



UKFT Brexit Position Paper

Executive Summary

Brexit undoubtedly presents significant challenges for the UK fashion and textile industry. However, there are also a wide range of opportunities number opportunities and benefits. The industry, in a strong and meaningful partnership with the UK Government, can emerge from Brexit in a strong position to seize these opportunities.

1. Skills & Talent

- With many factories having over 70% of employees from the EU the industry needs an urgent guarantee on the future status of EU workers already in the UK.
- To benefit from the potential uplift in manufacturing, as well as accessing other skilled talent from the EU, any visa entry system must be simple and open to skilled manufacturing staff not just highly paid jobs. The current £35,000 salary requirement to acquire permanent residency must be removed.
- University students should be excluded from any EU entry quotas.

2. International Trade

- The EU accounts for 74% of exports, the fashion and textile industry must have tariff and non-tariff free access to the EU.
- There are significant export opportunities for the industry beyond the EU – UKFT urge the Government to rapidly secure meaningful trade deals with key markets including the USA, Japan, China, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand.
- Significantly increased support for UK exporters - to at least match the support given by our EU competitors.
- With 70% of our clothing and textiles coming from outside the EU it is vital that the Government secures duty free access for products from Bangladesh, Cambodia Myanmar, Pakistan and Turkey. Other key sourcing markets include India, China, Laos, Thailand and Peru.

3. Manufacturing Opportunities

- As part of the industrial strategy, HMG in conjunction with LEPs and local councils etc. must make available funds to support the capital growth and employment opportunities in the manufacturing industry.

4. Regulatory Framework

- The UK government must passport the entirety of EU law into UK law.



5. Intellectual Property

- Industry relies on its ability to protect its innovation and creativity through a range of cost effective EU intellectual property rights. HMG must ensure that the IP protections currently offered as part of the UK's membership of the EU are mirrored when we leave the EU with no additional burden or registration or loss in protection.

6. Innovation & R&D Support

- Textile innovation in the UK is ranked number 3 in the world and number 1 in Europe. There are major growth opportunities for UK companies in medical textiles, advanced materials and composites and smart textiles. EU research programmes have been a key source of funding for research and development in the industry. The Government should invest significantly in R&D within the fashion and textile industry. The industry is a vital component of a huge range of other major sectors including medical, military, aerospace, transport, hotels, sports and construction.

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