

Events Industry Alliance

Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee – Promoting Britain Abroad Inquiry

Submission on behalf of the Events Industry Alliance

Overview

The Events Industry Alliance (EIA) is an alliance of trade associations representing the UK business events sector. Many of our members' events are the engine of the domestic and international economy. High profile trade and consumer exhibitions across key sectors already sustain 180,000 UK businesses, have over £9bn of economic impact and drive £70bn of trade from around the world into UK businesses.

Our industry is a British success story. It fuels travel, tourism and hospitality and acts as a catalyst for growth by bringing together investors, innovators and customers from around the globe to do the deals that drive international trade.

As an industry, we are responsible for a large number of international visitors to the UK with conferences and exhibitions taking place on a near daily basis with our members involved. We welcome the opportunity to feed into this inquiry on the progress of the recovery of the UK as a destination for international travellers.

Our members are also involved heavily in how the UK promotes itself overseas as we have many world class business event venues which attract international shows and exhibitions each year.

Our latest Economic Impact study quantifies the economic significance of exhibitions in the United Kingdom, it showed that the industry generated £9.4 billion in trade and attracted 6.1 million visitors to the UK on an annual basis. This contribution is rarely recognised. Numerous Governments have failed to provide the industry with incentives to support their trade objectives.

As a trade association, we believe the Department of Culture, Media and Sport could do more to support our industry to grow across the globe, providing more jobs based in the UK and fuelling the country's growth.

The following policies are provided as suggested solutions that the Government could adopt to allow our industry to continue to thrive and promote Britain abroad.

How could our industry help to promote Britain abroad?

Reduced trade friction and greater access to markets

Post-Brexit trading conditions have had a significant impact on the business events industry. We want the Government to make it easier for foreign businesses to exhibit in the UK while at the

same time alleviating the current issues of outbound trade, particularly our industry working in the EU and EEA for short periods of time.

We know that if actioned, reduced trade fiction would deliver significant growth to the industry alongside the associated economic benefits. Putting barriers in place which limit the growth of events is short sighted and so the measures below are designed to ensure we have an attractive UK supply chain in the business events industry.

We believe that Britain could be promoted abroad through the creation of a business events office, similar to current proposals for a [Music Exports Office](#).

This Business Events Office could promote the industry internationally as well as being responsible for easing logistical issues for the industry internationally.

Government should take a strategic view of events

We also believe that the Government should take a strategic view of events, using them to advocate for and raise the profile of key sectors and stimulate trade. They could be used to articulate Government policy and stimulate trade across the UK and globally.

We are calling on Government to recommit to the Business Events Strategy, launched in 2013 by the then Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Sajid Javid who stated that *“there is a need for a more strategic, national approach and we want to seize the opportunity to present the UK as a competitive destination.”*

This request for support is not financial but ties in with wishing to see greater support from Government and a reduction of interventions that can be detrimental to the industry’s international competitiveness. In order to deliver this the Government would need to commit to cross departmental collaboration and increased engagement to facilitate growth to ensure the UK becomes the ‘World’s Meeting Place’.

Create incentives for growth

The Events Industry Alliance is requesting that the Government commit to providing incentives to boost the potential of the sector via support measures designed to create more opportunities for people to pursue careers in the events sector and plug the gaps that are standing in the way of creating the maximum benefit for the economy.

The Government has invested considerably in the Film & Television industry, most recently providing £77m to grow the industry and generate more jobs. One of the measures included in this budget is the Create Growth Programme through which DCMS supports businesses to commercialise their ideas and access resources, knowledge and private investments to scale up.

A similar programme would be welcomed for the business events industry, identifying key policy areas for Government and finding the events that align with these – or events that could be brought into the UK – providing a tax credit for any business that would be involved with keeping and growing events in the UK or bringing new events to the UK. Measures such as these have substantial positive impacts on the economy.

The above reforms would ensure focused engagement from Government, delivery of incentives for growth and reduced trade frictions would supercharge the business events industry and enable us to ensure the UK becomes the 'World's Meeting Place' through continued promotion abroad.



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