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Anne Marie Glosli,
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Monday 21 December 2020

From Tamara Finkelstein
Permanent Secretary

Dear Anne Marie Glosli,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to set out for your Ministry and stakeholders how the UK will apply sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) border controls after 1st January.

The UK values highly its strong trading relationship with Norway. We have a shared ambition for a new high-quality comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (FTA), to come into effect in 2021. We have made excellent progress in our negotiations, which the UK is committed to continuing.

The 1st January 2021 marks the end of the process of transition of the UK-EU relationship. From the 1st January 2021 the UK will regain control of its own laws and its own trade. This will mean that there will be changes to how UK businesses interact with the EU single market, and by extension Norway, as Norway is a participant of the EU single market through the European Economic Area Agreement.

The vast majority of these changes will take place regardless of the agreement we reach with the EU on our future trade relationship, because the UK will be leaving the single market and customs union, regaining its political and economic independence.

As the new high-quality comprehensive FTA covering SPS border controls will not come into force between our countries from the 1st 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 UK and Norway will be able to continue trade in goods through the interim continuity agreement, signed on 8th December 2020 in London.

On the 1st January 2021 the transition period with the EU will end, and the UK will operate a full, external border as a sovereign nation. This means that new controls will be placed on the movement of goods between Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) and Norway.

To afford industry extra time to make the necessary arrangements, the UK Government has taken the decision to introduce the new border controls in three stages up until 1st July 2021. These arrangements will apply to Norway for animals and their products where Norway are fully harmonised with EU SPS standards. This phasing of SPS control arrangements will be carried out for Norway in accordance with the [Border Operating Model](#).

Regulated plants and plant products exported from Norway will continue to be treated as third country imports and as such there will no changes to how import controls are currently applied to them.

The UK would welcome reciprocation of this treatment from Norway where possible, considering Norway's requirement to align to EU regulation.

As set out in the [Command Paper on The Northern Ireland Protocol](#), a UK Trader Scheme will be set up to ensure that no tariffs will be charged on goods moving from Great Britain for sale in Northern Ireland; this includes those goods originating from Norway. There will be some new administrative SPS requirements on goods moving from Great Britain to Northern Ireland. These requirements will uphold the longstanding status of the island of Ireland as a single epidemiological unit.

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

The UK will work towards future arrangements with Norway to secure a high-quality comprehensive FTA, to come into force in 2021.

Yours sincerely,



TAMARA FINKELSTEIN