

The Rt Hon. the Baroness Foster of Aghadrumsee DBE
Chair, Intertrade UK

The Rt Hon. Hilary Benn MP
Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
1 Horse Guards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

9 February 2026

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing to you following the Intertrade UK Board meeting held on 9 January 2026 at Belfast City Airport, during which the Road Haulage Association (RHA) provided to us a technical overview of the friction points that continue to impact UK internal market supply chains. These matters were further detailed by the RHA during a 28 January evidence session of the House of Lords Northern Ireland Scrutiny Committee, reinforcing the RHA's perspective on the persistent administrative challenges currently facing the movement of goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

A central theme of the RHA's testimony to Intertrade UK is that the current customs requirements for identifying Country of Origin and specific Product Codes remain problematic for many of their members and customers. They have proposed a series of policy changes to address this, including by moving "At Risk" assessments to the Point of Sale. The RHA believes this solution would remove much of the red tape associated with GB-NI trade, whilst being a viable basis for negotiation with the European Union (EU), specifically because it permits the EU to actively target and audit repeated non-compliant parties at the point of commercial transaction rather than at the transit point.

The RHA also highlighted to Intertrade UK that shifting data capture to the Point of Sale reflects the reality of how goods are manufactured and consumed in a dual market environment. This approach could serve to restore more predictable overnight logistics by allowing goods consumed within the UK to follow only UK regulations without the need for frontier-based bureaucratic processes.

The RHA has expressed a strong desire to brief you directly on the technical merits and the scalability of this proposal. Given their essential role in the logistics industry, I believe their "on-the-ground" perspective would be a valuable addition to your current departmental engagement and would therefore like to formally recommend that you meet with representatives from the RHA to discuss their objectives further.

Yours sincerely,

The Rt Hon. the Baroness Foster of Aghadrumsee DBE
Chair, Intertrade UK