



Weekly Monitoring **23rd June 2023**



EIA Update

The EIA held their regular stakeholder catch up with the Department for Business & Trade and provided a positive story of current trading conditions whilst noting the need to look deeper at the various underlying trends (such as cost concerns, cost of living impacting B2C shows, and large scale variations between markets).

It still feels like testing times for many, despite strong financials, with reports of pre-pandemic recovery, high inflation, increased costs remaining a pressure, and people still operating with lighter teams and thus running fast across all sides of the industry. The EIA reported continued concern on a lack of clarity on visas and working permits which have also been escalated to the EU parliament via EMECA - European Major Exhibition Centre's Association, which unites 22 leading exhibition venues in Europe.

Political Update

At this week's Trade Unlocked conference the Shadow Foreign Secretary, David Lammy outlined a future Labour Government's plans to convene a new business advisory council to engage on foreign policy under the party's plans to place economics at the heart of UK diplomacy.

In Edinburgh, Leader of the Opposition Sir Keir Starmer launched Labour's fourth mission: — a pledge to turn Britain into a clean energy superpower. He used the speech to position Labour as the green choice ahead of an expected general election and to outline the party's plans for GB Energy, a state-owned energy company.

Inflation figures remain stubbornly high, still stuck at 8.7% and the Bank of England had to raise rates further which could mean a drop of more than 20% in disposable income for 1.4 million mortgage holders. Simultaneously, the UK Government's debt in May reached more than 100% of its annual national income for the first time since 1961 as state borrowing more than doubled.

News

More than £200 million pledged to help UK lead the way on greener air travel

The Department for Business and Trade has announced £218 million of combined Government and industry funding to enable the UK to lead on greener air travel. The funding will help develop cutting-edge green aviation technology and grow the UK's share of the global aerospace market. The joint commitment with industry to invest in new aircraft and manufacturing technologies is set to help secure at least £20 billion of further private investment in aerospace in the UK and support over 100,000 jobs.

UK Government introduces post-Brexit trading scheme for developing countries

The UK has introduced its post-Brexit Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS) covering 65 countries and a population base of over 3.3 billion people. This scheme will remove or reduce tariffs and simplify the trading rules for the importation of goods from developing nations. On the scheme's introduction, Minister for International Trade Nigel Huddleston MP stated:

"This scheme is a brilliant example of the UK taking advantage of its status as an independent trading nation and I am excited to see it implemented today. It will create opportunities for businesses around the world, supporting livelihoods, creating jobs and diversifying local and international supply chains. It will also benefit UK businesses and consumers by lowering import costs on a whole range of products."

UK-India concludes round ten of FTA negotiations

The United Kingdom and the Republic of India concluded the tenth round of talks for an UK-India FTA. As with previous rounds, this was conducted in a hybrid fashion - a number of UK officials travelled to New Delhi for negotiations and others attended virtually. Technical discussions were held across 10 policy areas over 50 separate sessions. They included detailed draft treaty text discussions in these policy areas.

The eleventh round of negotiations is due to take place in the coming month.

UK signs fifth trade pact with US State of Utah

International Trade Minister Nigel Huddleston and Utah Governor Spencer Cox signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) designed to grow trade with Utah, a US state with a GDP of £201 billion in 2022 – equivalent to the economy of New Zealand. This is the fifth arrangement of its kind between the UK and a US state and signifies a milestone in the UK's trade ties with Utah.

The pact aims to strengthen the UK's trading relationship with Utah, establishing a framework to unlock export opportunities for UK businesses, encourage investment, and create jobs in the UK.

UK and Denmark sign a Bilateral Agreement

The British and Danish Government's have signed a bilateral cooperation agreement. The agreement sets out the two nations joint ambitions on issues such as foreign policy, security and defence, science and technology, sustainable development, economic cooperation, irregular migration, and climate and energy.

Newly formed Maritime Council hosts its first session

The Secretary of State for Transport opened the first session of the recently formed Maritime Council, to discuss the delivery of government's Maritime 2050 strategy, how to create new jobs, boost trade links and minimise emissions.

In his opening address to the council, Transport Secretary Mark Harper MP stated:

"As an island nation, maritime has always underpinned our national connectivity and prosperity, so it's vital we secure the long-term future of this sector and deliver on the Maritime 2050's recommendations to make the UK maritime sector the strongest and most competitive in the world."

Government Skills for Growth conference takes place

The Government's Skills for Growth conference took place last week, hosting some of the biggest British and international companies to discuss how to create a workforce fit for the future and address the urgent recruitment needs of businesses.

The Education Secretary Gillian Keegan spoke at the event, alongside Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt, Business and Trade Secretary Kemi Badenoch, Skills Minister Robert Halfon and Business Minister Kevin Hollinrake alongside the government's independent skills policy adviser, Sir Michael Barber.

Education Secretary, Gillian Keegan said:

"I know from my years in business that organisations drive innovation and create opportunities, but without skilled workers, it often feels like you're driving with the handbrake on. The Government is investing in building future skills for growth and calling on businesses to work with us, so that together we can build the workforce of tomorrow."

Re-appointment of Sir Michael Barber as adviser on skills policy

Sir Michael Barber has been reappointed as adviser on skills policy delivery to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Education. Sir Michael was originally appointed back in November 2022, however due to the continued importance of the skills agenda, it has been decided that his role will be extended for a second term until 16 December 2023 to help support the Government on the reforms set out in the Skills for Jobs White Paper.

Parliament

House of Commons

Written questions to Department for Work and Pensions

Conservative MP for Ashfield, Lee Anderson asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, “what steps his Department is taking to support people with (a) disabilities and (b) long-term health conditions into work.”

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work Tom Pursglove responded:

“A range of Government initiatives are supporting disabled people, and people with health conditions, including those with long-term health conditions, to start, stay, and succeed in work. These include:

- Increasing Work Coach support in Jobcentres for people with health conditions receiving Universal Credit or Employment and Support Allowance;*
- Disability Employment Advisers in Jobcentres offering advice and expertise on how to help disabled people and people with health conditions into work;*
- The Work and Health Programme and Intensive Personalised Employment Support, providing tailored and personalised support for participants;*
- Access to Work grants helping towards extra costs of working beyond standard reasonable adjustments;*
- Disability Confident, encouraging employers to think differently about disability and health, and to take positive action to address the issues disabled employees face in the workplace;*
- An online information and advice service called “Support with Employee Health and Disability”, providing better integrated and tailored guidance on supporting health and disability in the workplace;*
- Increasing access to occupational health, including the testing of financial incentives for small and medium-sized enterprises and the self-employed; and*
- Work in partnership between the DWP and health systems, including Employment Advice in NHS Talking Therapies, which combines psychological treatment and employment support for people with mental health conditions.*

To tackle rising economic inactivity due to long-term sickness, we announced a wide-reaching package at the Spring Budget to support disabled people and people with health conditions to work. New investment will provide faster access to joined-up work and health support, including for mental health and

musculoskeletal conditions, the two leading causes of economic inactivity due to long term sickness."

Oral question to the Treasury

During oral question to the Treasury, SNP MP for Glasgow North Patrick Grady asked the Chancellor "what recent assessment his Department has made of the potential impact of withdrawal from the EU on the economy?"

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury Victoria Atkins responded:

"I note that the UK has grown at a similar rate to comparable European economies since 2016, and that it still remains challenging to separate out the effects of Brexit and wider global trends on the UK economy. We remain absolutely committed to seizing the opportunities we now have, free from the EU."

House of Lords

House of Lords debates Non-Domestic Rating Bill

During its second reading, Members of the House of Lords discussed the current performance of the Valuation Office Agency, the reduction in time between property revaluations and current local authority investment in business and economic growth. The [Non-Domestic Rating Bill](#) is a government bill that would make changes to business rates. It would reduce the time between property revaluations, impose a duty on businesses to notify the Valuation Office Agency of changes that could affect a property's rateable value, and introduce rates reliefs for improvements to property and heat networks.

House of Lords debates Lifelong Learning (Higher Education Fee Limits)

Bill

During its second reading, Members of the House of Lords discussed the main principles and purpose of the Lifelong Learning (Higher Education Fee Limits). The [Lifelong Learning \(Higher Education Fee Limits\) Bill](#) is intended to support the Government's lifelong loan entitlement policy by creating a new credit-based method for calculating maximum tuition fee limits for modules, short courses and full courses in England. This will ensure that learners who study flexibly are not charged disproportionately and allows access to post-18 education throughout a person's working life.