

FUTURE EU-UK PARTNERSHIP MUST GUARANTEE FRICTIONLESS TRADE

Brussels, 4 March 2020 – With negotiations on the future of the EU and UK relationship beginning this week, the European Steel Association (EUROFER) urges both sides to reach as comprehensive an agreement as possible. The European steel industry, its suppliers and downstream users need frictionless trade in a stable environment, mutual market access, a level playing field between competitors and reciprocity in the treatment of regulation, firms, products and staff.

“We welcome the official start of the negotiations, given the importance of protecting the prosperity of citizens and businesses on both sides of the channel”, said Axel Eggert, Director General of EUROFER. “While each side rightly wants to defend its regulatory autonomy, a deal that ensures EU and UK trade interactions are fair, reciprocal and frictionless is essential”, emphasised Mr Eggert.

Maintaining a level playing field and reciprocity should be the leading principles of the negotiations for both sides. EUROFER hopes the EU and UK will agree on solutions that ensure the continuity of the logistical procedures involved in the movement of goods between the two countries. Mutual market access, as well as alignment of standards on state aid, competition policy, state-owned enterprises, employment, environment, climate change, relevant tax matters and other regulatory measures and practices, is vital.

On 25 February the EU released its negotiating mandate, with the UK doing the same two days later. During the current transition period, nothing changes in terms of the UK’s trading relationship with the EU. The EU and UK can agree on an extension but must do so by 1 July – otherwise, the transition ends on 31 December 2020 even if there is no agreement reached.

“No deal would be the worst possible outcome – erecting barriers to trade overnight that would be needlessly damaging”, concluded Mr Eggert.

Notes for Editors

Contact

Charles de Lusignan, Spokesman & Head of Communications, +32 2 738 79 35, charles@eurofer.be

PDF

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About the European Steel Association (EUROFER)

EUROFER AISBL is located in Brussels and was founded in 1976. It represents the entirety of steel production in the European Union. EUROFER members are steel companies and national steel federations throughout the EU. The major steel companies and national steel federations in Switzerland and Turkey are associate members.

The European Steel Association is recorded in the EU transparency register: 93038071152-83.

About the European steel industry

The European steel industry is a world leader in innovation and environmental sustainability. It has a turnover of around €170 billion and directly employs 330,000 highly-skilled people, producing on average 160 million tonnes of steel per year. More than 500 steel production sites across 22 EU Member States provide direct and indirect employment to millions more European citizens. Closely



integrated with Europe's manufacturing and construction industries, steel is the backbone for development, growth and employment in Europe.

Steel is the most versatile industrial material in the world. The thousands of different grades and types of steel developed by the industry make the modern world possible. Steel is 100% recyclable and therefore is a fundamental part of the circular economy. As a basic engineering material, steel is also an essential factor in the development and deployment of innovative, CO₂-mitigating technologies, improving resource efficiency and fostering sustainable development in Europe.