

7 February 2023

Dear Prime Minister Sunak and President Macron,

The bilateral Chambers of Commerce – the French Chamber of Commerce in Great Britain and the Franco-British Chamber of Commerce and Industry – have helped to foster Franco-British business relations for over a century. The UK and France have a longstanding economic relationship: France is the UK's fifth-largest trading partner, and the UK is France's seventh-largest trading partner. Both Chambers recognise the strength of the commercial relationship and the importance of excellent cross-Channel business relations for growth and prosperity in the present international economic context

For these reasons, on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2022 the bilateral Chambers of Commerce launched the new UK-France Business Forum in Paris, hosted by the British Ambassador. The Business Forum is built on a joint commitment by the bilateral chambers and other partners to strengthen business relations between France and the UK. 28 business leaders from 25 French and British companies came together for business-to-business dialogue on commercial opportunities on both sides of the Channel.

In view of the upcoming UK-France Summit on 10<sup>th</sup> March, the Business Forum met on 7<sup>th</sup> February at the Residence of the French Ambassador to the United Kingdom to consider business and commercial priorities around the bilateral Summit. The Business Forum identified three key priorities and subsequently published reports (attached to this letter):

- i. Mobility
- ii. Climate transition
- iii. Technology & Innovation

The Business Forum recognises the importance of **cross-border mobility** in facilitating trade and investment between the UK and France. The mobility sub-group's recommendations can be summarised threefold:

- i. **Digital border:** Reduce friction at the border through advanced traveller preparation and authorisation and accelerate border crossing with biometric technology and trusted traveller recognition
- ii. **Visa Facilitation:** Facilitate the current visa process by reducing time and costs for applications, as well as introducing greater clarity and/or expanding the list of permitted paid activities for which no visa is required.
- iii. **Youth Mobility:** Introduce initiatives to encourage young people to experience cultural, educational and professional opportunities of the other country and create future economic opportunities for both countries.

**Climate action** is central to both countries' economic futures. Forum members see opportunities for further collaboration in the transition to renewable energy and the circular economy. As such, we propose that both governments:

- i. Create a **UK-France Renewable Energy Taskforce** and a **UK-France Circular Economy Taskforce**, bringing together private sector stakeholders, relevant authorities, and operators to facilitate cross-Channel investment.
- ii. **Unlock business investment in carbon free energy including nuclear, renewable energy and the circular economy** through specific regulatory changes and investments in infrastructure.

Both the UK and France are leading **technology** players in Europe and have a strategic interest in building digital sovereignty in the face of global competition and using technology to develop initiatives to support cross border climate action. The Business Forum Technology & Innovation working group proposes to:

- i. Organise a Tech Summit supported by the **UK-France Business Forum** to take place in the margins of London Tech Week, VivaTech and the next Business Forum (June or July 2023) in Paris.
- ii. Explore possibilities to create **Franco-British synergies between London Tech Week and VivaTech**, the two flagship tech conferences taking place in the UK and France respectively in June 2023.
- iii. Use **London Tech Week and VivaTech as an opportunity for both governments to make a high-level commitment** to creating a dynamic and resilient tech ecosystem in Europe.

Both Chambers recognise the short lead-time ahead of the 10<sup>th</sup> March Summit. As such, our sub-groups have focused on executable solutions where business and government can work together to create the architecture for trade and investment to thrive in the next phase of UK-France relations.

You will find attached the three draft reports, which both Chambers would be happy to discuss with UK and French Governments ahead of the UK-France Summit. We hope that the Summit will be a real success.

Sincerely,



Fabienne Viala,  
President, French Chamber of  
Commerce in Great Britain



Thierry Drilhon,  
President, Franco-British Chamber