

Northern Ireland economy minister flies to US to boost trade and investment

Northern Ireland's economy minister has pledged to grow trade and investment with the US at the end of a three-day tour.

Gordon Lyons said the US, as the second-largest export destination, is hugely important to the Northern Ireland economy and holds significant potential for future growth.

In the year to the end of September 2021, Northern Ireland exports to the US totalled £938 million.

He was speaking to the Northern Ireland Bureau in Washington DC at the end of a three-day visit which also included New York and Maryland, ending with a reception at the White House.

A statement from the Department for the Economy said Mr Lyons was visiting existing US investors in Northern Ireland, as well as those considering the region as a potential location.

"I have been proud to represent Northern Ireland this week and to feel the warm welcome from all in the US," he said. "With countries beginning to open up again, it is more important than ever to reassure the world that Northern Ireland is open for business.

"This has been a very worthwhile visit to create further opportunities for Northern Ireland export focussed businesses, build relationships and to highlight our strengths as an attractive place to invest, visit, study and relocate to."

During Mr Lyons visit to Maryland, he met with representatives from the state's Department of Commerce and Department of Labor to strengthen ties under the joint cyber-security Memorandum of Understanding, signed with the Northern Ireland

Department for the Economy in 2019.

It has helped Northern Ireland retain its status as the number one international investment location for US cyber security firms.

“I was pleased to be here today to renew the ties of our cyber security MOU with Maryland. The MOU provides a great opportunity for both Northern Ireland and Maryland to help each other by sharing knowledge and best practice. Nurturing relationships and attracting more high value inward investment is a priority in my 10X Economic Vision. MOU’s can play an important role in helping to support this Vision, which will benefit our economy and our people.”