



Department for Transport

Ms Iselin Nybø
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From the Secretary of State
The Rt. Hon. Grant Shapps

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Dear Minister Nybø,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Department for Transport and Department for International Trade of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (“the United Kingdom”) to set out for the Ministry of Trade Industry and Fisheries of the Kingdom of Norway (“Norway”) and stakeholders, how the United Kingdom will regulate our trading relationship concerning maritime transport services. These arrangements will apply following the end of the Transition Period on 31 December 2020, in the interim period until a Free Trade Agreement (“FTA”) is concluded between our countries.

The United Kingdom highly values its strong trading relationship with Norway. We have a shared ambition for a new high-quality FTA, to come into effect as soon as possible in 2021. We have made excellent progress in our negotiations, which the United Kingdom is committed to continuing.

1 January 2021 marks the beginning of a new relationship between the United Kingdom and the European Union. This will mean that there will be changes to how United Kingdom businesses interact with the European Union single market, and by extension to Norway, as a participant of the European Union single market through the Agreement on the European Economic Area of 2 May 1992.

The vast majority of these changes will take place regardless of whether we agree a deeper trading relationship with the European Union or whether we proceed with the relationship based on 2019 deal, because the United Kingdom will be leaving the European Union single market and customs union, regaining its political and economic independence.

As the FTA between our countries will not come into force from 1 January 2021, it is prudent to put in place any necessary mitigating action to ensure continuity in trade at the end of the year whilst negotiations continue. Primarily, the United Kingdom, Iceland and Norway will be able to continue trade in goods through the interim agreement on goods, signed on 8 December 2020.

In addition, the United Kingdom reiterates its political commitment to the principles of free and fair market access for maritime transport services.

Until a FTA is agreed, I confirm that the United Kingdom has no intention to introduce new maritime restrictions on the freedom of Norwegian flagged vessels to provide maritime cabotage services in United Kingdom waters. I also confirm that vessels registered in Norway will continue to have reasonable and non-discriminatory access to the United Kingdom ports and port services but not beyond the most favourable treatment required to be accorded under the UK – Canada Trade Continuity Agreement signed 9 December 2020, during this period of time.

The United Kingdom will continue to honour its commitments under the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention of 1958 including those relating to the entry of seafarers.

The United Kingdom welcomes reciprocation of this treatment from Norway where possible, considering Norway's requirement to align to EU regulation.

This letter does not constitute a legally binding agreement. The United Kingdom and Norway will communicate any changes to existing and future processes.

The United Kingdom will work towards future arrangements with Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway to secure a high quality, comprehensive FTA, to come into force in 2021.

Yours sincerely,



Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT