

Ursula von der Leyen
President
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
B-1000 Brussels

Brussels, 8 May 2025

Subject: Strengthening EU-UK economic relations

Dear President von der Leyen,

In an era of geopolitical rivalries, as you yourself accurately stated in your re-election speech at the European Parliament last year, well before the current turmoil in the global trading order, we believe it is more important than ever to reinforce economic links with the EU's friends, neighbours and like-minded partners.

The European Union (EU) and the United Kingdom (UK) are undoubtedly strong economic partners and allies. We face similar challenges, be they of a geopolitical nature such as the ongoing war on our European continent, or of a more economic nature, such as the digital and green transitions. Our geographic proximity and our continued deep economic ties reinforce the case for a strong EU-UK partnership, especially in the face of significant common challenges. Where our interests align, it should therefore be mutually beneficial to explore areas where life could be made easier for businesses, especially SMEs, to trade and invest between the EU and the UK. This involves the continued need to minimise the trade friction experienced on a day-to-day basis by companies operating between the EU and the UK should not be overlooked.

In light of the upcoming EU-UK Summit on 19 May, we would urge both sides to lay the foundation for a forward-looking economic relationship that revolves around the following themes.

Conclusion of an institutional and structured agreement on foreign policy and defence with the UK, including collaboration in important areas of foreign economic policy such as sanctions policy, investment screening, or export controls.

In the economic area specifically, we see room for improvement, in particular in limiting future regulatory divergence through regulatory cooperation, as well as in enhancing mobility between the EU and the UK. The latter applies to both professional and youth mobility. This could be achieved through clarifying and expanding relevant areas of application of the TCA, advancing the mutual recognition agenda for professional qualifications and by concluding an agreement on youth mobility.

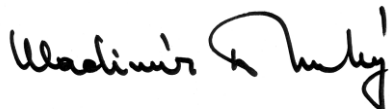
European chambers would also strongly welcome the UK government linking its emission trading system (ETS) to the EU's, as this would prevent an unlevel playing field for EU businesses and reduce the regulatory burden from the imposition of potentially different carbon border adjustment mechanism measures when fully implemented in both the EU and the UK.

Similarly, negotiating a separate veterinary and sanitary and phytosanitary agreement between the EU and the UK would also bring important benefits in our view to EU and UK businesses, as it could remove or at least limit the necessity for sometimes cumbersome border checks for EU agrifood products destined for the UK market and vice versa. Any such agreement would of course need to provide the necessary safeguards for preserving the integrity of the single market through dynamic alignment and a role for the European Court of Justice.

We are hopeful that the upcoming EU-UK Summit will prove a significant milestone in further advancing EU-UK economic ties in the current volatile geopolitical environment. Should there be any scope for involving business representatives in elements of the summit programme, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Rest assured that the European chamber network stands ready to assist you and your services in optimizing the outcome of this important phase in EU:UK relations.

Yours sincerely,



Vladimír Dlouhý

cc: Maroš Šefčovič, Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security