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The Whitehall & Industry Group
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'Trade & International Affairs' Series

Ambassador João Vale de Almeida

Head of Delegation of the European Union to the UK

23rd June 2021

Expert Insight

The Trade and Cooperation agreement between the EU and UK was formally approved in April 2021, announced as a basis for a partnership 'amongst equals.' In light of this, we were delighted to be joined by Ambassador João Vale de Almeida, Head of Delegation of the European Union to the United Kingdom, to share his thoughts on how the EU/UK relationship might evolve. He touched on some key points:



- We are in the beginning phase of the governance of the relationship between the EU and the UK. The instruments (Withdrawal & Trade and Cooperation agreements) and bodies (the Joint Committee and the Partnership Council) are in place to guide this process going forward.
- Economic actors are confronted with a number of challenges that are characteristic of this transition e.g. changes to supply chains, changes to border controls.
- Whilst some changes may be temporary by nature, others will be structural, and will require long-term adaptation from both sides. Attentiveness to the quality of our relationship and building of trust is key.
- The relationship between the UK and the EU is by no means just bilateral in nature, it has a global dimension. There is an enormous responsibility for both actors to address global challenges.
- The EU and the UK must work towards having a common ground in our relationships with China, Russia, and those in the common neighbourhood.
- The UK was one of the most active members in tackling climate change within the EU. Cooperation between the actors must remain to ensure progress is made in this area, and the COP26 summit in Glasgow in November 2021 presents great opportunity for this.
- The EU and the UK share the same fundamental values. It is important to re-affirm commitment to democratic values and human rights through proactive action on the global stage.

Presentation Spotlight



We are in the beginning of a new cycle, a new process in our relationship, but this does not mean it will be less relevant or less important than it is today...our challenge is to make sure this transition is a productive and effective one.

This relationship has a great potential, and we should work to make the most out of this potential; economically, socially, and strategically.



Our members' questions

Our members raised some challenging questions to be answered, key issues raised included:

- The impact of the pandemic on shared approach to biosecurity challenges
- Informal leadership in the EU now that the UK has left
- Opportunities for technology sharing and industrial collaboration programmes
- The complexity of the EU's relationship with Turkey

WIG members can listen to the Ambassador's presentation [here](#)

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