Dear President von der Leyen,

Dear Prime Minister,

The UK and EU aerospace and aviation industries are concerned by lack of progress in negotiations to date. Given the short time remaining to reach agreement on key issues, progress on aviation safety is now an urgent priority.

The General Aviation Manufacturers Association (GAMA) is an international trade association representing the majority of the world’s leading manufacturers of General Aviation aeroplanes and rotorcraft, engines, avionics, and related equipment. ADS is the UK trade association representing the Aerospace, Defence, Security and Space sectors, with a turnover of around £79bn (€90bn).

We believe the opportunity should now be taken to build consensus on a pragmatic approach to aviation safety, providing much needed confidence in our industries and putting in place strong foundations to secure future industrial growth and investment in the UK and the EU.

Aviation safety

Aviation safety across Europe is a priority for our members. There is mutual interest for both sides to reach an agreement on aviation safety that avoids costly and damaging duplication of processes. This is an international industry, with complex and delicate pan-European supply chains. Regulatory complexity will add costs and make it harder for UK and EU manufacturers to compete in international markets.

The Bilateral Aviation Safety Agreement (BASA) should be a standalone agreement that is not impacted by the wider free trade agreement. The requirement for the BASA to be negotiated within the free trade agreement is unprecedented.

A non-negotiated outcome on aviation safety would be catastrophic for the European aviation and aerospace sectors, and the hundreds of thousands of jobs they support. Duplication of regulatory processes will add significant unnecessary cost to industry. These are costs industry is currently unable to absorb.

It is clear from discussions with both sides, and their respective draft legal texts published to date, that key issues remain to be negotiated. These issues are not insurmountable. By showing pragmatism and flexibility, an agreement can be in place for the end of the transition period.

Wider issues affecting the aerospace sector

Beyond the BASA, urgent progress needs to be made on several wider issues including customs & borders, import VAT, chemical regulation, and Northern Ireland. We have attached a technical annex outlining these issues in detail.

The global aviation industry is experiencing a severe impact from the COVID-19 crisis, putting aerospace manufacturers and operators in a struggle for survival. The compounded effect of the pandemic and a non-negotiated outcome on these issues would damage the European aerospace sector and threaten hundreds of thousands of jobs. In addition, ground will be lost to international competitors at a crucial time, and the recovery will take years.
A comprehensive agreement on all these issues is essential before the end of the transition period. A positive outcome will allow industry and Government to focus on a green recovery and developing the cutting-edge technologies required to decarbonise aviation.

**June stock-take**

Time is running out to finalise an agreement. Aviation safety was not on the agenda for the fourth and final round of negotiations. It is absolutely vital that progress is made ahead of the June stock-take. We are appealing to both sides to reflect on their positions in relation to aviation safety and demonstrate the flexibility required to move forward.

Negotiations must continue after the June stock-take, and aviation safety must be back on the agenda as a matter of urgency. As ever, we stand ready to engage constructively on the issues set out in this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Pete Bunce
President and CEO, GAMA

Paul Everitt
Chief Executive, ADS Group