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BPA PRESS RELEASE

“Ports welcome focus on businesses and trade in Labour announcements on Brexit”

Ahead of tonight's Labour Party launch of its campaign for the UK to remain within the European Single Market and Customs Union after Brexit, British Ports Association Chief Executive Richard Ballantyne welcomed the renewed focus on businesses and trade. He said:

"As the outcome of the Brexit negotiations remains unclear, ports and traders will welcome the focus on certainty and continuity. We are not a political organisation and so took no side in the referendum but ports are examining the potential consequences of leaving the EU with great interest.

In particular the impacts of leaving the EU Customs Union are likely to be substantial. The prospect of customs and bureaucratic checks at the border could potentially create congestion and delays at certain ports adding costs for traders, manufacturers and consumers.

Allowing the UK to maintain as many of the benefits of Customs Union membership as possible will ensure business as usual for ports and operators in the logistics chain."

The Government recently published its Brexit Customs Partnership position paper which made some helpful suggestions on trade with Europe and shared standards but there is still a long way to go and there is no indication from the EU as to if the UK's proposals will be acceptable.

A number of ports, particularly in the Roll-on Roll-off/ferry sector, have warned about customs challenges post Brexit. However more generally some ports will find the bureaucratic requirements of the recently introduced EU Port Services Regulation (PSR) difficult to swallow if the rules remain in place after Brexit.

This is particularly likely under Labour's planned continued membership of the Single Market and the BPA will be lobbying to limit the negative impacts of the PSR.

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General notes

- The British Ports Association represents the interests of 100 port members, covering over 350 ports, terminal operators and port facilities
- BPA Member Guide available online at: <http://www.britishports.org.uk> or direct form the BPA
- The UK ports industry plays a fundamentally important role in the country's economy. 96% of the UK's international trade – imports and exports – is carried through UK ports which also handle 60 million passenger journeys each year
- UK ports directly employ around 120,000 people, often in areas of high inequality and unemployment
- The UK port industry is the second largest in Europe, handling more than 500 million tonnes of freight each year

Contact the BPA

If you would like any more information on the above briefing or to discuss any of the issues raised please contact:

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