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Gary Smith
Regional Secretary
GMB Scotland
Fountain House
1/3 Woodside Crescent
Charing Cross
Glasgow
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26 April 2017

Dear Mr Smith,

Thank you for your letter of 28 March regarding trading relationships to support the UK's whisky industry.

The Secretary of State for International Trade has been clear that the UK Government would like to see a transition of existing EU free trade agreements with third countries into UK agreements when we leave the European Union. We will also seek the greatest possible access to the EU single market on a fully reciprocal basis through a comprehensive free trade agreement.

With regard to new trading relationships, the UK Government is working to understand where the greatest opportunities lie for future agreements and this will include consideration of the needs of exporters in the UK.

As you point out, the Scotch whisky industry is one of the UK's greatest stories of exporting success, supporting more than 40,000 jobs around the UK. There is a real opportunity for the industry to grow from its strong position as we leave the EU and build new trading relationships around the world.

The UK Government is already working hard to support this. I visited Burma and Singapore earlier this month and made the case for the whisky industry in both countries. My ministerial colleagues in the Department for International Trade have undertaken extensive travel around the world to develop new markets and I am pleased that the Scotch Whisky Association and Diageo were able to join the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for International Trade on their recent visit to India to develop the market for whisky there.

The UK Government is committed to ensuring that the whisky industry, along with all industries across the UK, is in the strongest possible position to thrive as we leave the European Union.

**Rt Hon DAVID MUNDELL MP
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND**