

PRESS STATEMENT – 23/12/2020

UK and European Industry calls for flexibility in applying new trading rules during an adjustment period if a deal between the UK and EU is agreed

Governments are warned, companies are not ready to deal with twin threat of significant last minute rule changes and the ongoing pandemic

Brussels, 23 December 2020 – The leaders of the manufacturing industry in both the UK and Europe have called for a pragmatic approach or the use of easements in applying new trading rules and a flexible adjustment period in the event of a deal being finally signed between the UK Government and the European Union.

The call was made by Ceemet – European Tech & Industry Employers and its UK member Make UK which together represent some 200,000 manufacturing businesses directly employing 17 million people across the continent.

While united in the vital importance of coming to an agreement and avoiding “No Deal” at all costs Ceemet and Make UK have both warned the EU and the UK Government they must recognise that industry will not be able to adapt quickly to the final details of any deal negotiated at this late stage and, with just a week to go, there is still no certainty for how industry will conduct business next year.

Commenting, Make UK Chief Executive, Stephen Phipson, said:

“For any deal that comes out of the negotiations companies will need time to adapt to the new realities and requirements of whatever is agreed which will be impossible at this late stage. Even without the pandemic it would be stretching credibility to believe they could adapt to significant changes if new rules were to be strictly applied from January 1st.”

Commenting, Ceemet Chairman of the Board, Oliver Zander, said:

“The priority now must be to ensure the flow of goods, people and data to ensure companies are not disrupted. We need to see a mechanism in place to ensure that companies have adequate time to adjust to any change to the current operations, with review clauses in place if needs be.”

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About Ceemet

Ceemet represents the metal, engineering and technology-based industry employers in Europe, covering sectors such as metal goods, mechanical engineering, electronics, ICT, vehicle and transport manufacturing.

Member organisations represent 200,000 companies in Europe, providing over 17 million direct and 35 million indirect jobs.

Ceemet is a recognised European social partner at the industrial sector level, promoting global competitiveness for European industry through consultation and social dialogue.