



Department for International Trade

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Angus Brendan MacNeil MP
Chair, International Trade Committee
House of Commons
London
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28th January 2022

Dear Chairman,

I am writing in response to your request for evidence for the International Trade Committee's inquiry into a trade agreement with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

The Department for International Trade (DIT) aims to secure an ambitious programme of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) to benefit the whole of the United Kingdom and support businesses of all sizes across different sectors of the economy. An FTA with the GCC nations of the Kingdom of Bahrain, the State of Kuwait, the Sultanate of Oman, the State of Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates could contribute towards this.

The GCC is a major trading partner of the United Kingdom, with £23.7 billion worth of our exports going there last year, and an overall trade relationship worth £32.5 billion. An FTA with a large, diverse and vibrant trading partner such as the GCC will help us become a truly Global Britain - breaking down barriers to trade and supporting growth and jobs for British workers.

Specifically, we could see benefits for British businesses in areas such as:

- New opportunities in areas like renewable energy, where British businesses could play a key role in partnering with a region that wants to move away from a reliance of oil.
- Food and agriculture exporters, who could benefit from more access to a region that imports a significant proportion of its food and has huge demand for top-quality British produce.
- British financial and digital services businesses as well as education and healthcare providers, who could also strengthen their position in a region that has a high regard for UK expertise.

Thank you for your interest into our trade relationship with the GCC, and how an FTA aligns with our desire to build a network of modern deals spanning the globe that will have significant benefits for the whole of the United Kingdom. After speaking with your Clerk to steer our response to your call for evidence, answers are provided in the annexe to this letter.

Yours sincerely,

RANIL JAYAWARDENA MP
Minister for International Trade