

Sir William Cash
European Scrutiny Committee
European Affairs Unit
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

29 November 2021

ABPI response to European Scrutiny Committee's Inquiry into the institutional framework of the UK/EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement

Dear Sir William,

I write to you as Chief Executive of the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI). The ABPI exists to make the UK the best place in the world to research, develop and use new medicines and vaccines. We represent companies of all sizes who invest in discovering the medicines of the future.

I write to you regarding the Committee's inquiry into the role, responsibilities and powers of the new joint UK/EU bodies established by the UK/EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA). The ABPI welcomed the proposed formation of the new joint UK/EU bodies established by the UK/EU TCA. Under the scope the TCA, there are a number that are of importance to the life sciences sector. In particular:

- The Working Group on Medicinal Products
- UK Domestic Advisory Group
- Trade Specialised Committee on Regulatory Cooperation
- Trade Specialised Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade
- Specialised Committee on Participation in Union Programmes
- Trade Specialised Committee on Intellectual Property

Whilst we are not yet aware of how these groups will operate, it will be important for UK officials to engage with industry as part of preparations for all relevant meetings. As part of this business engagement, it will be important to:

- ensure that key industries are engaged, particularly those that have been identified as strategic sectors in the UK's Plan for Growth, are highly regulated manufacturing sectors and/or have been specifically addressed in the TCA e.g. those with a sector Annex.

- have a strong understanding of the operational/technical impact of issues and/or strategic insight on how a given issue might impact the UK's competitiveness vis a vis the EU or other countries.
- ensure that the presence of bodies established under the TCA do not act to replace alternative industry mechanisms already in place to discuss issues of importance to the life sciences sector and relevant to the TCA, but rather they are a complementary forum for direct dialogue with and input to the teams managing ongoing UK-EU relations.
- Create business engagement processes that allow organisations to be able to provide comprehensive input on behalf of their organisation/membership. To achieve this, the business representatives consulted will firstly need to have specialist knowledge of those industries of importance to the UK economy and secondly, need to be able to consult with their members/internal experts ahead of meetings between the EU and the UK. It is therefore vital that businesses have adequate time ahead of meetings to provide input.
- make provisions to receive and handle commercially sensitive information from a given organisation if required to evidence the impact of a TCA provision.

I trust this information is useful to you as you gather evidence to inform your current inquiry.

Yours sincerely,



Richard Torbett
Chief Executive
Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry