

Future Relationship: Industry welcomes the deal but needs time to adapt

European industry leaders have welcomed the announcement of a deal struck between the EU and the UK on their Future Relationship, but need adequate time to analyse its contents. Furthermore with 7 days to go until the end of the transition period, Ceemet reiterates its call that its industrial sector must have the necessary time to adapt to any new reality the EU-UK deal sets out.

Brussels, 24 December 2020 – After almost five years of negotiations, manufacturers from across Europe are carefully optimistic that a no-deal, for the moment, has been avoided. However, as is so often the case, the devil will be in the detail. We will need the requisite time to analyse this agreement to ensure it delivers a solution which is in the best interests of industries on both sides of the Channel.

The backdrop of COVID-19 and industrial transformation

What must remain in focus is that all of this continues to happen against the backdrop of a COVID-19 pandemic and in the middle of the digital and green transformations. Manufacturers are experiencing the biggest industrial crisis in living memory; Ceemet estimates that in the 18 months from June 2020 to December 2021, 1 million jobs are in danger of being lost due to the current crisis and its economic effects.

Now industry needs time to adapt

The companies which make up our sector, the overwhelming majority of which are SMEs, could not have been ready for these changes. The time originally set aside to prepare for change, the transition period, is nearly at an end. This should have been the time for businesses to adapt to the contents of the new deal and prepare for any new realities.

Therefore, a mechanism must be put in place to ensure that companies have the adequate time to adjust to these inevitable changes. Companies in the MET sector are already disproportionately affected by the triple challenge of a pandemic and a twin transformation of industry. This deal must preserve the complex and delicate relationships developed between manufacturers in the EU, their non-EU trading partners which are part of a Customs Union, and the UK.

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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.