UK Trade & Business Commission

Free Trade Agreements: Canada and the US

8th September 2022

Hilary Benn MP

Good morning and good afternoon, can I welcome you all to this Zoom meeting of the UK Trade and Business Commission and we've got two evidence sessions this afternoon looking at the UK's trading relationships first of all with Canada and then secondly with the United States of America. And in a moment I'm going to ask the witnesses who are appearing in our first panel to briefly introduce themselves, however I would just like to say before we begin that we are all deeply concerned about the news of the Queen's health and we obviously await further developments, but I know that all of us would wish to extend our thoughts and our prayers to Her Majesty and to the members of her family who are gathering at Balmoral as we speak.

So, if I could turn to our witnesses, could I begin with you Goldy, just to introduce yourself.

Goldy Hyder

Well good morning and good afternoon to you all and I too wanted just to add on behalf of the people that I represent our well wishes to Her Majesty for a full recovery. I had the privilege of working with over 175 of Canada's finest leaders running the largest corporations, so I know leadership when I see it and I think what the Queen has embodied over the course of her reign is certainly exemplary in terms of having the gold standard of what leadership really is and I look forward to her returning quickly and strongly in that role. I represent as I just mentioned the Business Council of Canada, which is an organisation that's over 45 years' old, it has currently 175 CEOs of the largest companies in our country, many of which are global, many of which are strong proponents and champions of trade as you would imagine. They have about 50% of the Toronto Stock Exchange in their MarCap value and about two million direct employees and a multiple we say of another three to four of the supply chain for the small and medium enterprises as they are known here that we're very proud to be a partner with, again grateful for the opportunity to be here with you and particularly the Canadian Government official Colin and my friend Andrew.

Hilary Benn MP

Thank you very much indeed. Andrew.

Andrew Casey

Well thank you and good morning, good afternoon, I'll echo the sentiments regarding the Queen, we wish her a speedy recovery. I am Andrew Casey, President CEO of BIOTECanada, BIOTECanada is the national association representing the biotech industry, our members are a vast array of companies, we include all the large multinational pharmaceutical companies but most of our members are early stage biotech companies that have an idea, an innovation that they're trying to move forward to solve for a world that's going to ten billion people and we need to change the way we live ours lives, the way we manufacture, grow and heal, and those innovations are what's going to allow it to do so and that's the industry that I represent. For those of you in the UK who are familiar with the UK Bio Industry Association, we are essentially that counterpart to that organisation in Canada.

Hilary Benn MP

Thank you very much. And Colin.

Colin Barker

Yes hello, my name is Colin Barker I'm the Senior Trade Commissioner her at the High Commission of Canada to the United Kingdom. I've been here in post for just over a year and of course it's been a busy year as we've climbed out of the pandemic and with business is starting to return to a more normal pace of things, so we're starting to see lots of interest as we negotiate a new free trade agreement with the UK on behalf of Canadian business to come and visit the UK and so that's a very positive devolvement over the past year. So, I look forward to speaking to you today, so thank you for the invitation.

Hilary Benn MP

Well thank you very much indeed to all of you. We have very limited time, we've allocated about five minutes to members of the commission to ask question, don't all three of you feel under an obligation to answer all of the questions and colleagues may direct particular ones to each of you. I think we ought to crack straight on and I was going to come Alison if that's alright to you for the first question, Alison.

Alison Williams

Thank you. And welcome to our witnesses. So, the first question, what importance does Canada place on developing a trading relationship with the UK? If we could go to Goldy first, please.

Goldy Hyder

Well thank you for the question and I think the short answer is a great importance, today this is going to be a theme that will come in these responses. Businesses have frozen in many ways around the world, capital is frozen because of the geopolitical risks that are mounting around the world and we're all looking for what we all crave which is stable, predictable, regulatory and political environments and including the importance of social cohesion which is again fraying at the seems in many parts of the world, democracies included which is shocking when we think about it. And so, we want to make sure we find that predictability. United Kingdom offers us a history of being in the Commonwealth, of already being in trade agreements, the continuity agreements that's in place today allows us a framework on which to build and finalise, we feel expeditiously, a full pledge trade agreement. There is no question that the data is quite strong in terms of where you are, the third largest market, I'll make sure I get this all right here, but United Kingdom remains Canada's third largest merchandise market for exports with almost just shy of £11 billion, it is second largest destination for Canadian services exports at just under £4 billion last year. It's also the fifth largest recipient of Canadian direct investment abroad which is not a bad place to be given how many countries there are in the world, another £2 billion that's gone in. And so the amount of FDI that's available, foreign direct investment, Canada/UK was the third largest source for FDI flows into our country as well, so it's a two-way relationship, this is not a one-way street, and we think that it is a foundation upon which we can build and a trade agreement would give you the stability and predictability that I just spoke about to provide us that long-term view.

Alison Williams

Great, thank you. Can I go to Colin now please?

Colin Barker

Sure, thank you very much. I was going to quote some statistics but Goldy beat me to it and I think that underlines statistics are important though for underlining the strength of the relationship, so in fact the UK as was mentioned is our third most important trading partner and interestingly you know we've never had a free trade agreement with the UK, a bilateral one, it's always either been through the EU or some other arrangements with the WTO, so a true bilateral free trade agreement between Canada and the UK is an interesting opportunity for us as very like-minded partners on a lot of issues to perhaps do some interesting things together. Of course we have a very good starting position with our continuity agreement which was based on our agreement with the EU, so we have a very good starting point and so that affords us the time to maybe look at some areas where we can go further together, incorporate new developments certainly around digital trade and other areas where perhaps we can go further and do some innovative things that will be perhaps exportable around the world. So, I think that's the opportunity that we have before us.

Alison Williams

Great, thank you. And Andrew I don't know if there's anything you want to add from your particular sector?

Andrew Casey

You correctly note that I'm going to be a bit more narrowly focused, but I'll pick up on a little bit what Goldy said which is around capital, because capital in our sector comes in sort of three forms, there's intellectual capital and intellectual property, there's investment capital and there's talent, people. And those are all in three very high demand at this particular point as a result of Covid, and the biotech industry when you think about the vaccines and therapeutics that came out, everybody is investing very heavily in their domestic capacity creating enormous pool in the domestic sense, so anything that creates greater flow of capital in those three areas I think is going to be essentially very important for certainly the Canadian sector. We're not big enough as a country to sort of do it on our own so we're highly dependent on bringing in from the outside and I think any sort of bilateral agreement that works to support that is going to be really important for this sector.

Alison Williams

Great, thank you. Back to you Hilary.

Hilary Benn MP

Thank you very much indeed Alison. Over to Geoff Mackey, Geoff.

Geoff Mackey

Thank you very much Chair, good morning, good afternoon. I wonder would our witnesses for this session like to start by commenting on the current status of negotiations from their perspective between the UK and Canada and if they would move on briefly and just touch on the potential growth areas that they see in our trading relationships, that would be appreciated. Could we start with Colin please?

Colin Barker

Sure, thank you. Yes so, I can give you the basic facts of where things stand and then my co-witnesses perhaps can add some of the areas that they follow more closely. So, we have had three rounds of negotiations and, sorry we are about to have three rounds of negotiations, so the third round will be actually happening next week here in London, I'm getting ahead of myself, so we've had two rounds, third round next week here in London. Things are progressing well. As I noted we already have a very good starting point, so unlike Australia and New Zealand where the UK was negotiating from scratch with both of those partners, we have a very good starting point already. So we can make some quick progress and then as I say turn to some of these other areas where we might want to go further and do more, that includes the digital space, some inclusive trade elements on gender and indigenous peoples in Canada, the movement of people to support R&D in the science and technology sphere, so these are all things that we are … innovative things that we are looking at perhaps doing in this agreement going forward. So we envisage that we are on track, we gave ourselves a two year window from the start of negotiations last April, we think we're well on track for that, both sides are eager to find ways that we can maybe even in fact expedite that process and so already plans are in the works to hold subsequent rounds of negotiation later this Fall and then again in the Winter. So, a clear plan for the negotiating sessions has been laid out. So that's a bit of the nuts and bolts and I'm happy to turn over to my co-witnesses.

Geoff Mackey

Colin, thank you very much. Andrew?

Andrew Casey

Yes, I'll go right to what's important, I think when I look at the objectives the focus on investment and the protection and growth of investment that would include the protection of intellectual property, I think there are some important objectives. Also, the support or at least the promotion of small and medium sized enterprises, I think that's another key element when I think of our sector that's the bulk of our industry which is the SMEs. So, I think those areas of focus and then sort of the science and research and development focus as well, I think those are the areas that I would look at from a biotech perspective that are the most important.

Geoff Mackey

Thank you very much, and Goldy, current status and way forward.

Goldy Hyder

Yes, let me just say that again business is looking for that stability and predictability that I spoke about and when we see the political will align with sort of the business world to get this done, we're encouraged. What we would say of course is no trade deal is ever perfect and so let's not make perfect the enemy of the good, if you can get a really good deal let's do a really good deal. However, let's also make sure that we provide the venues, so the openings if you will, we have that in the US MCA, the agreement with the United States here and Mexico where you can revisit where we are in six years or eight years or 12 years, so that we're not handcuffed to a deal today that's supposed to work for the next 25 years, we all know enough that the pace of change is so much today that you don't know what you don't know and it's going to show up in five years or ten years, you're going to say well what do we do about this, we didn't know about this five years ago when we did the trade deal, so ensure that you get a good deal, that you maintain some flexibility so that modernisation is not something you do every 25 years but it's something that you can visit and have a vehicle or mechanism by which you can do that.

Secondly I would say that in any trade agreement in today's context, in any environment we're operating in we're finding too much politics with the greatest of respect is getting in the way of the predictable regulatory frameworks that businesses need to make not short-term investments, long-term investments, and so we can't be held hostage if I can say by the political situations when elections happen and things change, we should be able to rely on conventional wisdom that if something was good and something was working it would stay. Today in some countries the day there is a new Government, that day black becomes white and white becomes black and you cannot operate in that kind of an environment. So we want to make sure that there's predictability and stability in all aspects of the regulatory frameworks that are being negotiated in these trade agreements and the depoliticization of that we think is an important element to say here are the rules, this is how we're going to administer them, this is how we're going to resolve conflict and we're going to get out of your way to let you do what you do, which is bring about investment, bring about economic wealth and bring about jobs for your constituents and others.

Last point I just want to make specifically is the world desperately needs three things today, critical minerals, energy and food and Canada happens to have all of them and you have some of them and so we have an opportunity here to work together to make sure that our countries are building the infrastructure, the trade enabling infrastructure that allows products to get to market, we have some work to do on that front here in Canada and we would benefit from hearing more from our trading partners as we just did from the German Chancellor and others about the need to make sure that Canada can actually export those resources that are in demand by other countries around the world. Colleagues have mentioned R&D and health and others, I would just add infrastructure in addition to the things that I've mentioned and the last point is the talent capabilities of the Canada and the United Kingdom's citizens, the people, to help innovate because innovation is going to be extremely key to the issue of our time which is climate change and I think all our citizens in Canada and in the United Kingdom would like to see leadership by our businesses as much as they would from our political folks on how we're going to help resolve that issue and make progress on it.

Geoff Mackey

Thank you very much, a smorgasbord of opportunity, back to you thank you Chair.

Hilary Benn MP

Geoff thank you very much indeed. I'm now going to turn to Charles Rose, Charles.

Charles Rose

Yes, thank you Hilary. We've heard there's a myriad of opportunities here but what are Canada's main priorities for a trade deal with the UK? What particular trading goods and services does Canada believe is important to develop? I wonder if we could start that one off with Colin, please.

Colin Barker

Great, thank you very much. I would also direct you to in fact a handy document that the Government has tabled in Parliament in February which actually outlines Canada's objectives for the negotiations so that is available publicly, that document was published as part of our process for entering into a negotiation. But I would pull out of that, it deals with all the various areas so it's quite comprehensive, but I would maybe pull out a couple of examples just to highlight for you. So, I think on rules of origin in particular as I say we have a very good agreement we're starting from, but I think you know our experience in the North American context is that when you're dealing with economies you want to integrate them more seamlessly, the rules of origin are a very important question. And as the UK is trading with both us and the EU and as we are trading with both the UK and EU, I think this question of cumulation of rules of origin is an important one, so that's something I think we are looking to be flexible on and to encourage the ability of goods to move quite easily between the three jurisdictions.

One other thing to note we haven't mentioned yet is SMEs, so SMEs are actually the backbone of both of our economies and we want to encourage more SMEs to export, SMEs that export are more profitable, they pay their employees more, they're more innovating, they're more sustainable, so more able to adjust to economic fluctuations, so really encouraging SMEs to use the agreement, so we want to come up with sort of innovative ways that we can allow SMEs to see themselves in the agreement, see the rules that really help them to export and find partners overseas. So that's another area where I think we could perhaps do something that's a little bit more innovative than we've seen previously.

So those are two quick examples for you.

Charles Rose

Thank you, Colin. Andrew, I wonder if you could look at this from your slightly narrower perspective and make a comment.

Andrew Casey

You know Colin talked about the SMEs, obviously that's a big part of our membership and certainly a big part of the industry. I think the other one that I've seen in both sets of objectives is the encouragement of investment and the protection of that investment and I'll read between the lines, the protection of the investment is intellectual property rights and making sure that intellectual property is protected, because that's essentially when you invest you want to make sure that you've got a guarantee that that intellectual property is going to sort of be protected and we've seen certainly how competitive this space can be in the course of Covid in terms of sharing of IP and the risks that's there for investors if the IP is sort of handed out to other jurisdictions without any sort of care or caution. So happy to dive into that at some other point but I think the identification of investment and its protection and encouragement, I think that that's another important objective for the trade deal.

Charles Rose

Thanks, and Goldy, do you have anything more to add to this?

Goldy Hyder

Well, I would just say ditto to both my colleagues here, certainly agree with what's been said. The only thing I would just add to this is more of the style issue which is more collaboration with the private sector and government and government agencies I think would go a long way. I think we're at an era where citizens are expecting us to work together and there's too much politics that comes in the way of someone needs to be the bad guy, everybody talks about the SMEs, who gives birth to those SMEs, where do they come from, what kind of an ecosystem exists if you don't have the large businesses that you have in the United Kingdom and we have here in Canada. So, it's not an either/or it's an and. And we need to work together to make sure that all of those folks can drive and that we can bring forward the values that we have and the integrity with which we do business, large or small.

And then more specifically on the sector, I just want to continue to reiterate the importance and the opportunities around climate change, it's important that people of the United Kingdom and here in Canada, the minerals are going to be a very key piece of this, you need to make sure you have access to these minerals. We're asking people to buy electrical vehicles that have batteries that contain cobalt that are basically available in China or in Ghana or Congo I believe, that's it. So, what are we going to do if that supply of cobalt is restricted in any way, shape or form as we're seeing the weaponization of energy in Russia today. So we've got to be smart about this and we've got to make sure that we don't look at this as competitiveness between us, we need to collaborate, we need to cooperate so that we can take on those who are trying to challenge the way in which we want to see the world evolve, and I think that climate change is going to be one of those areas where tremendous opportunity to work together, to share the resources together, to build that so-called 'near shoring' and 'friend shoring' of supply chains and particularly the infrastructure that's going to be needed because in many ways the infrastructure is being restricted by special interests and other groups who basically don't want to see the use of the energy, who don't want to see the use of the critical minerals and stuff. We have to be mindful of that and that's going to take political will, we're there to partner and collaborate with you but at the end of the day many of you here and others are the decision makers on these issues.

Charles Rose

Thank you, I think that's given us a whole geopolitical dimension to it in addition to the individual agreements, but I'd like to hand back to the Chair now.

Hilary Benn MP

Charles, thank you very much indeed. Paul, Paul Blomfield.

Paul Blomfield MP

Thanks Hilary and thanks again to all our guests for being with us today. Colin referred to the starting point for the negotiations being the current rollover agreement that we share from our time in the EU. Obviously that depends on continued alignment with retained EU law and I just wondered if you could each reflect on how important that's going to be going forward for Canada in the negotiations, given that it's now become a bit of a point of discussion within the UK, and perhaps I could start with Goldy because you talked about the need for stability and predictability.

Goldy Hyder

Well look I'm not in the business of opining on the politics of these trade agreements and some of the sensitive issues that I know that all of you are going to have to deal with, so I'll leave that really for the EU and United Kingdom to resolve some of the issues that I think you're alluding to. What I will say is that we see opportunity to really work with the United Kingdom on the digital trade relationship for example, Andrew has talked about the depending …

Paul Blomfield MP

Goldy, can I press you because I'm not looking for that wider opinion in terms of EU/UK relations, but the discussion a moment ago was about the alignment between, or the value of the EU, the UK and Canada as a sort of triangular market, so it's this issue of specifically how important the alignment issue is in terms of business.

Goldy Hyder

Well obviously, you know alignment goes a long way towards predictability and stability, but is it a mandatory consideration, no, we have trade deals today in Canada that are different, they are not all the same and they are going to be different. We think CEDA [ph 0:24:05.4] and for that matter the TPP, the CPTPP which of course, the United Kingdom is interested in joining and we're strong advocates for having frankly any country that can meet the standards of the CPTPP should be welcomed into it and we're working I think to help bring about your entry into the TPP and that's not the same deal as CEDA is. So deals are not necessarily going to be the same but would it be helpful to have a construct particularly in Europe and the United Kingdom that is more aligned, I think it would be in businesses' interests to see that, it might even be in your interests to see that but as I said I reserve that, I defer that to all of you to decide. Business wants as much predictability and stability that it can operate under and if alignment brings that about so be it, if it doesn't just make sure that the rules are clear so that we know how to navigate them and if disputes arise, we want to make sure that the dispute mechanisms exist that help us to resolve them.

Paul Blomfield MP

That's great, thanks very much. Andrew, from your sector.

Andrew Casey

Yeah, it might be a bit above my pay grade this question but I would echo Goldy's comments, there might be some advantage when you can learn from other jurisdictions what didn't go well and so you can say OK this one is not working in CEDA or this one is not working in the Canada/US/Mexico free trade and so we can try something new. I think if there was an area that I would explore it would be in the regulatory space which is when you look at regulatory oversight, particularly in the biologics medicines, being as nimble and effective and efficient as possible because you're dealing with novel therapeutics, novel vaccines that require great expertise from a regulatory standpoint, if you can get out ahead of that and understand what's coming and there's a lot of regulatory cooperation that's taking place between the UK and Canada right now from a regulatory perspective, I think looking at that as an example might be a place to find some strength.

Paul Blomfield MP

Thanks very much indeed, and Colin, how do you feel about it? I think you're on mute. No, I don't know if everybody else in in the same situation, I seem to have lost your sound.

Hilary Benn MP

No, unfortunately Colin, we still can't hear you, your microphone doesn't appear as muted, but we can't hear you. I wonder whether if you dropped out and re-joined that might fix the problem. Will you do that? OK right. Thank you very much for doing that. Well, why don't we, Paul was there anything else you wanted to ask?

Paul Blomfield MP

No, I'm keen to get Colin's view on that.

Hilary Benn MP

Yes, I'm sure you are.

Paul Blomfield MP

So perhaps if we move on and we can come back to that before we close.

Hilary Benn MP

Yes, well we will definitely do that. So, onto Stephen Farry.

Stephen Farry MP

Thank you, Hilary, and good morning I should say to all of our witnesses. I just want to ask the question about what Canada expects from a trade deal with the UK, to do so with reference to the Australia trade deal and I appreciate that the profile of the economy in Canada and Australia are radically different but nonetheless just to see to what extent that provides some sort of a template, albeit there is a degree of controversy in our own Parliament and across the country in relation to that deal. So how do you, what expectations do you have for a trade deal with the UK and Canada through the lens of the Australian comparison. I'll maybe start with Andrew and then go to Goldy.

Andrew Casey

I'm not overly familiar with the Australian deal, but just on the surface, look Australia is very similar to Canada in many ways, particularly when I think of the biotech industry our sectors are almost identical and very similar in size and so I would see the exact same advantages where investment, investors and ideas and talent are inherently mobile, they are tourists, they are roaming around the world, they are looking for the best place to go, the safest place to go, you need to put out your welcome mat, you need to accommodate them, you need to reward them to grow and so any sort of deal like this, and I assume the same thing happens with the UK and Australia, is going to create channels and put out a welcome mat and those tourists are going to go to those places where they have the greatest advantage. And so, I think anything that facilitates that is welcome certainly for our sector because it is so mobile.

Stephen Farry MP

Super, thank you Andrew. Over to you Goldy.

Goldy Hyder

Yes, I certainly agree with that. I think the opportunity here is to go further, if we're able to really use the bilateral negotiation to do more in certain elements than even CEDA was able to do, I think it would be a competitive advantage for both of us to be able to do that. I think in areas like digital trade which has been mentioned numerous times today there would be tremendous opportunity to do. The other thing I would say to you just to change the frame a little bit is to say maybe the United Kingdom benefits from having a little more alignment with the North American trade agreement as much as it might from the CEDA trade agreement, maybe there is opportunities for us to share with new things that are working well and maybe not working so well in the agreement that we have here in North America. But if you were to borrow the best practices if I can say from your negotiations which your USMCA was just a matter of a few years ago, there may be some learnings. For example, I'll point to one thing, we have in the USMCA agreement which in Canada is called CUSMA by the way, CUSMA for the purposes of …

Stephen Farry MP

Of course, absolutely.

Goldy Hyder

I'm calling it the USMCA, there is a mechanism in there that's called 'the competitiveness chapter' and the competitiveness chapter is largely naked to be honest with you, it's a bone that we in the private sector have grabbed onto and said to our trade negotiators and our political folks, let us as business communities work together in the Canada, US and Mexico to help you flush out what a competitive North America looks like from a regulatory perspective and beyond, so perhaps that's something that we can put into our chapters and say what does a competitive Canada/UK agreement look like that allows more capital to flow in and more talent to flow in, for more procreation, for more collaboration to occur on some of the issues that I mentioned. So, I don't think we should box ourselves in by geography and say let's just look at what CEDA has done, let's look more broadly, what are the best practices and yes, what somebody said earlier, where are the don't go zones because it didn't work out in other trade agreements, why would we do that again.

Stephen Farry MP

Sure, thanks very much Goldy. And over to Colin, just want to check did you catch the question OK?

Colin Barker

Yes, thank you I hope you can hear me.

Stephen Farry MP

Perfect.

Colin Barker

OK good, sorry about that I'm afraid when there's a technical difficulty I get out of my element quite quickly, so on Australia, so yeah, we've noted how you know we hope to do things together that could be innovative that other people might want to look at when they're negotiating their agreements, so I'm not going to lie and say we don't look at other agreements and see what's gone on there, of course everyone does. And as the UK is embarking on an ambitious agenda of negotiating obviously the Department of International Trade is learning as they go and incorporating new elements as new partners come to the table because every partner obviously has different priorities and different constituencies and publics that they're trying to represent, so that's just a process of evolution as you negotiate with other partners, so you know in Australia we were heartened to see some interesting movement on movement of people, which is something that we're always very interested in, in allowing not permanent immigration but the movement of business persons and others to facilitate trade and investment and research and development. We think that's good for both sides. And in New Zealand in fact we saw that there was some work done on indigenous trade, so that's very heartening for us in terms of some of our priorities, I'm sure there are things that we will suggest that maybe are new or different for the UK to grapple with but that's just par for the course, but I would say that just to go back to my point that obviously again we are starting from a different spot than Australia and New Zealand so you know our trade is 98% tariff free already, so you know we are looking at some other more add ons to that, you know the basics of goods trade that will enhance that we hope through other rules and other chapters. So, I guess that's what I would say about that.

Stephen Farry MP

Sure, OK thanks very much everyone and back to you Chair, thank you.

Hilary Benn MP

Stephen thank you very much indeed. Can I go back to Paul Blomfield? So, you can put your question to Colin.

Paul Blomfield MP

OK just to briefly recap on the question, the continuity agreement that we have Colin, obviously was negotiated into it was the UK's continued alignment with EU retained law. How important is that going to be in the trade negotiations going forward?

Colin Barker

Yes, thank you. So, I was going to say I was sort of in close agreement with what my other co-witnesses have offered, you know we can negotiate different agreements with different jurisdictions, it's the rules of the agreement that we negotiate and then each party implements that in their own domestic law as they see fit, however their systems operate. And so you know it's the rules can be quite similar from agreement to agreement but often they are slightly different, but that might mean that a party has to make a tweak to a regulation or to a process or a policy or sometimes a law to make that in force in their jurisdiction, it depends on how significant the change is from one agreement to another. Of course, our effort is always to try and negotiate within a certain parameter that limits as much as possible the need for a lot of legislative change because that is obviously difficult, sometimes to do every time you negotiate a new agreement. So, if you can be creative as you're negotiating to ensure that you're operating within your existing legislative framework perhaps it just means that you do some policy changes for other sort of things like that, that are a bit simpler to do.

But all that to say, I think you know as has been said we have a multitude of agreements with different jurisdictions, I think the point was made it's important that the rules are clear for business because they are the ones who then have to use these agreements, and so that's where a lot of our focus has been over the last few years is we negotiate these agreements, it's wonderful, they're great, but we want to make sure business uses them and we want to make sure they're useful. And so we are starting to spend more time working with business and working internally to figure out how do we make sure companies understand what the benefits are, what the opportunities are, large companies obviously have the resources and the staff and the teams to do that work, again it sometimes is the smaller and medium sized enterprises that need that additional help to understand what the benefits are, how they can take advantage of those. So, there's the agreement but then there's maybe a whole suite of internal domestic programmes and policies you want to implement to ensure that the benefits are flowing to your business community. So, I think that's sort of the angle we take on it, is now you know the agreement is one thing but it's not enough, you need to then go the next step to make sure that the benefits truly flow, and your companies are using it.

Paul Blomfield MP

OK thanks very much indeed and I'm glad you were able to get your sound back.

Hilary Benn MP

Paul, thank you very much indeed. Can I now turn to Layla Moran, Layla over to you?

Layla Moran MP

Thank you, Hilary, thank you to our panellists, it's much appreciated you being here today. So some of you have already touched on aspects of this question so forgive me if it's sort of treading old ground but maybe you want to add to it, so I'm going to ask you now to take your crystal balls out and we're looking firmly into the future for how these negotiations are going to progress moving forwards and the question is simply how do you think this is going to pan out between the two countries. Perhaps I could start with Goldy.

Goldy Hyder

Great well thank you for the question. Look I think it says a lot that when as you would know Canadian trade negotiators helped trained British trade negotiators on doing trade agreements that the level of relationship when you go over and actually help your competition know how to take you on, and so there's a lot of goodwill here and we need to build on that. I think the accelerated pace of trade negotiations that are taking place here in Canada and around the world and you've been very aggressive in the move with Australia, I was just in India a couple of weeks ago and met with the same Minister that is working on our trade deal, your trade deal, there's a lot of excitement there about concluding that in the coming months. So, there is a momentum here that I think you want to build off of. I would like to just underscore the importance of the collaboration message that I've delivered on strong Government and private sector will. If you put those two things together the people of the United Kingdom, people of Canada know what to do. We will lead the way in leveraging the agreements that you bring about to make the investments, not just in resources but in human resources particularly in infrastructure and things that are going to make both our countries quite competitive. I would also just say the importance of the CPTPP here, it's a very good agreement, it's probably a gold star agreement in terms of standards and getting you to help you conclude that agreement I think would be a win-win-win for all those involved and it would just further United Kingdom's standing around the world in terms of being a reliable trade partner because if we can do a deal with Canada, you can do a deal with Australia, you can do a deal with India and you can do a deal with the CPTPP which gets you into so many other countries at the same time I think that would bode very well for our own bilateral relationship as much as it would for the multilateral relationships that we're both involved in.

Layla Moran MP

Thank you, and Goldy do you see any points of friction coming up?

Goldy Hyder

Well as I said, look everybody has self-interest, there is no question that even Canada doesn't come to the trade table with clean hands, we all have our politics, we all have our special interests and our considerations that take place, those are what they are, they're different in your country than they are in mine, they may be the same in some cases and we know for sure there are certain things off the table in some of these trade negotiations, partly because the politics as I said drives them. This is why I've said earlier let's not let perfect be the enemy of the good, let's make progress where we can, get some stability, predictability, move forward, build momentum and demonstrate to our businesses that each of our respective countries are safe, reliable places to bring in direct investment that can then create the jobs and the economic growth that both our countries desire.

Layla Moran MP

Thank you. Andrew, how about yourself?

Andrew Casey

Goldy is spot on, there is always going to be areas of interest, self-interest that are going to come up, whether it's Cheddar cheese or whatever it is going to be, but it's going to be something, we know that. But you're going to get through it so I'm optimistic if you're going to ask about my crystal ball, I'm very optimistic and what I might do is actually borrow from my previous incarnation which before joining BIOTECanada I was with the Forest Products Association of Canada which was the industry responsible for lumber, pulp and paper and I remember we were signing a free trade agreement with Jordan which seemed like a really small deal and it really was, it was small potatoes certainly in the construct of the global scenario for Canada, the trading interest, but there was one company in the middle of British Columbia that supplied cement bags to Jordan and that trade deal was going to open up that channel and keep that flow going and that alone was going to keep a small town in British Columbia because it was the life blood, economic life blood for that community in British Columbia, so every deal I think that advances greater trade and flow of goods and services in our industry and investment in talent, I think is going to be positive and I have every reason to believe that given the history of our two nations that we'll get to a very positive outcome on this one.

Layla Moran MP

All very positive, Colin.

Colin Barker

Well, I'm certainly not going to change the mood so I'm going to also be very optimistic, as I noted off the top, we've set ourselves a rather ambition two-year timeline to get this concluded, I think we're well on our way. I think we've seen a changeover of Ministers here of course in the last few days so we'll see what the new direction or new impetus comes from new folks and new positions, but I think every indication is it's full steam ahead on all of these fronts, so you know again I remain positive that the timeline will hold. And as noted, I think you know we have a real opportunity to do a deal together and I think it's important, I always try and make clear that you know these agreements are also about us doing things together, it's not just us exporting to you or you investing abroad or vice versa, it's about our companies partnering someone bringing a really piece of good tech to the table, someone else bringing a great service network to the table and then taking on the world and exporting that good and service around the world, and I think there's a lot of opportunity for Canadian and UK companies to do that in a whole host of areas. So that's really the benefit of these agreements is these companies being able to find one another and then grow and expand and become world leaders.

So that's really, I think the potential and I am also very optimistic and hopeful that we will conclude quickly and then as I say the hard work begins about getting our companies knowledgeable about it, what the opportunities are and seizing them, so you know the work doesn't stop once we conclude at the table. So yeah, so again I think the sky is the limit.

Layla Moran MP

Fantastic, thank you so much all three of you, back to you Hilary.

Hilary Benn MP

Layla thank you very much indeed. Now Hywel Williams is next.

Hywel Williams MP

Thank you Hilary, there's been quite a bit of noise over the Summer, political noise I suppose about agreements between the UK and individual states of the United States, for example there have been I understand a memorandum of understanding with both Indiana and North Carolina, I have to say I'm slightly sceptical of the value of these as many people are, but perhaps can you tell me are there direct bilateral agreements between individual Canadian provinces or territories and other foreign countries or foreign governments and if there are such things do they diverge from Canadian free trade agreements or are they subsidiary to those. How does that work? I just wondered if perhaps Colin could enlighten me.

Colin Barker

Yes so, the answer is very simple in our constitutional arrangement only the Federal Government can negotiate international treaties so it's the Federal Government that negotiates international treaties. Now it doesn't stop a province from doing an MOU is not quite a treaty, you can have MOUs on all sorts of different areas of cooperation and best intentions but they don't necessarily reach the status of a binding international treaty, they're more of a symbol of a desire to work together in a particular area that both sides perhaps bring a particular skill to or strength to. So that's possible, but in terms of a binding international agreement it is Federal Government. But I will say that we work very closely with our provinces as part of this process and in fact next week the negotiation I believe five or six provinces are sending people to come to London to not participate at the table necessarily but to be here and to get debriefs from the negotiating team each day on progress to feed in information, if it's helpful and relevant. So, we work extremely closely with the provinces on trade agreement negotiations, and this is no exception.

Hywel Williams MP

Thank you, I don't know if there's anything further to say about that other than I should explain that I'm an MP for Plaid Cymru the national party in Wales and we tend to have an interest in these matters specific.

Andrew Casey

So technically Colin has got the answer, I would only add that again from my experience from the lumber industry is that individual interests of certain industries can actually be your problem, so they are very effective from a lobbying standpoint with the Government to protect their self-interests, and so even though you may have a free trade agreement or an arrangement that can often get the stick in the spokes type of thing.

Goldy Hyder

I would just add, and you saw me chuckling when the question was asked because I thought we were heading in a direction of why Canada has inter-provincial trade barriers given our unabashed champions not being traded around the world but welcome to Canada, we're still working on that one. I would just say that in addition to what my colleagues have said recognise that resources are really jurisdiction of the provinces and so while commitments and trade agreements are being made around the world they are being done in consultation with our provinces and our premiers and that's where as Andrew has said sometimes you just simply run up against you know effective lobbies and in one industry or another that wants to be a little bit more protectious [sic] than perhaps any of us would like. But provinces are starting, I think it's a very good question, I don't know if you want to do 50 trade agreements if you can do one, in the US or ten plus three here. Provinces are becoming a little bit more specific in their needs as they speak, particularly for example now on talent, immigration agreements are in place with provinces to allow them to select a restricted number, I'd like to see the number go much higher than they are but provinces can say look I need 20,000 people who can do X, Y or Z so when you're recruiting them please keep that in mind I want them to come directly into my province. So, I think the diversity of a country like Canada and of the United Kingdom sometimes it is good to hone in on where specific issues in province can be successfully resolved.

Hywel Williams MP

I don't want to intrude in the civil politics, I was just thinking about Quebec and France actually as well. But perhaps I'd better leave that there.

Goldy Hyder

Well, I didn't mind making the point as you can tell be it's a source of frustration for us here in Canada.

Hilary Benn MP

Great, Hywel thank you very much indeed. Goldy, you said a moment ago, you described the CPTPP as a gold standard trade agreement, could you just tell us why you say that, how you would describe its gold standard nature?

Goldy Hyder

Well, I think the bar for entry is higher than you will find in most other trade agreements. The expectations are for compliance at a higher standard than in some of the other trade agreements. Look, I'll be candid, I've been as candid as I can be throughout your questioning. Even the recent experience that we had with the USMCA, it didn't fulfil our expectations and our ambitions in terms of how far we really needed to go to truly modernise an agreement that hadn't been touched for decades. Business is looking for that ability to be responsive to the issues of our time, when those agreements were negotiated we weren't in a global crisis around war and energy shortage that Europe is about to experience, or in fact you're about to experience as well unfortunately, so the game is changing quickly and so we need to make sure that there is a certain amount of flexibility that allows us to be responsive to the emerging issues of our time and I think that while these deals have gold standards in terms of their entre, in terms of their compliance, in terms of their dispute resolutions we also want to see some built-in elasticity to how it is that businesses and governments can work together to respond to things that we didn't see coming, the so called black swans.

Hilary Benn MP

Thank you very much indeed, that's really helpful. Since you mentioned dispute resolution this is a subject of quite a lot of debate between the UK and the EU at the moment over the Northern Ireland Protocol and it took some time to work out how that was going to be dealt with on the level playing field provisions. What would you say are the characteristics, and this is for all of you if you want to offer a comment, the characteristics of a good dispute resolution system, given that trade deals are increasingly complex, cover areas of trade, not just physical goods but services where technology is changing and moving fast, and how one ensure that the dispute resolution mechanism can command the confidence of all of the parties that have signed up to the agreement, I don't know if anyone would like to comment on that?

Goldy Hyder

Well as the one who mentioned it many times maybe I'll go first, and Colin and Andrew can come in. Look, this is a critically important issue for the business community, at a time in which globalisation is being questioned, at a time in which trade itself is being questioned, at a time in which populism and again I'm trying to stay free from politics here but simplistic solutions to complex problems are being offered to our citizens, you get caught in some of that rhetoric you know and what the dispute mechanism is designed to do is hopefully recognise that organisations like the WTO, the originator and founder of it has walked away from being a point A judge [ph 0:52:11.5] you know to the dispute mechanism body there that's at the WTO, we can't have that kind of fragile infrastructure when the rules have been set and we count on the rules to be applied, so that's the first point. The second point is it's not so much getting the dispute mechanism right because as I said earlier, trade agreements have different components, different elements, different styles, different considerations, so do dispute mechanism resolutions, they're not all going to be the same. What matters is that they're honoured. We're currently in mechanisms where we have one dispute mechanism and they're not being honoured by the other side and you know I won't get into all the details here but they've certainly been well reported, that's a source of great frustration for countries and governments and the businesses that are affected by those, so it's less about which is the right model and more the whatever the model you've chosen make sure you honour the purpose of having a dispute settlement mechanism, which is to settle the dispute.

Hilary Benn MP

OK that is very clear. Andrew or Colin would either of you like to comment on this aspect of what we've been discussing.

Colin Barker

So, Andrew and I both have history in softwood lumber it seems, so we're well aware of the importance of effective dispute resolution mechanisms for resolving these things. So yes, I would just echo that you know as a medium power but one that's very reliant on open and free trade Canada has a very invested interest in ensuring that there are, there is a rules-based system, and everyone adheres to it. So, to that end it's very positive that the UK is taking an interest at the WTO in being part of work that's ongoing as part of the Ottawa group to look at the dispute resolution mechanism at the WTO, we welcome the UK's involvement in that and their interest in helping to resolve that. Because as has been pointed out it's very important that we have that reassurance that if that's needed that that system is available to us and resolves disputes as quickly as possible as well. So, there's perhaps things we can do together to improve it certainly, there's always room to improve these things including speed and other things, but yes, we do need these effective systems in place.

Hilary Benn MP

OK thank you very much and finally to you Andrew, is there anything you'd like to add on this?

Andrew Casey

No I mean maybe something, I completely agree with my colleagues I think they've said it all other than at a more philosophical level a trade agreement in and of itself is a way of avoiding disputes and so you're always going to have some disagreements within that deal, but I think getting the deal itself is probably the most effective way to sort of reduce the number of disputes.

Hilary Benn MP

OK, well that brings us now to the close of this session, on behalf of the members of the UK Trade and Business Commission can I thank all of you, Goldy, Andrew and Colin for giving up your extremely valuable time and for sharing your expertise and experience and advice with us which is of huge assistance to us as Commissioners as we continue to scrutinise the UK's new trading relationships around the world and can I wish you a good day, thank you very much indeed.

We're now, I may be advised, are we going to pause at all or are we going to be able to patch in our witnesses from our next session which is due to start in just under three minutes.

Secretariat

Hi Hilary, we are just awaiting a few of our witnesses for the next session so let's pause here momentarily while we wait for them to join.

Hilary Benn MP

OK so you have metaphorically time to make a cup of tea before we restart as soon as our three witnesses are with us. Thank you.

I can see two of our witnesses already here, welcome to you Emanuel and to you Nick and we are just waiting for Brendan to join us. And then we can get going.

Excellent, now so Julia are we ready to go?

Secretariat

Yes, we're ready to go.

Hilary Benn MP

Right well on behalf of the UK Trade and Business Commission can I welcome our three witnesses who have just joined us for our second panel this afternoon and this morning for some of you, looking at the UK's trade relationship with the United States of America. We've all got questions that we'd like to put, and time is quite tight so if you could keep your answers as succinct as possible and it won't necessarily be required that every one of you answer every single question. But with that could I ask our three guests to introduce themselves, can I start with you Brendan Boyle?

Brendan Boyle

Yes, it's a pleasure to be with you and with all of you who are here, I'm Congressman Brendan Boyle coming to you from my office here in Philadelphia in my eighth year, hard to believe, eighth year in Congress and currently running for what would be my ninth and tenth year, or a fifth term in the US House of Representatives. I serve on the House Ways and Means Committee which is kind of relevant to our conversation and specifically the Trade Subcommittee. I'm also part of the US delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and so a pretty important role but especially since February, so it's great to be with you.

Hilary Benn MP

Thank you very much for joining us. Next Emanuel.

Emanuel Adam

Thank you very much Chair and members and colleagues, it's a great pleasure to be on this panel and the session. I'm a dual British-German citizen, I have spent the last ten years working on behalf of British and American companies in the UK and have recently transitioned to look after the same constituency but from Washington DC. It's a great pleasure to be here, thank you.

Hilary Benn MP

Thank you. And last but not least, Nick.

Nick Crook

Thanks Chair and thanks everybody for inviting me to take part today. My name is Nick Crook, I'm Head of International at UNISON, for those of you who don't know UNISON we are the UK's largest trade union, we are a union mainly representing public service workers. One of the areas I lead on is trade and I'm also on one of the many advisory groups to the Department of International Trade, specifically on labour rights and labour chapters and in a previous existence I also helped lead on trade for the European Economic and Social Committee.

Hilary Benn MP

Well thank you very much indeed and to all three of you for giving up your valuable time. Right, I'm going to kick off with the first question, we're now six years on from the Brexit referendum and one of the things that those arguing for Brexit said was we're going to get a trade deal with the United States of America, and I'll perhaps start with you Congressman Boyle, so how's that going?

Brendan Boyle

I was on the BBC yesterday and I was responding to a question that I recall I had first gotten about six years ago on that programme and so I'm convinced that one of Dante's circles of hell is having to keep relitigating this issue over and over and over. Look, the US/UK relationship is important, the UK is our seventh biggest trading partner, about 5% of our trade, but then I should also mention just for perspective about 43% of the US trade comes with three countries, Canada, Mexico, and China. So when we're talking about scale and in terms of significance you can understand why even before President Biden took office if you look at the four years of the Trump administration, what did we do on the Ways and Means Committee, we spent a lot of time with what is essentially NAFTA2.0 [ph 1:03:40.1] updating that, because government loves acronyms, the latest acronym is USMCA, that is the trade agreement we were able to reach, and frankly was probably one of the few significant achievements of the Trump administration, not that he ever actually spoke about it. And then of course our rather tortured relationship with China. Those two by far take the most focus. In terms of where we are with the UK, when President Obama went over at David Cameron's invitation in 2016 and he used the line the UK would be at the back of the queue, I know some took that as a sordid insult, he didn't mean it as such it was just a reflection of reality and what our priorities are.

Finally I'll say I talked to the United States Trade Representative, Catherine Tye, who used to actually work for the Ways and Mean Committee, she's made it clear that any conversations with the UK are sort of kind of at the back right now and other things are taking priority, until we see the way that the UK finally resolves itself with the EU in relation to the Protocol.

Hilary Benn MP

Thank you very much. Emanuel?

Emanuel Adam

Thank you very much Chair. I think the fact that we are still speaking about a UK/US FDA after six years is a very good thing. When we look back at other negotiations that partners on both sides of the Atlantic have led, including the trade agreement between the US and the EU, the momentum didn't hold as long as it did for the US/UK conversation, and I think that's a very good sign. Secondly, six years is a long time but it's not necessarily a long time for trade deals, especially between two advanced economies. It takes time and trade deals are very complex. Nevertheless, I would say that there is still a good chance for such a trade deal to become reality and whether that be in a year or five years from now, given the continued momentum and political interests that we see on both sides of the Atlantic and given the opportunity that we have by indeed bringing the US and UK closer together. We may discuss in more detail as to what that looks like, but I think if there is a chance for a modern 21st Century trade deal that builds on what we have seen from the UK with its recent trade deals for the USMCA then I think the US/UK conversation would be at the forefront.

Hilary Benn MP

Thank you. And Nick?

Nick Crook

I think the representative made it very clear that you know negotiations started in May 2020 and there actually haven't been any meaningful negotiations since October that year, so you know two years in there haven't been any meaningful negotiations. I don't think that's particularly a reflection of the UK, I think that's where the Biden Administration is on trade in general, as the representative said there, you know they were far more interested in securing the new deal, the renegotiation of NAFTA and generally the Biden Administration isn't looking for particularly new trade agreements. And I have to say we already have a very high degree of trade between the UK and the US at the moment and we also have a very high degree of foreign direct investment between our two countries as well. So, I think from the trade union perspective we're not opposed to a UK/US deal, it would obviously depend on the detail, but we understand where the Biden Administration is coming from on this.

Hilary Benn MP

OK thank you very much and just perhaps a one-word answer coming back to you Congressman Boyle, do I take it from what you said that there's no prospect of such a trade agreement between the UK and the US while the Northern Ireland Protocol problem remains unresolved, would that be a fair reflection?

Brendan Boyle

That is correct and that's pretty clearly been stated by others as well, including The President.

Hilary Benn MP

OK, that is extremely helpful, thank you very much indeed. Right, over to Geoff Mackey, Geoff.

Geoff Mackey

Thank you very much Chair, good morning, good afternoon. Could I ask a compare and contrast question if I may? How does the US view its trading relationship with the UK compared with how it views its trading relationship with the EU please? Could I start with Emanuel?

Emanuel Adam

Thank you very much for the question, I'm very happy to kick off. I think first of all the US looks at size of a market and relevance to trade and it looks at partners across the world and here the UK is clearly a major single country trading partner when it comes to trade in goods particularly and services, looking at the EU altogether I think if I get my numbers right they're looking at a size four times as much in terms of value of trade and importance. Secondly the EU and the US are together the two most important and largest economies and therefore standard setters for the rest of the world and that reflects how the US acts and views both the EU and the UK. It's not an either/or question, it's just that sometimes who is potentially more relevant in specific conversations and I think what we have seen in that context is indeed that disputes such as around steel aluminium or the kick off of negotiations for the [inaudible 1:09:15.8] agreement started with the EU and concluded with the EU earlier than it did for the UK just because of the size of the market and because it was important for the US and that is indeed our view for those issues to be resolved with the EU first before it comes to the UK.

Now, saying all that that would be my last point, one can also argue that the US and the UK are more aligned than the US is with the EU, especially when it comes to regulatory practices and liberalisation of trade and business and this is going back to my point earlier, this is really where the opportunity lies because I think what we have seen now after the negotiations between the US and the EU concluding unsuccessfully for a comprehensive trade agreement, the EU has done a lot of things instead for example the Trade and Technology Council launched in 2021, but I think this is how far that can go at the moment. When you look at the US and the UK I think they could go further and this is really the opportunity if specific obstacles were to be resolved and maybe we can talk about the political context maybe slightly different, that could be an opportunity for the US and the UK to indeed strike a trade deal that they wouldn't be able to strike with the EU.

Geoff Mackey

Emanuel thank you very much. Nick.

Nick Crook

Thank you, yeah, I wouldn't actually disagree with much of what Emanuel said. I think he's absolutely right. I would like to sort of emphasise the position, the status of regulatory standards because essentially there are two global blocks in the world on regulatory standards, the US and the EU and the EU is therefore far more important and of more interest to the US than the UK is, and I think the US is waiting to see where the UK positions itself in terms of regulatory standards. And as we saw in the former Trans-Atlantic trade and investment partnership TTIP [ph 1:11:10.8] between the US and the EU, regulatory standards was one of the big issues that both sides want to resolve, so I think from that perspective I think it's obvious that the US is going to have more interest with some sort of agreement with the EU.

Geoff Mackey

Nick, thank you very much. Congressman Boyle, would you agree with that sentiment?

Brendan Boyle

Yes, it seems like we have unanimity here and Nick ended up using the acronym I was about to interject and that is TTIP, back in 2015 there was a lot of momentum for that but the Obama administration made the strategic decision, unwisely in my view and I said so to them at the time, they decided to lead with the TPP which was the Trans-Pacific Partnership, it became hugely controversial, Donald Trump incidentally at the same time was rising in the Republican primaries, the

Republican party essentially flipped from its usual position on trade, the Democratic party with strong labour interests had always been a bit sceptical of trade agreements to begin with, and then of course you had the issue of TPP was very easy to demonise because you looked at you know the wages and the standards in certain countries that are part of that like Vietnam and it turned actually a sizeable majority of the American public against not just TPP but trade agreements in general. And so, what happened was the Obama administration ultimately wasn't able to get either agreement through, either the TPP and then the TTIP just died. I think that's unfortunate because as we look to build on the strength, the renewed strength of the Trans-Atlantic Alliance adding a trade component to that and bringing us closer together has a lot of advantages to it even beyond dollars and cents and euros.

Geoff Mackey

Thank you very much, that's really quite useful. Back to you Chair if I may.

Hilary Benn MP

Geoff thank you very much indeed. I'm now going to turn to Tamara Cincik. Tamara.

Tamara Cincik

Thank you Chair. So, my question is both sides have concerns about specific aspects of the trade deals, could you explain what these are and how they are likely to impact trade negotiations going forwards, which of the evidence providers would like to answer that first?

Emanuel Adam

I'm happy to kick off, this is Emanuel from British/American business. I have been thinking about that question for a while and I'd say traditionally one would of course mention agriculture market and access procurement procedures and maybe some regulatory differences in the way we regulate tech and data as stumbling blocks for any organisation. But overall though looking at what we have seen in the first five negotiations, first five official negotiations rounds and the work that had been done in the Trans-Atlantic Working Group between the US and the UK prior to that, interestingly I would argue for this perspective that there isn't too much of concern that would potentially lead to a situation that we faced among others in TTIP where there were indeed some hurdles that negotiators struggled to overcome. I think that the devil in the detail and it will be around whether the UK or the US for that matter can agree to certain adjustments, the US has obviously a template in place that they have used on a number of times in their trade agreements and the UK has now started to build up such a template and we have to look whether they are comparable and whether there are ways that can be found to bring the US and the UK closer together. The UK in the end I think in a more interesting position because the UK, and we've heard that before from Nick, they have to look into how it positions itself between the EU and the US, which I think is both an opportunity and a challenge. But it will have to make decisions on for example services, whether to use a negative or a positive list or rules of origin in textiles just to name a couple of examples, as to how it can accommodate and ask from the US negotiators. But keeping it short, my view is that if we get into an environment, a political environment where there is strong enough support because it is already there from business for negotiation we may actually get there and not see large barriers that may prevent us from having a deal in the end.

Tamara Cincik

Sorry I was muted, it's a classic I'm so sorry. Nick, do you have any thoughts?

Nick Crook

Yes and I'm going to come at this from a trade union perspective because I'm sure there aren't many trade union witnesses that you've had recently, so I mean I would have said a few, before the Biden administration that a normal concern for us would have been labour rights and employment, but actually we have in the Biden administration probably the most pro labour administration in decades and actually the US is actually leading on this, Ambassador Tye when she was here in Aberdeen earlier this year got the UK to include the recognition of employment rights and trade union rights within the joint statement in saying that it would have to be a worker led agenda and that's something we would very much welcome. I think the more traditional concerns we would have an Emanuel mentioned some of those, would be services liberalisation, especially public services; the trade in data, and people's right to their security in data; regulatory standards, probably in a different perspective from Emanuel is where we see actually we think that you know the UK moving away from the EU regulatory standards is probably a negative thing. And then around investments and whether the UK would want to have a strong investment chapter with the ISCS mechanism in it which we would be concerned about.

I think from the American's perspective certainly the AFLCIO would be concerned because one of the UK's offensive interests is around public procurement and Buy America [ph 1:17:53.0] and clearly the AFLCIO would be wanting to make sure that there's no retreat from Buy America either at the Federal level or State level.

Tamara Cincik

Thank you, is there one more person from our evidence givers who would like to answer that question before I defer back to the Chair?

Brendan Boyle

Yeah, you know I would only add and Nick might be interested in this, so as would others, probably the longest lasting polling organisation in the US, Gallop, recently did a poll as they periodically do on the approval rating or favourability rating of labour unions, this was just in the last ten days or so and it was published in conjunction with Labour Day which we celebrated in the US on Monday. Labour unions right now in the United States have the highest approval rating in my lifetime, that's a world of difference from where we were for example 25 years ago in the 1990s, so they have become in the US relevant and more popular in a way that was not the case in the 1980s or even 1990s.

Tamara Cincik

So, to decompress that a little bit, what you're saying is the concerns about labour rights in terms of broader relationship with America might be [inaudible 1:19:15.0] given the approval rating for workers' rights and union uptake.

Brendan Boyle

Yeah, sorry I missed a little bit of what you said but my more general point was even contrasted with previous Democratic Presidents like Bill Clinton who actually signed NAFTA rather controversially, you now have in Joe Biden a President who is vocally very pro-labour union as Nick pointed out, that is actually reflective of where a majority of public opinion is. I would also add to that, we are now seeing whether it's at Starbucks or Amazon warehouses or other fast food establishments, we're seeing places getting unionised and voting to unionise today that we have not seen ever, so something is, there is a shift going on in American society, for better or worse, I'm not … you can probably guess where I am on this but I'm not putting a value judgement on it, there is clearly though a shift going on over the last couple of years.

Tamara Cincik

That's very insightful thank you for that expert thought. Back to you Chair.

Hilary Benn MP

Tamara thanks very much indeed, and now to Alison Williams, Alison.

Alison Williams

Thank you. Where do the main opportunities for growth in a trade deal between the two countries lie? If I could go to Congressman Boyle first.

Brendan Boyle

Well, that's a very interesting question, I would be very interested actually in the answers of others. You know one of the unfortunate aspects of the UK no longer being part of the EU from an American perspective is that we lost someone at the table who tends to view the world pretty similarly when it comes to regulation and laws and things like that. In terms of the opportunities, speaking from a South-Eastern Pennsylvania Philadelphia perspective where the life sciences are really growing, the idea that our meds and eds here in the US, but especially frankly representing the, besides Boston, the area with the most colleges and universities in the country is my area, the idea that we could partner with British institutions and work together on research, produce a number of things that can be life-saving or life-improving, as we saw during Covid which at record speed saw at least three different vaccines developed, you saw the way the US and the UK led independently in that area, but there were interesting partnerships between of course academia and the private sector. So, I would just intuitively I would think that area more than any other, and then also I think the UK would obviously benefit from the kind of cross pollination that comes between Silicone Valley, Austin, Boston, and some other tech hubs and what's going on again at British universities.

Alison Williams

Thank you. Can I go to Emanuel now please?

Emanuel Adam

Thank you very much and I am very happy to build on the Congressman's remarks in saying that overall it's not easy to point to specific areas for where you want to see benefits right away but of course you would look at historic sectors that have been strong in terms of UK trade and the UK economy etc, indeed life sciences as the Congressman mentioned, or services, but also machinery and vehicles which are a big export item for the UK as we know. So, they're obviously there is the argument that there are benefits to be seen quite quickly in terms of production and regulatory alignment. But again building on the Congressman's comments here is that when the UK and the US negotiated I think it was pretty clear quite early on that this is a chance to use all the experience of the success of other trade agreements and to form something that stands out and goes one step further, especially in setting standards for new technologies, we have seen a lot of work being done around AI and crypto assets on both sides of the Atlantic, new vehicles and so forth. Where other trade agreements maybe had some limits either because of the size of the economy, I've studied the UK/Australia deal in more detail which I think is a very good and strong one, but of course you know Australia is a different economy than the US or because it couldn't go as far as the USMCA did in a number of areas. So, there is really a chance here to build a trade agreement that takes us a step further and I think that is over the ambition. From businesses, when business looks at the benefits of trade agreements, and I just wanted to mention that, what's really key is that trade deals are about creating market access for companies, companies want to see that there is an additional market access that allows for them to go into a new market, whether they are small or large in that they can sell their product and services in the other market. It's about facilitating trade by reducing the paperwork and the conformity that you have to go through otherwise we have seen a lot of examples, we don't have to go through that, and this group has maybe studied them also of companies who just have to do a lot of duplication in order to get their product over the border. It's about setting standards and here you know I mean pushing maybe a tiny bit even further obviously we have learned that the EU is a regulatory super power, but just imagine if the US and the UK came together and used even though the UK sits outside, but used its approach and pragmatic approach to business and trade and you know set a standard that maybe the EU may even find interesting or makes the EU think about things slightly differently and I think that would be an interesting playing ground here that could have strong consequences, positive consequences for the rest of the world.

And final, finally also again when business looks at trade deals it's about avoiding divergence and protection where that is possible and I think with the current developments around chips [ph 1:25:26.6] production, domestic chips production I think we have a good example here where we could benefit from countries talking early on so that we don't end up having single markets that compete with each other, especially in a world where we have to work together more closely. Thank you.

Alison Williams

Thank you for describing those direct and some of the indirect benefits or opportunities. Nick, have you got anything you want to add?

Nick Crook

Yeah, I think you know just to be a little bit more sceptical here I think you know there is a very high degree of trade between the UK and the US already and I think we can probably sometimes over egg how much trade agreements actually lead to an increase in trade. The UK Department for International Trade is saying we already have trade of about £220 billion a year between the UK and the US and the Department of International Trade's own estimates say that in the long run, without defining what the long run will be, that could be increased by maybe another 15 billion, so not a huge amount, because there is already a very high degree of trade already. Now I'm not knocking that, I'm not saying that, but I just think you know there is not going to be a large amount of growth in trade between the UK and the US as a result of a trade agreement.

Alison Williams

Thank you, back to the Chair.

Hilary Benn MP

Alison, thank you very much indeed. I'm now going to turn to Claire Hannah, Claire.

Claire Hannah

Thank you, thank you very much Chair and in fact the Chair has touched on the issue of the UK/US relationship in the context of the Protocol Bill already but I just wanted to pick up on that and your thoughts on how that relationship would be impacted if the Protocol Bill is amended in its current format and the Protocol is therefore unilaterally disrupted. I'll maybe come back to you Congressman Boyle because I know you've briefly touched on this but Emanuel what would be your thoughts on that?

Emanuel Adam

Thank you very much for the question. I fully agree with what the Congressman said earlier, I think in short there is a very limited chance for a deal, it's not the only reason but there's a limited chance for a deal to be negotiated or concluded as long as the Northern Ireland issue has not been resolved, and I think from our, from our business perspective I think the reason is and you know I'm not in politics so it's more for the Congressman to respond to, but I can imagine that the US doesn't want to take sides in what are two very important relationships to them. And so, if the Bill passed as suggests both hosts that is that could indeed become very problematic because I feel that the US will not want to move even if they could, if the tension has not been resolved between the UK and the EU. Now, we as Trans-Atlantic businesses we fully understand the complexity around the issue you know and there are lots of different elements involved in this and so we fully get it, but at the same time of course we also see and bear the consequences of it, so which is why especially now with the new UK leadership in place we are very hopeful that the Prime Minister is successful in crafting a compromise that keeps trade as free as possible between the two islands and between the UK and the EU overall and is cerebral to internal audiences, but also honours the interests for both the UK and the EU. I know that that's not easy but we very much welcome that this is top of the list because indeed, I mean if that was to be removed, I think the price could be a very big one.

Claire Hanna

Thank you very much, Congressman Boyle, you were quite clear when the Chair addressed it earlier, I say reassuringly clear as a Belfast Member of Parliament it is useful to hear that, but I wondered obviously would in your analysis that would be fairly consistent approach and viewed from across the political spectrum and is there anything you think it's appropriate for us to understand in terms of either the UK's approach or how the US would approach this dispute going forward.

Brendan Boyle

Well thank you Claire, and you know I was with Speaker Pelosi and a total of ten of my colleagues when we sat literally at 10 Downing Street in April of 2019, it was only about three and a half years ago but it was I think three different British Governments ago, Theresa May was Prime Minister and Philip Hammond was Chancellor and they fortunately had agreed with our position, obviously they're no longer in power today, but we've been quite clear since 2016 on this. The only thing I would point out is that you know I know in life and especially in politics people can sometimes have short memories, I notice in some quarters there's this sort of urban legend growing around that if there was a change of control of the House of Representatives with the Senate that somehow this US position would change, I say people have short memories because in fact for most of the last six years Republicans actually controlled Congress from June of 2016 up until January 2019, Republicans had the House, Republicans had the Senate from before 2016 up until January 2021 and of course Donald Trump was President from January 2017 to January 2021. And that was still the US position, it's a pretty strongly held bipartisan view, also given the Senate and given the role of the philibustery [ph 1:31:22.3] even if the Senate changed hands which actually betting markets are now betting against, there's been a remarkable kind of change in the political winds here ever since the Dobbs decision overturning Roe versus Wade in late June, I think the consensus experts right now believe the House of Representatives would narrowly flip to the Republicans, but the Democrats would keep control of the Senate. Be that as it may though as I said whether it's a narrow Republican majority or a narrow Democratic majority in either chamber, no one should expect a change in the position of the US and the administration when it comes to this issue.

Claire Hanna

Thank you very much, appreciate that clarity. Nick, I wonder did you have anything that you wanted to build on there in terms of I don't know the extent of links across the Atlantic between the movements?

Nick Crook

No, absolutely and I think I don't disagree with anything that Congressman Boyle has said. You know UNISON is not only a member of the British TUC but we are a member of the Irish Congress as well, as you know, UNISON organises in Northern Ireland and we obviously have very clear links with the AFLCIO and the TUC, the Irish Congress and the AFLCIO have all made it very clear that we can't have the peace process in Northern Ireland disrupted in this way and we are very concerned about the negotiating position of the UK Government. And just, you know, the most recent thing that concerns me is the two most recent appointments to the Northern Ireland office of Chris Heaton-Harris as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and Steve Baker as Minister in the Northern Ireland office. You know both coming from the ERG, the European Reform Group. Now that could either be an ERG taking over of the Northern Ireland office or it could be Liz Truss saying to the ERG, OK you know, you deal with this problem, let's see. But I think it's a very worrying signal from the UK side that they probably will be moving towards some quite aggressive action on the Northern Ireland Protocol and from a trade union perspective both in the UK and in Ireland and the US, that's not something we would welcome at all.

Claire Hanna

Thank you very much I appreciate that and back to you Chair.

Hilary Benn MP

Thank you very much indeed Claire. Stuart Anderson, Stuart, over to you.

Stuart Anderson MP

Thank you Chair and thank you panel it's been a really enjoyable discussion so far. I think the question I was going to ask I think has been covered by Congressman Boyle just around the consistency of approach across both parties notwithstanding the terms or any potential change at the present level, but I think maybe I'll just change tack a little and look at US has had very clear views on the Protocol, we've discussed them at length here, what role do you think the US can play now with the US Government in place to move things along with its relationship both with the EU and the UK, should that be a public role, should it be a private one and really what is it that you think they could do, particularly with an eye to the 25 year anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement this year, so maybe just start with Congressman Boyle and then work around the panel, thank you.

Brendan Boyle

Yes, so thank you Stuart and let me actually take a step back and make this a bit larger than just Northern Ireland as important as that is. This sort of constant friction between London and Brussels is good for neither the UK nor the EU, nor is it good for the US. So the idea that you could have a US administration, if not in public though I think that would be fine, at least behind the scenes, attempting to play a bridge role, it's ironic because back when Tony Blair was Prime Minister it used to be the UK playing this role between the US and the EU, but frankly relations between the US and the EU never got to the point as bad as they are right now between the UK and the EU. There is, I observe from 3000 miles away, there is obviously political mileage on the right in the UK to be derived by beating up on Brussels and by beating up on Europe and looking, standing tough for one's country and throwing red meat to the most anti-European voices. That's a terrible mistake and frankly that is a luxury none of us can afford, most especially the UK as it faces an inflation crisis and going into what looks like unfortunately a very difficult winter. So I would like and I happen to also be Chair of the Congressional European Caucus, I would like the US to play to the best they can some sort of role in piecing this back together, the kind of unity that we see in the west standing up for Ukraine, that's the kind of unity we need to preserve and we need it to extend on issues just beyond Ukraine.

Stuart Anderson MP

Thank you, anyone else want to come in on that, Nick, or Emanuel.

Emanuel Adam

I fully agree with the Congressman at least in the sense that the US has a unique role because it has very friendly and very strong relationship with both the UK and the EU and therefore can offer a perspective sometimes that helps maybe all of us who are part of it to remove ourselves and look at it from a more [inaudible 1:37:17.1] point of view. Again, we all understand the complexity around it, we all know it is what it is now and you know there is no need in us thinking about what could have been, but it does indeed need, and that includes I think you know saying the Prime Minister I think will have to balance all these different interests and that you know have their reason to be there, but it will require all of us, especially those leadership positions to look at it in an objective way and think about what's best for our country in the short and long term and again repeating here what the Congressman said, in the end it is to our benefit if the UK, the EU and the US pull on the same string and have good political and economic relationships with each other, especially in a world that we are facing right now. I may want to quote a colleague from the US Government who said you know actually what has happened in Russia and the Ukraine and what is happening in China and in the world overall gives us the narrative that we need to build the case to showcase the case for why we need to think about this in a slightly different way. This is not only about trade, but also about security and it is about our position in the world as a western corridor. Takes us maybe back to some of the narratives that we have seen in the beginning of TITA [ph 1:38:38.3] but maybe that's how I want to conclude, this is more about trade, it's about how we see this corridor play a role in the world that we are facing right now.

Stuart Anderson MP

Thank you. Nick?

Nick Crook

No, I think Congressman Boyle and Emanuel have made it very clear and I don't disagree with anything either of them have said.

Stuart Anderson MP

Thank you, back to you Chair.

Hilary Benn MP

Thank you very much indeed Stuart. Right, we're going back to Tamara Cincik, Tamara.

Tamara Cincik

Thank you Chair. The UK Government has described bilateral relationships with US states as trade deals, are these trade deals in your view? Brendan.

Brendan Boyle

Yeah, so I could answer this one simply, no. They are not legally or in any other … they're great PR if you can convince a foreign public who might not be aware of our system, they're essentially memorandums of understanding but when it comes to trade that's Federal jurisdiction. I spoke to Governor Newsome of California about this, and we were kind of you know chuckling about it, so it's great PR I guess if you can make it look like it's an accomplishment, but flat out no, it's not a trade agreement at all.

Tamara Cincik

So how do we shift that narrative if that's what the UK Government are PRing?

Brendan Boyle

Well I mean that would be, I don't want to overstep my bounds I mean I think that would be more an issue for anyone in the UK, but you don't exactly have to dig too far to cite the evidence and the actual legality of it and I would recommend making certain folks in the media aware who might be susceptible to getting snowed, I'm not sure if that metaphor carries across the Atlantic, but just doing a job of educating folks who might be writing those articles that in fact these are not trade deals.

Tamara Cincik

Thank you, Emanuel what are your thoughts?

Emanuel Adam

Thank you so much, I don't even know whether this was ever official UK Government PR to use the term trade deal, I know it has slipped itself into some tweets and statements but as far as I remember since discussions had started in Government to think about these MOUs, the term trade deal wasn't actually used. There may have been just an error somewhere, but yes there were no trade deals especially because they are not legally binding, legally binding agreements are being negotiated at a Federal level not State level, so and they are also not a feature that is exclusive to non-EU countries, I think that was also something that we had seen, Spain I think only recently signed an MOU with the US around trade and they have done so before, so that is clearly a feature that has been around for a long time and that can be used by countries as well as organisation as they wish.

Critics obviously sometimes would point out that they are not legally binding they are just nice PR and nothing else. I would actually not agree with that, I think this is a very good idea and I think that the UK Government and those responsible for it should be commended for testing that out, for various reasons. On the one hand, and Congressman Boyle would agree, the discussion for a trade agreement [inaudible 1:42:05.6] trade agreement doesn't, it's not what you get in Washington DC or in other major, major cities, especially the capitals. You have to win that fight where trade takes place and that is indeed you know in your constituencies and in your regions and communities where businesses are active and employ people and produce products and by taking an initiative to those places across various states and engage stakeholders locally you build up that support that you may need once a trade agreement comes to a road [ph 1:42:34.2]. I think that this may be also a lesson from previous negotiations where we knew that there is a public interest and we have seen that during the times of TITO where there was a lot of public interest and so why not take that conversation to where it actually needs to take place. I've said that these memorandum of understandings are not legally binding but there are two things that I feel are worth noting, on the one hand they create relationships and bring a conversation to a specific state or region and are part of an agenda and that is always something that is welcome. So just imagine you are a small business from Yorkshire and you know that you have seen on the news that an MOU has been signed between the UK and the state of North Carolina and that there are a number of provisions there around offshore wind and green technologies, if you happen to be in that sector of course then you suddenly have on the radar, well maybe this is a state I need to explore and because there is always something happening maybe it will be even easier for me via the UK Government or other stakeholders to find a contact there that I can use to take my business across the Atlantic.

And secondly I think there is also something the UK Government pointed out and which we as businesses agree, if you look closely into some of these, so far two of them have been signed, Indiana for example has a provision on procurement in it which I was told is not something that Indiana usually subscribes to, now again it's not binding but it is a good sign that you know in this case Indiana says OK well we will want to work with the UK around procurement and allow for UK companies to access our procurement over here to sell their products and services. So, it can indeed lead to positive outcome, it's not a trade agreement but it can lead to a positive outcome. In the end what is key of course is that you follow it through, and I know that there are currently discussions in place as to how many of these memorandums of understanding can essentially be signed in order to also make them workable, but overall, I would say that it is a smart idea and something that we as stakeholders should support.

Tamara Cincik

Thank you. Nick in this I think what's the subtext of this question that's interesting is this kind of PR war of looking like things are shiny and opportunity is ripe when, what I really resonated from what I've heard from you is that the estimations on what an FTA would bring in terms of increased GDP is not so much, so it does draw on that, is there a bit of a PR war going on here do you think?

Nick Crook

I would actually agree with you, I think there is a PR war going on here because you know the Government has clearly failed to deliver on the trading agreement that they said ever since Brexit was the most important one and they have to cover for that in some way. I mean just to go back to the question you asked Congressman Boyle about how can we sort of break the coverage of this, I think this is a question that Parliament really needs to take up more because so far, the Government has really tried to avoid scrutiny on trade in Parliament. We saw that in the debate yesterday on the Australia/New Zealand, it was only in the framework of implementing the public procurement clauses that we actually had a Parliamentary debate on the Australia/New Zealand trade deal despite the impact that will have on the UK agricultural sector. And the Government has been running from any kind of effective scrutiny, whether from the House of Commons as a whole or from the committee for international trade, in a way that Congressman Boyle's Ways and Means Committee would never allow in the US. And we really need Parliament to start asserting a bit more scrutiny and a bit more control over the Department for International Trade and the negotiating process of all trade agreements given the importance of them.

Tamara Cincik

Yeah, I mean I was asked into BEIS actually, I think it was four years ago, to talk about the opportunities for the fashion industry from an FTA with America and you know from my sector it really is the only opportunity that I can see that makes up for the loss of business with our local and global partner in terms of capacity and opportunity, but it doesn't seem to be any closer than it was when I was called in for that meeting, so thank you very much and I defer back to the Chair.

Hilary Benn MP

Tamara, thank you very much indeed. I'm now going to turn to Layla Moran, Layla.

Layla Moran MP

Thank you Chair, thank you all. And this actually follows on I think quite nicely from Tamara's point that you've just made which is the importance of that trade relationship for both countries and so I'd like to ask the panellists to perhaps reflect on that, we have the stats, it's 5% coming out way from America, but that said it's more than that, I think Emanuel you made that point, it's security, it's about global positioning, so perhaps if I could start with Emanuel, is there anything more you'd like to add to that?

Emanuel Adam

No too much, maybe just some summarising thoughts based on your thoughts so far and in response to your question. US and UK share one of the strongest political and economic relationships and again we don't have to go into the numbers, we know them. This is not going to change, no matter the issue or the political leadership we see, that is just part of life, and this relationship has been very persistent for good reasons. You could of course argue it's a reflection of the relationship is that Prime Minister Truss made one of her first phone calls to President Biden, no surprise because it's clearly a reflection of it. Going back to my earlier points you know having seen the UK negotiators either as part of the EU or independently, you know the two things I may want to conclude of this, on the one hand yes I do of course know the economic forecast and they can be questionable here and there, but I also do see any tiny change that Governments can make that suddenly open the door for businesses to fulfil their ambitions and there is a lot in these trade agreements that you may want to call PR that suddenly open up resources that will have a trigger on effect for businesses that we work with on the ground who are looking into expanding in new markets and delivering growth for their own communities and abroad. So, I think having the end is very good but for me having seen the teams, the discussion [inaudible 1:49:34.2] it's indeed more than that, it's indeed about establishing a framework that secures [inaudible 1:49:40.1] and helps us avoid potentially even future crises and align among friends and allies when we face other challenges.

And so again I actually see the window of opportunity, not only with the Northern Ireland issue being resolved but also with the US and UK influencing the rest of the world in a very positive way. Thank you.

Layla Moran MP

Thank you very much. I'll come to Nick next if that's OK.

Nick Crook

Thanks very much. Look, the British trade union movement is not opposed to a future trade agreement with the US and clearly it will have some impact on the UK economy, but nothing to the degree upon the damage that has been inflicted and will be inflicted on the UK economy from us walking away from the European Union and the single market and our largest, biggest trading partner. I'm not advocating, and the TUC and the British trade union movement isn't advocating that we re-join the European Union, but we do need to start to address some of the problems that we're already beginning to see emerge from the trade and cooperation agreement that we've negotiated with the EU, which has many, many faults to it. And any trade agreement between the UK and the US cannot undo the damage that has already been done to British business by walking away from the European Union Single Market.

Layla Moran MP

Thank you. And Congressman Boyle, can I invite you to also bring in the political aspect, how important is some kind of trade negotiation with the UK, does it just not feature, is it just that we need you more than you need us?

Brendan Boyle

I would feel a little awkward saying that but let me put it this way, so I was doing a meet and greet last night with about 60 new constituents of mine, we had the Decennial redistricting process that takes place right after the census ending in the year zero, so I was in a part of Philadelphia that I hadn't previously represented. I got a ton of questions. I had one question when it comes to Northern Ireland Protocol from someone who by the way quite clearly did not have an Irish surname, and no questions about a UK trade deal, only in the context, people only ever bring it up when really the issue is about Northern Ireland. Other than that, it doesn't come up here. When trade is mentioned, trade really became a hot potato again in that 2015/16/17 period, Donald Trump especially was really beating up on it, I noticed that trade almost becomes a catch-all for every problem that people have with the modern economy, especially automation. When trade does come up in the US by far the biggest topic is China. That is really the majority of the time and everything else buying represents a minority, after that it would be the perception and somewhat based on reality that we're losing jobs that leave big industrial states like in Pennsylvania and go south of the border to Mexico. That is a hot topic and that comes up a great deal. And then after that it would be what we do in the rest of Asia to make sure other Asian countries are more aligned with the United States and the west than with China.

After that then a conversation about the UK and the EU, but candidly among voters or constituents of mine, like I said this is just not an issue that ever comes up.

Layla Moran MP

But can I ask in that group of 60, was that just ordinary voters, so that Northern Ireland Protocol question was coming up from just …

Brendan Boyle

So, it was new constituent voters, but these were also Democratic committee people in a pretty high income, Society Hill happens to be the neighbourhood, it's right around actually where Independence Hall is, the historic district of Philadelphia. It would certainly be considered, the room was a largely well educated, high income, liberal leaning group of constituents. Older as well.

Layla Moran MP

Thank you. Well nevertheless, the fact that it cut through to the point that they asked you a question about it I think is quite interesting and I'm sure we'll note that moving forward, but thank you so much all, back to you Chair.

Hilary Benn MP

Layla, thank you very much indeed. Congressman Boyle, can I ask you, when a potential trade agreement with the United States is raised in the media in Britain, we often hear references to hormone injected beef and chlorinated chicken, I can see the smile appearing on your lips the moment you heard that familiar phrase. I'm just interested to know how is that type of discussion and that reference greeted in the United States? What do people feel and say about it?

Brendan Boyle

I was to disabuse any one of the notion that I do not personally dunk my chicken in a swimming pool before eating it. This has been a rather exaggerated point, actually I think the FT had a piece quite a while back explaining the myth of the chlorinated chicken, I would encourage people to look at that. It is true that we have different standards and sometimes weaker standards, certainly on environmental issues than Europe … someone like myself wouldn't mind if we moved a little, inched a little closer to your side of the Atlantic, but the chlorinated chicken issue is really quite a grossly exaggerated one. Nonetheless this is actually an issue that never comes up in the US media, if you were to poll most Americans they would have never heard about this issue, it's one that generally comes up in Europe and I include the UK while not in the European Union as part of Europe, it's on that certainly whenever a trade deal with the US comes up is talked about a lot in European media, it actually never comes up here in the US.

Hilary Benn MP

That's extremely interesting, two sides of what we think is the same debate but rather different perspectives and priorities. Well look, that brings our session to a conclusion, on behalf of the Commission members who've attended today can I express our deep thanks to you Nick Crook, Emanuel Adam and Congressman Boyle for giving us your valuable time, your expertise and your wisdom, it's been incredibly interesting and very, very useful to us and I wish you a successful rest of the day. And that brings our proceedings to a close, all the best.