



International Trade Committee

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Rt Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP
Secretary of State for International Trade
Department for International Trade
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Admiralty Place
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28 September 2021

Dear Anne-Marie,

As you will be aware, the House of Lords International Agreements Committee (IAC) recently published its seventh report of the current session, revisiting working practices for the scrutiny of international agreements.¹

On behalf of my Committee, I would like to formally support the IAC's conclusions and recommendations, including codifying the Government's various commitments to date around free trade agreement scrutiny.

As I have noted before, meaningful and transparent scrutiny of agreements is vital, and strengthening the role of Committees throughout the negotiation process would significantly enhance this. Therefore, we particularly endorse the recommendation in paragraph 94 of the report and the proposals for further agreement in the concordat.

Further, assuming the Government is open to considering the concordat, I propose we also:

1. add a commitment for it to prioritise briefings, to ensure timeliness;
2. formalise the current "at least three months"² period between making the signed agreement text available – publicly – and laying it formally;
3. define the minimum period between publishing the Trade and Agriculture Commission's advice and Government report and laying the agreement; and
4. consider the extent to which any of the concordat's provisions should be extended to cover the Agreement in Principle stage (where applicable).

I would be happy to discuss this matter further with you and the IAC Chair, Lord Goldsmith, or for your officials to do so initially with the Committees' Clerks. I am copying this letter to the IAC and its Clerk.

In accordance with our usual practice, this letter, along with any replies, will be published on the Committee's webpage.

Kind regards,

Angus Brendan MacNeil
Chair of the International Trade Committee

¹ House of Lords, Report of the International Agreements Committee, Session 2021–22, [HL Paper 75](#)

² [Letter from the Secretary of State to the Chair relating to free trade agreement scrutiny, 6 July 2021](#)