# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE** | **The Future UK/EU Relationship: Negotiating Priorities for Wales** |
| **DATE** | **20 January 2020** |
| **BY** | **Jeremy Miles, AM Counsel General and Brexit Minister** |

Since the EU referendum the Welsh Government has been guided by the clear intention of protecting Wales’ future in whatever circumstances Brexit creates. It is now clear that the UK is leaving the EU on 31 January and the UK will soon begin negotiations on the UK’s future relationship with our closest and most important economic partner. The UK Government will base its negotiating strategy on the platform set out in the Political Declaration.

The Welsh Government has mapped out a set of positions which reflect Wales’ interests with great consistency over the last years drawing on the available evidence base. Today we have published ‘The Future UK/EU Relationship: Negotiating Priorities for Wales’, setting out the negotiating priorities that we believe will best protect Wales’ economic, social and environmental interests, by developing the political declaration to inform the setting of the UK’s negotiating strategy.

Given the overwhelming importance of the EU markets to our economy - particularly Wales’ manufacturing, agriculture and services sectors - the UK must prioritise continued frictionless access to these markets over trade arrangements with other countries. While we recognise our future relationship with the EU will be based on a Free Trade Agreement, the UK must have the fullest access to EU markets without tariffs, and non-tariff barriers must be minimised.

Given this, we will continue to challenge the UK Government’s approach to the negotiations, which prioritises the ‘freedom’ of the UK to diverge from EU regulatory standards above the well-being of the people of Wales. Such an approach would be deeply flawed, would likely result in lost jobs and lost investment in Wales and undermine the economic, social and environmental protections that 40 years of close integration and cooperation has generated.

In addition we call on the UK to pursue the closest possible future security partnership with the EU, and to negotiate continued participation in EU programmes, such as Erasmus +, Horizon Europe, the Ireland –Wales Programme and Creative Europe which have helped support significant investment in Wales’ economic, cultural and social infrastructure.

The priorities outlined are broadly explored, as they respond to the Political Declaration which itself is concluded in broad terms. We again press forward the case for the Welsh Government, and the other Devolved Governments, to be involved in the negotiations, to protect the interests of all citizens of the UK, and to enable our priorities to be set out and pursued in more detail.

As part of this publication we have produced an updated economic analysis on the future trading relationship by the Welsh Government’s Chief Economist. We have also published an independent report completed by the UK Trade Policy Observatory which analyses the potential implications for Wales’ external trade as a result of the protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland, as set out in the Withdrawal Agreement.

[**The Future UK/EU Relationship: Negotiating Priorities for Wales**](https://gov.wales/the-future-uk-eu-relationship)