



**2022/2188(INI)**

24.7.2023

# OPINION

of the Committee on Regional Development

for the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on International Trade

on the implementation report on the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (2022/2188(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Pascal Arimont

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## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Regional Development calls on the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on International Trade, as the committees responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into their motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) establishes preferential arrangements in areas such as trade in goods and services, intellectual property, digital trade, road transport and aviation, public procurement, energy, social security coordination, law enforcement and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, fisheries, competition, mobility, investment, thematic cooperation and participation in Union programmes;
- B. whereas the impact of the UK's withdrawal from the EU varies among EU regions and the impact of the TCA at regional and local level is still unknown;
- C. whereas, despite the TCA, the EU's trade with the UK following the COVID-19 pandemic is recovering slowly compared to trade with other non-EU countries, which may affect economic and social cohesion in certain EU regions;
- D. whereas the UK's withdrawal from the EU has negatively impacted regions and partners involved in Interreg projects, including those concerning cross-border environmental protection and the fight against climate change, and endangers territorial and cross-border cooperation and the existing relationships between the different regions and cities of the EU and the UK as a whole;
- E. whereas the TCA fails to develop the territorial dimension of the relationship between the UK and the EU;
- F. whereas on 27 February 2023, the Commission and the UK Government reached a political agreement on the Windsor Framework, which includes a comprehensive set of common solutions aimed at definitively addressing the practical challenges faced by Northern Ireland's citizens and businesses, and a commitment to preserving the Good Friday Agreement in all its dimensions;
- G. whereas the Windsor Framework covers a wide range of areas, such as customs, agri-food, medicines, State aid, VAT and excise duties;
1. Points out that the TCA, despite its lack of a regional dimension, provides a general framework for the UK's participation in EU programmes; regrets, in particular, the general lack of Interreg programmes with the UK as a non-EU country partner; reiterates its call<sup>1</sup> to explore possibilities for the participation of parts of the UK in EU

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<sup>1</sup> European Parliament legislative resolution of 28 April 2021 on the draft Council decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the Union, of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community, of the one part, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, of the other part, and of the Agreement between the European Union and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland concerning security procedures for exchanging and protecting classified information, OJ C 506, 15.12.2021, p. 159.

cohesion policy programmes;

2. Believes that there is untapped potential for EU-UK subnational cooperation in areas of mutual interest, such as immigration, mobility – including of military personnel and assets – the sustainable management of the North Sea, the Channel and the Irish Sea, trade, climate action, education, digitalisation, human and social rights, and security; supports dialogue and strategic cooperation between the EU and the UK on the most urgent common challenges and stresses the need to create synergies and to support initiatives for bilateral and multilateral cooperation between EU and UK regions, such as the Straits Committee, possibly through a specific EU interregional cooperation programme, provided that the UK Government financially contributes to this programme and that participating regions are adequately consulted and involved in its development;
3. Calls for a balanced and coordinated approach towards achieving the European Green Deal objectives and energy independence for both the EU and the UK; highlights the importance of technological cooperation, skills development, the exchange of data in the energy sector and of research and development cooperation in the fields of critical technologies, carbon capture technologies, hydrogen, renewable energy and nuclear energy; believes that common rules for offshore renewable and nuclear energy, carbon capture technologies, gas, hydrogen and pipeline infrastructure are essential in facilitating commercial agreements between the EU and the UK; calls for a coordinated EU-UK approach to the development of critical energy infrastructure in order to enhance its robustness and lower the chances of infrastructure disruptions and energy supply failures, including the development of the offshore grid, given the huge renewable energy potential and the long-standing energy priorities of the EU and the concerned countries;
4. Takes note of the ‘transitional arrangements’ in place for potential UK participation in Horizon Europe programmes and regrets the fact that grant agreements cannot be signed, as they are conditional on the UK’s association to the programmes; calls on the Commission and the UK Government to swiftly reach a fair, balanced and mutually beneficial agreement on UK association to Horizon Europe under an agreed set of financial and intellectual property rights rules;
5. Regrets the UK’s non-participation in the Erasmus+ programme and invites the UK to reconsider its association to it, which would increase its opportunities for exchange and cooperation projects in the areas of education and training;
6. Calls for cooperation to be strengthened in the field of cybersecurity, due to its implications for both the EU and the UK on a wide range of areas of mutual interest, especially in the digital and financial sectors, and information technology defence, energy and research and development;
7. Regrets the tensions that have arisen in Northern Ireland stemming from the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol and welcomes the fact that an agreement, referred to as the Windsor Framework, has been reached to remedy the implementation issues; hopes that the Windsor Framework will help strengthen relations between the parties by enabling them to fully exploit the potential of the TCA;

8. Welcomes the UK Government's continued commitment to the PEACE programme, which plays a key role for cooperation between Northern Ireland and the border regions of Ireland; notes the fact that the 2021-2027 PEACE PLUS programme was formally adopted by the Commission in July 2022;
9. Underlines the importance of quantifying the effects, including the social impact, of the TCA at regional level in order to adopt tailored measures for the most impacted regions and their communities and private and public businesses; calls, in particular, for dedicated support for the small and medium-sized enterprises that are located in border regions and whose businesses are particularly dependent on the UK market;
10. Points out that, for EU-UK trade relations, particular attention should be paid to the four economic sectors defined by the European Committee of the Regions<sup>2</sup> that could be most affected by the impact of Brexit, such as vehicles, electrical machinery, wood products and furniture, and agricultural products;
11. Calls for the greater involvement of the devolved territories of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales in the EU-UK Parliamentary Partnership Assembly;
12. Asks the Commission to properly involve regional and local authorities and civil society organisations in the process of scrutinising the implementation of the TCA; suggests that the EU and the UK create a cooperation body for local and regional authorities within the framework of the TCA to foster communication and collaboration.

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<sup>2</sup> European Committee of the Regions study entitled '[New trade and economic relations between EU-UK: the impact on regions and cities](#)', 2022.

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Rule 58 – Joint committee procedure</b> Date announced in plenary	15.12.2022
<b>Date adopted</b>	19.7.2023
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 33 –: 0 0: 1
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	François Alfonsi, Adrian-Dragoș Benea, Isabel Benjumea Benjumea, Franc Bogovič, Vlad-Marius Botoș, Corina Crețu, Rosa D’Amato, Christian Doleschal, Matthias Ecke, Mircea-Gheorghe Hava, Krzysztof Hetman, Peter Jahr, Cristina Maestre Martín De Almagro, Nora Mebarek, Martina Michels, Alin Mituța, Dan-Ștefan Motreanu, Niklas Nienass, Andrey Novakov, Younous Omarjee, Alessandro Panza, Caroline Roose, Marcos Ros Sempere, André Rougé, Susana Solís Pérez, Irène Tolleret
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Karolin Braunsberger-Reinhold, Carlos Coelho, Rosanna Conte, Herbert Dorfmann, Sandro Gozi, Ana Miranda, Yana Toom, Stefania Zambelli

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>33</b>	<b>+</b>
ID	Rosanna Conte, Alessandro Panza, Stefania Zambelli
PPE	Isabel Benjumea Benjumea, Franc Bogovič, Karolin Braunsberger-Reinhold, Carlos Coelho, Christian Doleschal, Herbert Dorfmann, Mircea-Gheorghe Hava, Krzysztof Hetman, Peter Jahr, Dan-Ștefan Motreanu, Andrey Novakov
Renew	Vlad-Marius Botoș, Sandro Gozi, Alin Mituța, Susana Solís Pérez, Irène Tolleret, Yana Toom
S&D	Adrian-Dragoș Benea, Corina Crețu, Matthias Ecke, Cristina Maestre Martín De Almagro, Nora Mebarek, Marcos Ros Sempere
The Left	Martina Michels, Younous Omarjee
Verts/ALE	François Alfonsi, Rosa D'Amato, Ana Miranda, Niklas Nienass, Caroline Roose

<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>

<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
ID	André Rougé

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention