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To the attention of The Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch MP

Secretary of State for International Trade and President of the Board of Trade
Department for International Trade
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Dear Secretary of State,

I write on behalf of the Business Visits and Events Partnership (BVEP), representing the UK Events Industry, to warmly congratulate you on your appointment as Secretary of State at the Department of International Trade.

The UK Events Industry is of critical importance in supporting the delivery of the government's economic growth agenda and driving economic recovery. Business events provide a highly competitive and productive platform for UK businesses to do business at home and most importantly in overseas markets.

Business events held in the UK and abroad generate trade, exports, inward investment, regeneration, knowledge exchange and scientific and technological innovation, as well as providing a showcase for Britain on the global stage. This is the result of the UK having resilient, highly innovative, world-class conference, exhibition and trade fair sectors that are estimated to generate £165 billion of trade transactions annually from both UK and international businesses. In particular business events offer small businesses an affordable and convenient opportunity to market their products and services to a global audience.

The UK is also home to many of the largest international exhibition and business event companies that export their services worldwide, estimated to be worth a further £3 billion per annum across more than one thousand events organised overseas.

Events are also key to driving the recovery of the tourism economy, itself a major UK export activity, and in which attendance at events accounts for over half of all visitor's spend. This is currently estimated to be worth around £50 billion of which £12 billion is spent by international business visitors in the UK. The Industry is targeting to build back to pre-pandemic levels in excess of £70 billion within the next eighteen months. The Industry's Recovery Plan sets out new initiatives that will improve the already strong offer of the UK as a world destination of choice for meetings, conferences and exhibitions, so that it can retain its unrivalled position as the world's meeting place. Current initiatives include measures that will prioritise events in the Government's target economic and business sectors.

There have been several attempts to more closely align UK business event activities and policies with your Department's priorities. These include previously working with DCMS on the establishment of an Events Industry Board and the publication of an International Business Events Action Plan. Additionally Events have been accorded a specific stream in the GREAT programme, using "Events are GREAT" as a promotional tool to win international business events that can be staged in the UK and attract international business and market UK goods and services to overseas visitors. This is particularly well manifested in the Business Events Growth Programme, funded by GREAT and administrated by VisitBritain which looks to attract and enhance business events held in the UK. There is also a cross Whitehall Working Group, co-ordinated by DCMS, which seeks to engage with Government Departments on policies and activities that can generate more trade and export opportunities through the better utilisation of conferences and trade fairs.



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However the Industry strongly believes even more can be achieved by a much closer relationship directly with your Department, especially if there were to be a more strategic role in the delivery and implementation of the Government's international trade activities using business events to promote key export sectors and inward investment opportunities. There is a big win for greater economic growth to be gained as your Department leads in these areas and the Industry is very keen to help make this happen.

Representatives of the BVEP hope you would agree to discuss further how the opportunities from business events can be even more greatly leveraged to support the Government's growth agenda and meet your Department's policy objectives.

In the meantime, I wish you every success in your new role.

Kindest regards,

Michael Hirst OBE

BVEP Lead – Advocacy & Government Relations



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About the BVEP

The Business Visits and Events Partnership's (BVEP) vision is to support sustainable growth for the UK's £70 billion UK Events Industry. BVEP's mission is to support growth across the entire sector via advocacy, networking, collaboration and a collective voice. BVEP's objectives are to:

- Operate an umbrella organisation to represent, promote and further the interest of member organisations involved in the United Kingdom Events Industry
- Advance the interests, standing, quality, sustainability and growth of the United Kingdom Events' Industry
- Seek greater collaboration across the Events' Industry sectors on common issues
- Forge close links with Government departments, including devolved Governments where possible via representation that can influence favourable policies towards the Industry. In particular, maintain strong relationships with key sponsoring departments, DCMS, DIT and BEIS
- Seek a stronger link with the Creative Industries and other related sectors
- Encourage joint events
- Increase the focus on professionalism and skills development.

BVEP PARTNERS

Association of British Professional Conference Organisers (ABPCO)

Association for Events Management Education (AEME)

beam (formerly HBAA)

Business Travel Association (BTA)

Core Cities

Events Industry Alliance (EIA)

Events Industry Forum (EIF)

Event Marketing Association (EMA)

Event & Visual Communication Association (EVCOM)

International Congress & Convention Association (ICCA)

London & Partners

Meet in Ireland

Meetings Industry Association (MIA)

Meetings Professionals International UK & Ireland (MPI)

National Outdoors Events Association (NOEA)

Production Services Association (PSA)

Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA)

Professional Lighting and Sound Association (PLASA)

Tourism Northern Ireland

Unique Venues of London (UVL)

VisitBritain/VisitEngland

VisitScotland

Visit Wales.

Supporting Government Bodies

Department for Digital, Culture Media and Sport (DCMS)

Department for International Trade (DIT).