[Name of your MP](https://members.parliament.uk/members/Commons)

House of Commons

Westminster

SW1A 0AA

Dear Name,

I am writing from name of company based in your constituency regarding measures to ensure businesses like ours can thrive once the Transition period with the EU concludes at the end of this year. I’d like you to support our business by encouraging the Government to remove unnecessary red tape for the fine wine sector.

Name of company is an SME business. We employ X people in Y branches, including Z in your constituency. Although our turnover is A, our gross profit is B, which reflects [the high value of the products/the low margins in fine wine trading/ high rates of excise duty in the UK/ other]. Approximately C% of our wines are imported from the EU27, representing E% of our turnover.

Our business supports the Government’s aim of securing a comprehensive, zero tariff future partnership agreement with the EU; and also to make progress on negotiating trade agreements with our major trading partners. Our priority is to ensure the UK remains at the centre of the world’s wine and spirit trade – a trade that generates almost £50 billion in economic activity. The success of the UK’s world leading fine wine sector is integral to that aim. Despite the fact that 99% of wine consumed in the UK is imported, wine is the UK’s 6th biggest food and drink export which is significantly driven by fine wine exports to markets like Hong Kong (worth around £170m) and the US (£88m). Furthermore, the UK accounts for around a third of the £5bn global fine wine industry and is a major global hub.

These are uncertain times for businesses like ours and not knowing the likely trading environment at the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020 is adding considerably to that uncertainty and making planning for the future even more difficult. **Rather than wait for the outcome of the negotiations with the EU, there are measures which we believe the Government should commit to now, which would give businesses like ours a welcome boost.**

One policy area in particular, the introduction of wine import certificates for EU wine, will result in UK businesses having to comply with unnecessary bureaucracy and increased costs from 1 January 2021. Far from taking back control, simply rolling over existing EU legislation into UK law would mean having to bend to rules designed to disadvantage wine imports. Fine wine is particularly impacted by this requirement as the introduction of wine import certifications would be near impossible to comply with - you would have to open expensive bottles of wine no longer in production to test them, devaluing them very significantly.

I am particularly concerned at the Government’s lack of understanding of the issue, which stated in a recent written answer that the cost of introducing VI-1 wine documentation would be “nil or negligible”. This is categorically not the case.

We believe the following steps could be taken [amend as appropriate for your business] by Government now to boost certainty for our business and ensure the UK retains its status as a global trading hub:

* Commit to removing/take steps to avoid introducing unnecessary bureaucratic burdens on 1 January next year – in particular, suspend import certification requirements for wine; and
* Demonstrate the UK is serious about international trade by committing to join the World Wine Trade Group.

Not only do these measures make sound economic sense, I believe they would be politically attractive and send a very strong, and easily communicated, signal to consumers and business that the UK will be operating differently on 1 January 2021 than on 31 December 2020.

These policy outcomes are not dependent on securing a deal, nor would there be any loss of negotiating capital if the Government were to support UK businesses along the lines I have set out. By committing to act now, the Government would provide welcome encouragement for our business and the sector as a whole in these unprecedented and uncertain times.

I should be very grateful if you could consider these matters and raise them on our behalf with the Government, in particular Michael Gove and George Eustice.

Yours sincerely,