

Minutes of the fourth meeting of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement
Partnership Council, 2 February 2026

London, in-person and online

2 February 2026, 12 midday to 1:30pm GMT

1. Opening remarks and adoption of the agenda and decisions of previous Partnership Council

The UK co-Chair, Rt Hon Nick Thomas–Symonds MP, Paymaster General and Minister for the Cabinet Office (Minister for the Constitution and European Union Relations), opened the meeting and noted that the relationship between the UK and the EU had continued to strengthen since the third Partnership Council (PC) meeting in May 2024. He noted the wide range of work topics covered by the Specialised Committees established under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), covering areas from energy to intellectual property, and thanked the Civil Society Forum and Parliamentary Partnership Assembly for their contributions. He noted previous PC decisions on fisheries and energy cooperation in June 2025 and a decision in November 2024 to update the Product Specific Rules in the Rules of Origin annexes.

The EU co-Chair, Maroš Šefčovič, European Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security and Interinstitutional Relations and Transparency, noted that since the EU-UK Summit, both teams have been working on delivering the renewed agenda. He underscored the importance of the full, timely and faithful implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement including the Windsor Framework, and the Trade and Cooperation Agreement. He also noted that geopolitical turbulence in trade and security highlight the importance of UK-EU cooperation.

The agenda was adopted.

2. TCA Implementation

Deliverables since the last meeting of the Partnership Council

Both Parties acknowledged the generally positive implementation of the TCA to date, with the EU noting that the TCA remained the most ambitious agreement of its kind between the EU and a third country. The UK welcomed the progress towards its association to the Erasmus+ programme from 2027, and ongoing work on areas identified in the Common Understanding, such as on a Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) agreement, linking of Emissions Trading Systems (ETS), and working towards an electricity agreement. The UK looked forward to signing the Competition

Cooperation Agreement later that month (February 2026), which the EU acknowledged, and noted that the Agreement underlined the importance of international cooperation in current global circumstances.

The EU welcomed the conclusion of negotiations on Erasmus+ association, noted the launch of negotiations on ETS linkage and a common SPS area, and recalled the Joint Statement of December 2025 which stated the aim to conclude negotiations on the youth experience scheme, ETS, and SPS agreements by the next summit.

The EU reported progress on all seven deliverables agreed at the 2024 Partnership Council, with four finalised and three close to finalisation. The agreement on the Competition Cooperation Agreement was finalised and awaiting signature. On energy, the EU noted that the Working Group on Security of Supply had been established and had met three times in 2025 and that exploratory discussions on the potential electricity agreement were concluded. The EU also noted continued work on exchanges of information about transport managers and road haulage operations. The EU noted that discussions had been concluded on arrangements for automated searching of vehicle registration data and information exchange, and a joint action plan had been set up between the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and its UK counterpart to facilitate cooperation on communicable diseases. Lastly, the EU noted that technical discussions were ongoing to facilitate UK access to the EU's rapid alert system for dangerous non-food products.

Initiatives adopted following the EU – UK Summit within the scope of the TCA, including fisheries and energy

On fisheries, the UK noted that the fisheries access deal provided a predictable long-term framework for fishing fleets on both sides. The UK also noted its £360 million Fishing and Coastal Growth Fund to revitalise the UK's fleet, and said the forthcoming SPS agreement would slash red tape for seafood exports. The EU noted that the agreement on reciprocal access to fisheries had brought stability for businesses and fisheries.

On energy, the UK highlighted the positive work of the relevant Specialised Committee, particularly on areas such as electricity trading, new technologies, and security of supply. The UK referenced ambitious commitments from the North Sea Summit in Hamburg and noted the extension of the TCA's energy chapter beyond its scheduled end date. The UK confirmed the commitment to continued technical regulatory exchanges on new technologies such as hydrogen, carbon capture, utilisation and storage, and biomethane, and the agreement to start detailed negotiations on the UK's participation in the EU's internal electricity market. The EU confirmed that it was seeking authorisation from the Council to open negotiations on the UK's participation in the EU's internal electricity market, following the conclusion of the exploratory talks in December 2025.

The UK raised the issue of seed potatoes, stating that the resumption of seed potato trade to the EU (banned since 2021) remained a priority. The UK stressed the importance of resuming trade as soon as possible following the positive draft audit report in autumn 2025. The EU acknowledged the importance of the seed potato issue, noting that it would be addressed through the SPS agreement. The EU noted it was awaiting information from the UK on the three Member State seed potato marketing applications for GB and would revisit the issue once resolved. The EU raised concerns about the UK's sponsorship scheme. The UK noted willingness to discuss this further, notably through the dedicated dialogues.

Cathode Active Materials (CAM) guidance

The UK stressed the shared ambition on the green transition, including increasing the manufacture and take-up of electric vehicles. The UK emphasised the automotive sector's need for agreed guidance and clarity ahead of rule changes in 2027, which would support industry in making investment decisions. The UK welcomed the EU's draft of the joint guidance, and looked forward to technical exchanges to agree the guidance. The EU agreed on the importance of providing industry with clarity as soon as possible, and confirmed the latest updated draft had been shared with UK experts.

Review under Article 776 of the TCA

The UK noted the commitment under Article 776 to undertake a joint review of the implementation of the TCA five years after its entry into force (this year). The UK acknowledged that both sides had undertaken implementation reviews and that as part of the review, work was currently underway, and in some cases already completed via the exploratory talks ahead of the Summit in 2025. The EU and UK noted they are in close dialogue with their stakeholders and pointed to the ongoing role of the Specialised Committees to consider issues of implementation, and of the Parliamentary Partnership Assembly and Domestic Advisory Groups.

The EU pointed to the regular reviews of implementation carried out by the TCA's joint bodies, as well as the European Commission's annual reports on the functioning of the TCA, which both concluded that the overall implementation of the TCA had been smooth. It also noted that the basic assessment from stakeholders, including the Domestic Advisory Group, was that the TCA operated well. The EU noted that the first UK-EU Summit had already identified new areas for cooperation, many of which fall under the TCA, supplement it or add to it

3. Cyber Security Cooperation

Cooperation on cyber issues in line with Articles 704 – 707 of the TCA

The UK highlighted that cooperation through the UK-EU Cyber dialogue had been positive, with the third meeting taking place in December 2025. The UK stressed the mutual benefit of strengthening the partnership through Articles 704-707 of the TCA, and suggested that UK participation in the NIS Cooperation Group would ensure alignment of the implementation of the respective cyber regulations, and cooperation with ENISA would permit increased information sharing on cyber threats. The UK stressed the importance of maximising cooperation under Articles 704-707 of the TCA ahead of the next Cyber Dialogue in 2026.

The EU agreed that cyber security was a key shared priority - noting the similar cyber security threat assessments and legislative approaches of the EU and UK as well as the interconnected networks and infrastructures - and agreed that UK-EU cooperation in this area could be deepened. The EU welcomed the UK's proposal to extend cooperation under Articles 704–707 and expressed openness to discussing the principles to underpin this work within the TCA framework and in line with internal procedures.

4. Trade, Level Playing Field and Economic Security Policies in the EU and UK

Measures relating to global steel overcapacity

The UK emphasised that the UK and the EU shared concerns of overcapacity and overproduction in global steel markets, and stressed the importance of cooperation in this area. The UK highlighted the interconnectedness of the UK and the EU steel industries and therefore the need to avoid taking mutually damaging measures. It pointed out that existing safeguards in both the UK and the EU would expire in June 2026, and urged both parties to work together on a solution.

The EU acknowledged the issue, citing the EU's significant loss of production facilities and jobs in the steel industry. The EU said its new measures were still under discussion by co-legislators and should enter into force by 1 July 2026. The EU appreciated its relationship with the UK as an FTA partner and indicated that the allocation of quotas under the measure will consider the existence of an FTA. The EU also noted that partners could not expect to maintain historic flows, since overall EU quotas would decrease by roughly 47%. The EU has decided to act in line with the WTO framework and therefore launched an Article XXVIII GATT process. The EU said they were ready to exchange views to identify the best possible solution under these circumstances as soon as possible.

The UK responded by pointing out that the UK-EU relationship was deeper than an ordinary FTA. The UK agreed on the need to begin negotiations as soon as possible to allow the steel industry to make informed decisions.

Initiatives related to economic security; and Industrial policy measures

The UK emphasised the need to strengthen economic security, given the global trade environment had become unpredictable. The UK said that its approach to economic security and trade was grounded in this new reality, while reaffirming its belief in open, transparent, rules-based international order as the foundation stone for growth and prosperity. It welcomed cooperation with the EU in international fora and stressed the need to deepen cooperation on supply chains. The UK cautioned against an overly-prohibitive definition of “Made in Europe”, warning that it would drive up costs and harm deeply integrated supply chains. The UK stressed the need to work together to address shared challenges, noting it should be seen as part of the solution, not the problem.

The EU gave an overview of its recently adopted Joint Communication on strengthening EU economic security. The EU noted that it was pursuing policies to be better prepared for geopolitical instability, including on critical minerals, cybersecurity, or joint projects with close partners. The EU took note of the UK’s concern on certain industrial policy measures, noting that the openness of the European market is subject to public scrutiny. The EU also referred to ongoing discussions in the College of Commissioners and at the upcoming informal EU leaders’ retreat on 12 February. The EU said it was seeking a balanced approach to avoid creating additional obstacles for trade with the UK, while ensuring the EU’s Single Market was not taken advantage of.

Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanisms (CBAM)

Both Parties noted their ambition to fight climate change and decarbonise their economies. They reflected on the positive engagement between the UK and EU on their respective Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanisms (CBAMs), noting that the linkage of ETSs would not only serve sustainability goals but also secure mutual exemption from respective CBAMs. Both Parties reaffirmed their aim to conclude negotiations to link their respective ETSs by the time of the next UK-EU Summit.

5. Fisheries

EU and UK fisheries relations

Both Parties noted that last year’s agreement on reciprocal access to fisheries waters for an additional 12 years demonstrated the strength of their partnership on fisheries. The EU welcomed the UK’s active engagement on fisheries management measures, but noted the Member States’ increasing concern about the cumulative impact of the UK measures on fisheries.

The UK emphasised their commitment to the sustainable management of fish stocks and their stewardship of Marine Protected Areas, noting the joint UK-EU goal to effectively protect 30% of their seas by 2030. Additionally, the UK said Fisheries

Management Plans are being developed and implemented to ensure long-term, evidence based and sustainable management for key fish stocks.

Strategic partnership of the EU and UK in the coastal States and North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) forums

The EU raised concern about the mackerel arrangement concluded in December 2025 between the UK, Iceland, Faroe Islands, and Norway, including the sustainability of the Northeast Atlantic mackerel stock. The EU noted that it is assessing the arrangement from the perspective of its compliance with international law. The EU welcomed the UK's indicated openness during recent consultations to working collaboratively on the agreement. The EU also expressed concerns about the cooperation between the EU and the UK in the NEAFC.

The UK responded that the agreement concluded in December 2025 significantly relieved fishing pressures and was intended as a necessary stepping stone to a comprehensive agreement involving all six coastal states, including the EU and Greenland. The UK confirmed that the agreement was open to the EU.

6. Any other business

Memorandum of Understanding on Intellectual Property

The UK noted the aim to finalise and sign the MoU on intellectual property as soon as possible to allow for cooperation between our respective intellectual property offices. The UK confirmed that it had offered to remove text on enforcement to unblock the MoU.

The EU recognised the importance of cooperation between intellectual property offices and noted that it was in both Parties' interest to conclude the MoU.

Annex 1: Participation list

UK delegation

- UK Co-chair of the Partnership Council
- First Minister and Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland
- UK Government officials from the Cabinet Office
- UK Government officials from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
- Scottish Government officials
- Northern Ireland Executive officials
- Welsh Government officials
- Officials from the Isle of Man, Bailiwick of Jersey and Bailiwick of Guernsey

EU delegation

- EU Co-chair of the Partnership Council
- European Commission officials
- EU officials from the European External Action Service and Delegation of the EU to the UK
- Representatives of EU Member States