



PRESS RELEASE

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Logistics sector needs European workers to keep Britain trading, says FTA

Without workers from the European Union, the UK's freight and logistics sector could grind to a halt, says the Freight Transport Association (FTA). And while the Government's policy paper (released 26 June 2017) provides a starting point for the rights of these workers to live and work in the UK after Brexit, FTA is calling for urgent clarification on the timings involved for the introduction of new workers' rights. In addition, the Association, which represents the UK's freight and logistics industry, is petitioning the Government to ensure that the application process for EU citizens is as seamless as possible and prevent a lack of available skilled staff leading to avoidable delays in services.

EU workers currently account for 13% of HGV drivers and 26% of warehouse operatives employed in the UK's freight and logistics industry, itself a net £121 billion Gross Value Added contributor to the national economy. And with 2.54 million people currently working in the UK's logistics sector nationwide, removing this proportion of the workforce could have a disastrous effect on the UK's economy, according to the FTA.

“The Government's announcement on the rights of EU workers to remain and work in the UK is a welcome first step in enabling businesses to plan and manage their workforces,” says Pauline Bastidon, Head of European Policy at FTA, which represents more than 16,000 businesses in the logistics sector. “But there is still much to be done to ensure that logistics companies are not left stranded, without the skilled workforce required to keep Britain's trade moving nationwide, and across borders to other nations.”

“These EU workers are crucial to the success of the UK’s logistics industry – and thus to the success of the nation’s economy as a whole. With insufficient homegrown workers currently available, the Government needs to give careful consideration to how vacancies could be filled in the short and long term, to ensure that Britain keeps on trading, both domestically and internationally.”

According to the Government’s proposal, workers who have been living continuously in the UK for five years will be able to apply to stay in the country indefinitely through “settled status”. However, clarification is still needed for the “cut off” date for arrivals to the country who have not been resident for five years, and this lack of information could have a significant impact on British business’ ability to trade efficiently in the coming months and years.

“Whenever the new legislation is introduced, it is imperative that the Government makes the application process for those wishing to work in the UK as free from red tape as possible,” continues Bastidon. “The logistics industry needs and deserves to employ the very best candidates while it trains up the next generation of employees, and it will need Government support to ensure that the country’s trading routes do not grind to a halt when the changes are made. The Government must ensure that its post-Brexit immigration policy takes into account the needs of crucial industries such as logistics, and provide as much clarity as possible, as early as it is feasible, to allow industry to plan ahead and adapt. This advanced notice is vital to ensure that British business can keep moving, both in the UK and overseas.”

Notes for Editors:

The need to protect the logistics industry’s workforce post-Brexit was a key part of the FTA’s Brexit Manifesto – www.fta.co.uk/brexit

For further information, please contact the FTA press office via email: press.office@fta.co.uk or call 01892 552255. Pauline Bastidon is available for interview.

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The Freight Transport Association can trace its origins back to 1889 and is recognised as the voice of the freight and logistics industry, representing the transport interests of companies moving goods by road, rail, sea and air. FTA members operate over 220,000 goods vehicles - half the UK fleet - consign over 90 per cent of the freight moved by rail and 70 per cent of sea and air freight.