



HM Treasury, 1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ

Lord Holmes of Richmond MBE  
House of Lords  
London  
SW1A 0PW

3 March 2025

Dear Lord Holmes,

Thank you for your question during the recent debate on the Government's steps to promote the benefits of the Electronic Trade Documents Act and encourage global adoption of similar legislation.

The Government recognises the benefits that trade brings to businesses, which is why reducing trade frictions is a priority. Trade digitalisation is a key tool to modernise trade processes, reduce transaction times, and deliver economic growth.

The Government is actively promoting the benefits of electronic trade documents to UK exporters, including working with the British Chamber of Commerce Singapore to support trade digitalisation pilots between the UK and Southeast Asia. These pilots have shown businesses experience a 91% reduction in email traffic, an 89% reduction in paper usage, a 67% increase in staff productivity, and a 40% reduction in trade processing times by using electronic trade documents.

To support domestic adoption, the UK Export Academy runs quarterly webinars with the International Chamber of Commerce UK to educate businesses on trade digitalisation and the Government is creating a centralised information hub on how businesses can use electronic trade documents within their trade supply chains.

To drive global adoption, we are engaging with international partners through organisations such as the World Trade Organisation and the World Customs Organisation. The UK is a leading signatory to the Agreement on Electronic Commerce, which will ensure the vast majority of forms necessary for the import, export, or transit of goods are available and accepted electronically by signatories of the agreement. The UK is also pushing for greater collaboration among G7 partners and we are engaging with G20 proposals on trade digitalisation to complement the Electronic Trade Documents Act.

In our free trade agreements, the UK has secured commitments on digitalisation, in FTAs with Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and UK-EEA EFTA. Furthermore, we have signed Digital Economic Agreements with countries including Ukraine and Singapore.

The Government remains committed to advancing trade digitalisation to ensure UK businesses benefit from more efficient, cost-effective, and sustainable trade practices while working towards a globally accepted framework for electronic trade documents.

A copy of this letter will be placed in the library.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Livermore', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

**Spencer Livermore**

**FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY**