# Implementation report on the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement

2022/2188(INI) - 23/11/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 521 votes to 9, with 42 abstentions, a resolution on the implementation of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

***Main conclusions***

Members recalled that the conclusion of the trade and cooperation agreement (TCA) limits the negative consequences of the UK's withdrawal from the EU and establishes a cooperation framework which should **form the basis of a strong and constructive future partnership**, avoiding the most disruptive elements of a 'no-deal' scenario and providing legal certainty for citizens and businesses. The TCA is one of the most ambitious and comprehensive trade agreements which the EU has concluded with a third country.

However, it does not and cannot be a substitute for EU membership.

***Trade and Cooperation Agreement between UK and EU***

Parliament welcomed the **Windsor Framework** and underlined the specific situation of Northern Ireland, thanks to its unique position with access to both the EU and UK internal markets. It called for the swift implementation of the Windsor Framework in order to ensure lasting certainty and predictability for businesses and people in Northern Ireland, to protect the all-island economy, safeguard the Good Friday Agreement in all its dimensions, ensure smooth trade and cooperation, as well as safeguarding the integrity of the single market and the Customs Union.

Members also welcomed the positive initiatives included in the Windsor Framework, such as the proposal on medicines to ensure that people in Northern Ireland have access to all medicines at the same time and under the same conditions as people in Great Britain, and the proposal on sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures, while keeping in mind that the transport of animals should respect animal welfare.

***Institutional framework***

Members welcomed the full operationalisation of the TCA's institutional framework in 2022 and the good functioning of the joint bodies under the Agreement. They underlined the importance of the institutional structures for the smooth implementation of the EU-UK TCA and called for continued **transparency** in the implementation of the agreements concluded between both sides.

They also stressed the importance of strong EU and UK civil society involvement, including regional and local authorities employers' organisations and trade unions, as well as non-governmental organisations, in the implementation of the TCA. They reaffirmed Parliament's commitment to closely monitor the implementation of the TCA.

***Trade***

Members recalled that the TCA provides a comprehensive and ambitious basis for the relationship between the parties, in particular for EU-UK trade, while ensuring a level playing field for fair competition and sustainable development. The resolution concluded that the trade arrangements in goods and services established in the TCA are working well, although certain implementation difficulties have

persisted, such as the sponsorship scheme for the entry and temporary stay of natural persons for business purposes and the verification of origin for applying preferential tariff treatment.

Members took note of the further postponement of the implementation of certain UK import procedures and checks, in particular sanitary and phytosanitary checks, on products coming from the EU. The UK Government is called on to digitalise and simplify UK customs procedures to the extent possible in order to avoid further frictions in trade between the EU and the UK.

The resolution recognised the need to continue the ongoing progress towards ensuring the availability of veterinary medicines in Northern Ireland in order to maintain animal welfare and food security. Members also recalled the ongoing legislative work to revise the pharmaceutical legislation, which will also aim to ease the historical dependency of markets in Cyprus, Ireland and Malta on medicines supplies from or that transit through the UK.

***Fisheries***

The resolution pointed out that the full impact of Brexit is not yet fully known, not least because the full implementation of the TCA in relation to fisheries is still ongoing and will only be completed after the transition period ends on 30 June 2026. The Commission is called on to take all the necessary measures to ensure that reciprocal access to waters and fisheries resources is maintained after 30 June 2026 and that there are no further quota reductions for EU fishers. Members called for the exchange of fishing quotas between the parties to be streamlined and manageable for the sector.

***Participation in Union programmes***

Members deplored the fact that the UK lost access to EU research programmes as a result of its withdrawal from the EU and highlighted the importance and the mutual benefits of continued cooperation in research and innovation between the EU and the UK. They also deeply regretted the unilateral, political decision of the UK Government not to participate in the Erasmus+, Creative Europe and European Solidarity Corps programmes.

Parliament noted a significant drop in the number of EU students studying at UK universities, which fell by as much as 50 % in the case of first year students between 2020-2021 and 2021-2022.

***Cooperation in foreign and security policy***

Members regretted that, apart from the areas of cybersecurity, counter-terrorism, and weapons of mass destruction, the TCA does not include provisions on cooperation in foreign policy and defence, owing to UK’s unwillingness to negotiate on such provisions. On the other hand, they welcomed the good coordination between the EU and the UK on sanctions against Russia.

Members considered that the signing of a structured framework for cooperation on foreign and security affairs between the EU and the UK would be more effective than the current ad hoc cooperation. They called for the stronger involvement of the UK in European security and defence projects.