working internationally to strengthen workers' rights and enhance labour standards globally. The EU remains a key partner in this, and we share a common interest in enhancing employment rights. We are working with the European Commission to develop the agenda for the next Level Playing Field Trade Specialised Committee, which will be shared with your Committee and published on [Gov.UK](https://www.gov.uk) ahead of the committee itself in the autumn.

Climate Change, Agriculture & Environment

The UK and the EU are like-minded on the importance of protecting and restoring the ocean to good health and boosting the blue economy. Concrete details of the policies that will be introduced under the EU's Ocean Pact are not yet available. As the details emerge the UK will work through existing structures under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) - including the Specialised Committee on Fisheries - to understand the potential impacts for the UK and ensure UK views are accounted for where appropriate. Examples of areas likely to be of interest include the evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy or further progress by EU member states in establishing Marine Protected Areas. Under the Fisheries heading of the TCA, the UK and EU are required to notify each other of any new measures in their waters that may affect vessels of the other party (Art. 496(3)). Any measures arising from the Ocean Pact that are likely to affect UK vessels in EU waters will be in scope for a formal notification under the TCA. These notifications do not affect the provisions of the TCA.

The UK has not yet conducted a detailed analysis of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Simplification Package and its impact on UK agriculture. However, given that the UK has phased out CAP payments (UK farm payments have been delinked from CAP, and area-based subsidies are being phased out from 2021-2028) and that agricultural subsidies are not part of the TCA, the CAP Simplification Package will not have any direct impact on how the UK Government supports farmers financially. The EU's Vision for Agriculture provides for the possibility of moving away from a condition-based model towards an incentive-based model of agricultural funding. This would be more in the direction of the UK Government's current funding approach.

Energy

As you note in your letter, we have agreed to explore options for the UK's possible participation in the EU's internal electricity market. This would streamline electricity trading between the UK and the EU - reducing the cost of electricity across the UK and EU, bringing down consumer bills, and developing new renewables in the North Seas. As part of any agreement, the UK would have an appropriate contribution to decision-shaping. The specific terms will be subject to negotiation with the EU, and I will update you as this progresses.

More broadly, the government monitors and analyses the impact of EU regulations, and engages with the EU institutions through structured channels including the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) committee structures and Windsor Framework structured technical forums.

We have also agreed to maximise our cooperation with the EU on clean energy technologies, including hydrogen, carbon capture, use and storage, and decarbonised gases, supporting a long term solution to secure and sustainable energy future, and helping support jobs and boost growth.

As per my letter of 18 June, in my role as co-chair of the Partnership Council, I have completed the necessary procedures to stabilise the Energy Title under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement by extending the current Title's application until March 2027, with a commitment to make successive decisions to extend it further thereafter. This means the Energy Title will continue to apply in perpetuity, providing reassurance to investors and the UK and EU's respective energy sectors.

International trade

The Government discusses trade policy with the EU through a range of fora. The Joint Statement at the UK-EU Summit included a commitment to regular high level meetings on issues of strategic interest, including on trade. Furthermore, as announced in a joint ministerial statement in May, the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), of which the UK is a member, will be working towards a dialogue with the EU in 2025.

I look forward to appearing before your Committee on 1 July.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee for information.

Yours sincerely,



**RT HON NICK THOMAS-SYMONDS MP
MINISTER FOR THE CABINET OFFICE
HIS MAJESTY'S PAYMASTER GENERAL**