

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP

Prime Minister's Office
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

Friday 12 June 2020

Re. Progress of UK-EU negotiations

Dear Prime Minister

I am writing to you on behalf of the BMA (British Medical Association) ahead of your upcoming meeting with the EU's Presidents von der Leyen, Michel and Sassoli to discuss the progress of the negotiations to determine the nature of our country's future relationship with the bloc.

As I wrote to you in my letter of 9th March, "the BMA has clear priorities which need addressing during negotiations to ensure that the medical profession can continue treating its patients to the highest possible level beyond the end of the transition period."

Having noted your Chief Negotiator's recent assessment that: "Overall, at this moment in negotiations, what is on offer is not a fair free trade relationship between close economic partners, but a relatively low-quality trade agreement"; we are extremely concerned that our priorities – detailed below – will not be dealt with adequately during the negotiations.

Indeed, we fear that the unprecedented nature of these hugely complex trade negotiations, taking place virtually during a global pandemic and working to an incredibly challenging deadline, could result in the transition period ending without a negotiated deal being agreed.

Having consistently warned of the damaging consequences that a "no deal" Brexit would have for patients, the health workforce and health services across the UK, we must once again urge your government to make the pragmatic decisions necessary to avoid such a disastrous scenario.

Such an outcome would have been catastrophic for our members and their patients pre-pandemic. Its impact on an NHS, struggling to deal with the massive backlog of non-COVID-19 clinical work and threatened by a second peak in infections during the challenging winter period, simply cannot be countenanced.

Therefore, I would once again urge your government to do whatever is required to secure an agreement with the EU that permits our members' continued treatment of their patients to the highest possible level beyond the end of the transition period.

Yours sincerely



Dr Chaand Nagpaul CBE
BMA chair of council

Appendix

To protect and improve health and healthcare, the future relationship must include arrangements that:

- **Support the medical workforce** – to facilitate the continued sharing of medical expertise between the UK and EU member states, the UK government must ensure a continued system of mutual recognition of professional qualifications (MRPQ), allowing doctors who qualified in other EU countries to readily work in the UK.
- **Maintain cooperation on health protection and security** – to maximise the ability to respond to emerging health threats, such as any future waves of COVID-19, the UK must seek to negotiate a partnership agreement with ECDC (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control) that facilitates information sharing, coordination and access to alert systems. This should include continued access to the Early Warning Response System (EWRS), which is vital for coordinating pandemic preparedness and response.
- **Ensure access to medicines** – this should include a formal agreement for continued participation in EMA (European Medicines Agency) assessments for medicines approvals, and for mutual recognition schemes for medical devices to avoid delays or disruption to the flow of essential health supplies into the UK. Additionally, the UK should negotiate a formal agreement within the Euratom framework to facilitate a secure and consistent supply of radioisotopes, which have a range of important applications in medicine. It is also important that the implementation of the Northern Ireland/Ireland Protocol does not result in delays to the importation of vital medicines to Northern Ireland from Great Britain.
- **Promote medical research** – to maximise collaboration between researchers in the UK and EU, the UK should negotiate a formal agreement to maintain access to EU funding programs, ensure alignment with clinical trials regulations and secure the participation of the MHRA in clinical trials that cross the EU and UK.
- **Maintain reciprocal healthcare arrangements** – to ensure continued access to healthcare for both EU and UK citizens, the government must secure the UK's continued participation in existing EU/EEA reciprocal healthcare arrangements, or the establishment of comparable

alternatives.

- **Facilitate cross-border healthcare** – this is of particular importance on the island of Ireland, where ensuring that EEA nationals living in an EEA country can deliver care in the UK is essential for the continued provision of cross-border healthcare between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.
- **Safeguard the NHS** – it is imperative that a future agreement does not restrict – via liberalisation of the health and social care sectors or investor protection mechanisms – future Governments’ freedom to develop the NHS towards a more collaborative model and regulate to protect public health.