



**BRITISH CHAMBER**  
OF COMMERCE | EU & BELGIUM

## WHAT BUSINESS NEEDS FOR A STRONG EU-UK PARTNERSHIP – 10 NEGOTIATION PRIORITIES

These negotiating priorities were originally published in 2017. Although the Brexit process has since seen many developments, the ten priorities continue to guide our approach.

In order to underpin a stable, attractive and competitive European economy, the British Chamber of Commerce in Brussels (BCCB) have identified ten priorities that should underpin any future UK-EU relationship:

### TRADE & INVESTMENT

**Equivalent access and treatment:** European businesses should be able to access the EU and UK markets, participate in trading mechanisms, trade and provide services across Europe under compatible and equivalent conditions, so as to maintain free and fair economic relations. A deep and comprehensive agreement should guarantee the new UK-EU relationship enabling mutual market access, compatible with EU rules on free movement of goods and services. A close stable regulatory cooperation should ensure continuation of equivalence in standards and treatment. This includes continuation of tariff-free trading, simplified customs procedures, absence of duty rates and other restrictions, coordinated trade defences vis-à-vis third countries and tariffs and mutual preferential access to third countries' markets, as well as open data flows.

**Freedom of investment and establishment:** UK and EU businesses should continue to participate in Europe's economic life by enjoying mutual protection and unrestricted conditions of establishment and investment. An agreement should ensure that all entities engaged in economic activities, as well as movement of capital between the EU, the UK and third countries, are not subject to unjustified or unnecessary restrictions, for instance being able to rely on unhindered financing under stable equivalent conditions.

### LABOUR MARKET

**Skills, Qualifications & Employment rights:** European businesses need to rely on the right skills at the right time and place, to ensure innovative and dynamic economies and support full employment, as well as on clarity on the rights of the workforce and related obligations of employers during the transition to a new UK-EU relationship. A system between the UK and the EU that provides adequate availability of these skills throughout Europe is a must, including through continued (and where possible enhanced) mutual recognition of professional qualifications in the new EU-UK relationship.

### REGULATION & LAW

**Competition:** UK and EU businesses should benefit from healthy competition and a level playing field, in the interest of all European consumers, while embracing the opportunity provided by under the new relationship. An agreement should foster regulatory cooperation for continued alignment and equivalence in competition and M&A rules, to facilitate approvals, prevent abuses, limit compliance burdens, and ensure proportionality of antitrust investigations, as well as ensure close coordination on clearance of notifications.

**Contractual relations and dispute settlement:** European businesses must be able to maintain smooth contractual relations, without uncertainty as to the applicability of law in EU-UK cross-border situations, as well as benefitting from streamlined cross-border judicial procedures, certainty as to the competent courts and mutual recognition and enforceability of judgments, to safeguard attractiveness of EU-UK trade and investments.

**Better Regulation:** The principles of better regulation and proportionality should underpin the new EU-UK relationship and the agreements enshrining it, so as to avoid undue regulatory burden.

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### **ENERGY & CLIMATE**

To ensure a level playing field and respecting the principles of the Energy Union, under the new relationship the UK should have continued access to the Internal Energy Market (IEM) and commit to Europe's climate goals.

### **TAX**

In the negotiations towards a new relationship it should be ensured that the taxation of cross border trade and business activities does not become unnecessarily complicated or lead to double taxation. This applies in particular to the following tax matters: clarity in the application of the UK-EU VAT; keeping or reproducing frameworks that abolish tax impediments, such as the EU Arbitration Convention or legal frameworks on cross-border dividends within groups of companies; and maintaining a common system of taxation applicable to interest and royalty payments between associated companies from the UK and different EU states.

### **INNOVATION**

**IP and anti-counterfeiting cooperation:** European businesses should be able to rely on continued consistency in the application of IP rules, including the application and protection of trademarks, designs, copyrights and patents. This should be complemented with anti-counterfeiting and anti-fraud cooperation between UK and EU authorities.

**Innovation:** UK and EU businesses have a shared interest in ensuring ongoing cooperation on knowledge exchange, research priorities and funding, and maintaining open participation in EU and UK R+I+D and education programmes.

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