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European service industries welcome the conclusion of the Future EU-UK Trading Arrangements

The European Services Forum, which represents European service industries in international trade & investment negotiations, welcomes the conclusion of the negotiations between the European Union and the United Kingdom and that an agreement has been reached for their future trading arrangements after the end of the 'Transition Period' on 31 December 2020.

Services are the backbone of the EU and UK economies, with 75% of GDP, 70% of the workforce, and more than 40% of total trade between the two parties, with more than €380 billion in 2019 of imports and exports of services, including financial services, professional and business services, transport and logistic services, tourism, etc. The UK is the leading trading partner of the EU27 for services, and the second market for the EU27 after the US.

"We welcome the agreement finally found between the EU and the UK" said Noel Clehane, Chairman of the European Services Forum. This deal is a necessary arrangement to start a new relationship between two major neighbours, a steppingstone on which we need now to work towards clear information for businesses which look for certainty about what they can do, and what they cannot do after Brexit. The new trade agreement does not provide the same rights and obligations as the previous single market and customs union arrangements. "The Agreement will bring the much-needed legal certainty to services enterprises. Businesses will need prompt and clear information on the regime for transport services, mobility of professionals, cross-border data flows, financial services equivalence, and many other matters".

The European Services Forum urges the authorities in the EU and in the UK to clarify as early as possible the legal conditions for continuing to do business between the two parties in the coming weeks. ESF calls for a rapid provisional application of the deal reached today, and for swift ratification of the EU-UK agreement and for its publication as soon as possible, in particular the provisions on trade in services chapter and the schedules of commitments that will determine the actual conditions for access to their respective markets for thousands of services businesses.

"In this time of uncertainty due to the Covid pandemic, it is a profound relief that a deal has been struck, as a failure could only have added to the difficulties that our economies are already suffering" said Clehane.

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