

The United Kingdom and Chile: a partnership built for the future

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Chris Elmore MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Multilateral, Human Rights, Latin America and the Caribbean) reflects on his visit to Chile.

My first visit to Chile as a Minister at the British Foreign Office brings me to Santiago for the inauguration of President José Antonio Kast - a ceremony of great democratic spirit, and an opportunity for me to reflect on the relationship between our nations: one that is founded on shared values, but, crucially, that looks towards the future.

Our relationship is built on a foundation of mutually open economies - with a shared focus on economic growth. Chile is the one of the UK's most important trading partners in Latin America, with a total trade in goods and services worth £2.2 billion in the four quarters to the end of Q3 2025. With the United Kingdom's accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) in 2024, we became members of a bloc representing 15% of global GDP, of which Chile has been a part since 2023. Together, we are well placed to make the most of the trading opportunities this agreement offers.

The relationship between our two nations is also shaped by a shared understanding that economic growth goes hand in hand with a focus on environmental conservation and sustainability. The United Kingdom and Chile work together in areas of mutual interest, such as upholding high ESG standards in the critical minerals industry, essential to the energy transition, and driving the development of new clean energy sources. These collaborations are central to our collective future.

Chile's extraordinary range of natural resources and the United Kingdom's expertise in mining and energy make us natural partners. For instance, with the signing of two agreements in January, the British Geological Survey (BGS) established new partnerships with the National Geology and Mining Service (Sernageomin) and the National Lithium and Salt Flats Institute (InLiSa). These agreements will allow us to continue promoting the exchange of cutting-edge information and technology, helping to develop advanced methodologies for the sustainable exploration and extraction of minerals, and attracting investment to the sector.

Another of the most promising areas for our collaboration is the development of the naval shipbuilding industry. Chile's National Shipbuilding Policy reflects genuine ambition, and the United Kingdom has relevant experience to support in this area. In Scotland, investment in the shipbuilding industry has helped revitalise coastal communities, creating quality jobs, driving innovation and bringing together universities, industry, and government around a common purpose.

The Biobio region in Chile presents a remarkably similar opportunity. As communities seek to reinvent themselves, shipbuilding offers a pathway to sustainable economic development. We want to walk that path alongside Chile, sharing our knowledge and working together to transform industrial heritage into industrial renewal.

Scientific collaboration is another significant area of our partnership - from astronomy to the protection of oceans and the study of climate change. Furthermore, Chile's role as a gateway to Antarctica makes it a strategic partner. The collaboration between the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) and the Chilean Antarctic Institute (INACH) has deep historical roots that go beyond scientific

research; it also plays an important geopolitical role focused on the protection of the white continent.

The start of a new government in Chile is a natural moment to reflect on what this partnership represents and where it can go. At its heart, it is a relationship between two nations that believe in democracy, open economies and the role of science.

The future of our relationship will continue to be built on these foundations. My visit to Chile has only strengthened my belief in the extraordinary potential of the partnership between the United Kingdom and Chile, and I reiterate my congratulations to the new administration.

Further information

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