

The Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP
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Dear Liam,

**Update following Round 5 of negotiations on an upgraded Free Trade Agreement
with the Republic of Korea**

I am writing to update the committee on progress made during the fifth round of negotiations on an upgraded Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the UK and Republic of Korea (RoK), which took place in Seoul between 7 and 11 July 2025.

Total trade between the UK and RoK was worth £15.4 billion in 2024. An upgraded FTA is intended to support further growth in this trade and strengthen our broader relationship with RoK.

An upgraded UK-RoK FTA will help secure and future-proof current goods market access. It will update the agreement in key areas where trade policy has progressed in recent years, including digital and services trade. It will also support cooperation in broader parts of the UK-RoK strategic relationship, with commitments in areas such as supply chains and the environment.

During this round negotiators made good progress in several areas, including but not limited to:

Rules of origin

Constructive discussions were held covering both the main chapter text and product specific rules (PSRs) for a range of sectors including automotives, textiles and apparel, and food and drink.

Digital trade

A new ambitious digital trade chapter is a key part of these negotiations. Sides held further positive discussions during the round on a range of areas including: trade digitalisation and business safeguards.

Services

The two sides continue to hold constructive discussions on further support for trade in services. This included financial services, professional and business services and rules relating to the development of domestic regulation.

Other Areas

Positive discussions were held across a range of other areas of the FTA, including Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures and Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD).

The Government will only ever sign a trade agreement which aligns with the UK's national interests, upholding our high standards across a range of sectors, including protections for the national health service.

The UK and RoK expect to hold further discussions in London in the Autumn. The Government will continue to work towards delivering outcomes in the FTA that secure economic growth for the UK and will update Parliament on the progress of discussions with RoK as they continue to develop.

My Chief Negotiator, Adam Fenn, would be happy to meet with the Committee in **October** to provide more detail on the discussions during the round and progress on negotiations more broadly.

I value the important role that the Committee plays in the scrutiny of the Government's ambitious trade agenda. We are committed to being as transparent as possible during live negotiations and ensuring Parliament is appropriately updated whilst also ensuring we protect our negotiating position.

We will continue to keep you updated as negotiations progress which, as per the shared ambition between our PM and President Myung, both sides aim to conclude by the end of the year.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Douglas Alexander', with a stylized, cursive script.

THE RT HON DOUGLAS ALEXANDER MP
Minister of State for Trade Policy and Economic Security
Department for Business and Trade