

International Trade



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International Trade
Spokesman

Our relevant manifesto commitments

European Manifesto 2009

- Fighting Protectionism and removing barriers to trade and investment.
- Secure a global, pro-development agreement at the WTO.
- Ensure that the EU keeps its commitment to support developing countries through the Millennium Development Goals, and reform the EU's aid programmes so that they deliver better value for money.
- Make every effort to ensure Economic Partnership Agreements deliver freer and fairer trade for developing countries.

New EU initiatives for global trade: Freeing economic potential of the world's growth markets to EU trade and investment

I am a firm believer that trade will do more to eliminate poverty than any other factor and that the promotion of wealth creation is the only sustainable way to eradicate poverty in developing countries.

The Doha Development Round was launched to provide new trading opportunities, strengthen multilateral trade rules, address current imbalances in the trade system and to put trade at the heart of sustainable development. In recent months, the stalled negotiations have come to a complete standstill and it is now widely acknowledged that the deal, in its original form, is dead.

The EU has now shifted its focus to the world's most dynamic economies in the pursuit of bilateral trade agreements. The negotiation of regional and bilateral free trade agreements will never aim to supersede multilateral negotiations and agreements but as the European Commission has estimated that by 2015, nearly 90 per cent of trade growth will be generated outside of Europe, they are essential if we are to deliver access to foreign markets for British business, especially SMEs, and to promote growth in both the UK and abroad.

In order to achieve this, the EU has directed new initiatives to ensure economic growth by taking into account the shift in global economic trends away from the Atlantic towards the Pacific. One such deal is the recent EU-South Korea Free Trade Agreement

that entered into force on the 1st July 2011. As the European Parliament's leading member on the agreement, I am fully aware of the benefits that such agreements can bring, with initial estimates indicating that in the first year of the FTA, EU exporters will save €1.6 billion annually.

After the huge success of the EU-South Korea trade deal, I am currently working on similar agreements with India, Singapore, Japan and Canada. The scale of these deals will undoubtedly bring huge benefits to the UK economy, as they deal with some of the most dynamic markets on the planet. Whilst I know how



Robert with Ewa Bjorling, Swedish Trade Minister

difficult trade deals can be, I remain optimistic that the EU can negotiate comprehensive deals that will be beneficial for all.



Robert Sturdy at the Brussels plenary

Cutting Red Tape: Fighting protectionism and removing barriers to trade and investment

The EU is the most open market in the world and we have led the way in increasing the liberalisation and elimination of tariffs in a multitude of markets and across a vast array of sectors. However, many countries outside of the EU still employ restrictive trade practices and are increasingly turning to a different kind of barrier to trade and investment, known as

Non-Tariff Barriers. NTBs come in all shapes and sizes, from burdensome labelling and certification standards, to protectionist bias to their own domestic products and services, and although they differ from tariffs in their application, they still have a significant negative impact on international trade.

Although the EU has attempted to address this issue within the remit of its trade negotiations, I feel we must do more to pressure our so-called partners to provide a level playing field for all businesses and investors. This autumn, I will be launching a new report on the effects of NTBs on trade and investment. I hope that by highlighting examples from across the globe, and including examples when EU businesses are discriminated against in emergent and developing countries alike, the report will stimulate an ambitious approach to eliminate these unforgiving barriers.

This will not be an easy task. Understanding the impact that protectionist red tape has on our businesses at home and abroad is not straightforward, but what is clear is that the cost to Europe's SMEs ranges in the tens of billions every year. This issue becomes even more urgent in these times of economic uncertainty.

Ensure that the EU keeps its commitment to support developing countries through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Trade is a vital tool for development but it is not always an end in itself. The Conservative-led government has shown real global leadership and has been ahead of the field when it comes to development aid. In times of economic hardship, such as those in which we currently find ourselves, money for aid will be less freely available from donors. It is therefore even more important to ensure that EU development aid is fairly distributed and, crucially, directed at the correct projects.

One of my priorities has been to ensure that taxpayers' money delivers the maximum impact and any money that is spent is transparent and fully accountable. The ECR Group will be continuing to ensure that the money, coupled to trade deals, is spent wisely in order to deliver structural development so that the world's poorest countries can capitalise on new trade opportunities, helping to achieve the eight objectives of the MDGs. This is particularly the case with the Economic Partnership Agreements with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries.

As a member of the EU-ACP Assembly, I have recently drafted a new report which addresses the impact of debt on development financing in ACP countries. It is hoped by identifying these challenges, we can help ACP countries to move towards greater economic stability.

Future Plans

The agenda throughout the next year of the International Trade Committee will be incredibly busy. With the European Parliament's increased powers under the Lisbon Treaty, the International Trade Committee must now give final approval on all EU trade deals and we now have the power to influence the negotiating position of the Commission.

With such important trade deals being negotiated with some incredibly large and dynamic economies, I will be working hard to ensure that the interests of British industry are represented and that any deals that are struck will bring benefits to British consumers.

Furthermore, I will continue to work to forward the Conservative philosophy that trade is the best means for development. This describes development, not only for the less advanced countries of the world, but also for our own development at home. This forward-thinking attitude will help us to strengthen British business opportunities and investment, improve consumer choice and protection, and provide greater security, job creation and economic stability. 🇬🇧