

The Rt. Hon. John Whittingdale OBE MP
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport
Department for Culture, Media and Sport
100 Parliament Street
London SW1A 2BQ

28 June 2016

Dear John

I am writing to you regarding the impact of the referendum. While the outcome of the referendum has to be respected, there are considerable impacts on the UK tourism industry that need to be addressed, both immediately and when the decision is made to trigger Article 50 and negotiations begin on the UK's future relationship with the EU.

In discussing these impacts it is worth remembering that the UK receives 23m visitors from the EU each year and that these visitors provide £10bn per annum in export earnings for the UK economy and employment for over 180,000 UK residents. As such, their reaction to the referendum and the UK's withdraw from the European Union has the potential to adversely effect this very valuable sector of the UK economy.

While we have entered a period where there will be considerable uncertainty until a new Prime Minister is elected, we believe that there are three immediate actions that the Government needs to take.

1. One of the main adverse outcomes of the referendum has been the perception that the UK is unwelcoming of foreigners, regardless of whether they are intending to live in the UK or simply planning a holiday. The Government urgently needs to counter this perception with a co-ordinated cross-government initiative to reassure overseas markets that the UK is welcoming of visitors.
2. There is considerable confusion amongst people in overseas markets as to the UK's current status and whether there are now new requirements to enter the country. Again, the Government needs to provide clarity in overseas markets that nothing has changed and that the current requirements for visitors to the UK will remain for at least two years.
3. The UK tourism industry is highly dependent upon overseas workers. Figures from People 1st, the Sector Skills Council for the tourism and hospitality industries, show that employees in the sector that were borne overseas has increased from 19% in 2004 to 28% in 2014 in response the rapid growth of the UK tourism industry and increasing skills shortages in the local labour market. These employees are highly valued and actively contribute to the UK providing a high quality experience for visitors. The Government needs to provide reassurances that they are welcome, valued and that their right to stay in the UK is unaffected by the referendum.

In addition to these immediate actions, as tourism represents 5% of the UK's total exports to the EU and 180,000 jobs are dependent upon this trade, we would like to be reassured that the views and needs of the UK tourism industry need to be included in negotiations on the UK's future relationship with the EU. This includes inviting tourism representatives to discussions on negotiations and including someone with tourism industry knowledge on the Government's negotiation team.

To support this, the Tourism Alliance is currently developing a Tourism Exit Strategy which will be presented to the Tourism Industry Council. This will identify the Agreements, Rights and Regulations that the industry needs to be retained (and those that can be removed) in order to provide the best possible basis for future economic growth.

In the meantime, if we can help you in any way, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bernard Donoghue', with a horizontal line underneath.

Bernard Donoghue
Chairman

Cc

Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills

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