



Message from UKWA CEO Peter Ward

On 17th January 2017, the Prime Minister set out her plans for a so-called 'hard Brexit'. These plans are clearly of the utmost importance to UK plc and in particular, to the logistics industry, which will be impacted by changes to free movement of goods and labour across the EU and potential new regulations on customs and duties.

The role of UKWA as the voice of the industry has never been more significant. We are all in uncharted territory in negotiating the best possible deal as we leave the EU. Government cannot look to civil servants or think tank advisors in this unprecedented situation. Instead, ministers must (and are) consulting directly with business organisations and trade associations like ours for expert guidance and insights from 'the coal face', in order to make the critical decisions that will affect our country for generations to come.

UKWA is already in communication with ministers in all relevant government departments; we are feeding in advice and information, sharing views from the membership on infrastructure, training and education, fulfilment regulations and much more.

It is time to engage with your Association, stay abreast of developments that directly affect your business and take advantage of this unique opportunity to shape the future, not only of our industry, but of the UK in a new global landscape.

Key planks of Mrs. May's strategy that are of particular interest to UKWA members include:

- Tariffs and trade barriers
- Regulation
- Access to skilled immigrant labour
- New global partners

#### *Tariffs & trade barriers*

Mrs. May has confirmed that we will be leaving the European Single Market and instead will seek a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement. This raises a number of clear concerns, but UKWA supports the PM's aim to keep trade tariff-free and barriers to trade low.

In leaving the customs union, we face the possibility of the return of tariffs and non-tariff barriers such as Rules of Origin, with consequent disruption to supply chains. Clearly, this is a matter of high importance to members and UKWA will join other organisations, such as the CBI, in encouraging government to seek an innovative customs deal that minimises new trade barriers, but delivers control back to the UK of its own external trade tariffs.

#### *Regulation*

While carrying over the bulk of regulation from the EU will provide some certainty going forward, there are likely to be practical challenges ahead. For those operating warehouses, there is much complex and demanding regulation, from health & safety to working hours. Our interest will be in influencing government to simplify regulation and reduce the burden.

Our commitment is to ensure that our views are heard and we will continue to keep members up to date with the latest government proposals.

### *Skilled Labour*

While we understand the need to control immigration into the UK, access to skilled labour is a major issue for our industry. Therefore, the Prime Minister's recognition of the importance of migration in alleviating skills shortages was very welcome, as was her statement that the status of EU nationals already in the UK would be secure. However, we need to understand more about the government's likely policy on migration post-Brexit and will continue to engage with ministers accordingly.

### *New global partners*

Naturally, we applaud Mrs. May's mission to consolidate trade links with existing partners, while seeking opportunity in new markets. UKWA will look to contribute to the debate and influence where priorities should lie for new trade agreements. We join with colleagues at the CBI and others in embracing the new era of free trade and supporting Mrs. May in her ambitions.

The government is adopting a phased approach to Brexit, which will help us all adjust our sights and prepare for the changes ahead. The Prime Minister has declared her intention to negotiate a new trade deal with the EU within the 2-year Article 50 timeframe, whether this will be possible given this week's ruling by the Supreme Court remains to be seen. However, your Association will remain at the forefront in ensuring the voice of the industry is heard, our concerns are taken on board and the best possible outcomes achieved.

Ends.

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