

CAVENDISH

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Weekly Monitoring
Friday 24th
January



EIA Update

The EIA was delighted to meet with Dame Caroline Dinenage, Chair of the Culture Media and Sports Committee in Parliament this week. We found this meeting to be very productive and built positively on our previous meetings with Dame Caroline.

Off the back of the meeting, we are preparing a response to the Culture, Media and Sport Committee's inquiry into the "State of Play" where we will be advocating for a standalone committee session on the business events industry and the challenges that the industry faces.

To help with our engagement with Government and to help quantify the impact of Brexit the EIA recently went out to AEO and AEV members assessing the impact of Brexit, to build on the work of a survey that ESSA members have already filled out. If you haven't yet and wish to respond please find a link to the [survey here.](#)

Political Update

This week, we saw regulatory services continue to come under scrutiny as the Chair of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), Marcus Bokkerink, was removed from his role. This came following reports that the Business Secretary Jonathan Reynolds intervened and Ministers had previously informed Bokkerink that they did not feel the regulator was focused on growth. The news follows the Chancellor, Rachel Reeves, summoning all regulators to a meeting to discuss the need to remove barriers to growth.

It was a busy week for the Chancellor who also attended the World Economic Forum in Davos to promote the Government's growth and investment agenda on the global stage.

The week started with growing rumours that she would announce her support for airport expansion at Gatwick Airport, Heathrow Airport, and London Luton Airport amid growing concerns over the state of the UK economy. Additional announcements from the Chancellor during the summit included plans to soften the abolition of non-dom status and ease visa requirements for in the AI and life sciences sectors. More details to come as Reeves is expected to deliver a “growth speech” next week.

Across the pond Donald Trump was inaugurated as the 47th President of the United States where he promptly withdrew the US from the Paris Climate Agreement and granted Presidential pardons to the majority of individuals involved in the Capitol attack on 6 January 2021.

News

[The first Visitor Economy Advisory Council meeting held](#)

The Government has announced the formation of the Visitor Economy Advisory Council to enhance collaboration between the Government and the tourism industry. Co-chaired by Tourism Minister Sir Chris Bryant and Karin Sheppard of IHG Hotels & Resorts, the council includes prominent figures from British Airways, VisitBritain, and the Royal Shakespeare Company. This initiative aims to support the Government's Plan for Change by boosting the tourism sector, which contributes £74 billion to the economy and 4% of GVA. The council will work towards welcoming 50 million international visitors annually by 2030 and increasing tourism outside London. Additionally, it will focus on improving the overall visitor experience and promoting outbound travel. The council will also help inform the upcoming National Visitor Economy Strategy.

[Potential for the EU to consider the UK joining a pan-Europe customs scheme](#)

The EU's new Trade Chief, Maros Sefcovic, has suggested that the UK could consider joining the Pan-Euro-Mediterranean Convention (PEM) as part of "reset" discussions. This would allow tariff-free trade for manufacturing supply chains across Europe and North Africa. The Government is apparently consulting businesses on the benefits of PEM, which could reduce red tape and improve trade. While no final decision has been made, the idea is under consideration to enhance post-Brexit trade relations.

[Edinburgh tourist tax to be voted on by the Council](#)

Edinburgh councillors are set to vote on Scotland's first visitor levy, aiming to raise £50m annually. The final proposals, reflecting a 12-week public consultation, will be presented on January 24. Council leader Jane Meagher called it a “once in a lifetime opportunity” to invest in the city. If approved, a 5% charge will apply to stays in hotels, B&Bs, self-catering accommodations, and campsites from July 2026. The levy, capped at five consecutive nights, aims to enhance and sustain Edinburgh's appeal for residents and visitors alike.

[Rail ticketing to come under Great British Railways](#)

Great British Railways will unify train operators' ticket websites and collaborate with the private sector to drive growth and innovation. Plans will be developed in partnership with industry, simplifying fares and tickets, and allowing online and offline purchases. The Railways Bill will outline further details.

Airport Expansion

Energy and Climate Change Secretary Ed Miliband has stated he will not resign if the Government backs a third runway at Heathrow, despite his long-standing opposition. He believes the Government can achieve both growth and net zero targets. Chancellor Rachel Reeves is expected to announce the expansion of Heathrow Airport in a speech next week, while London Mayor Sadiq Khan remains opposed due to environmental concerns. Other airports also expected to receive approval are London Luton Airport and Gatwick Airport.

Parliament

House of Commons

Touring in the EU

Richard Baker, Labour MP for Glenrothes and Mid Fife, asked during a debate on EU-UK relations.

"Does the Minister agree that the arts, musicians and the wider creative sector play a vital role in our economy, which is why working to negotiate a deal with touring artists is so important? Will the Minister confirm that this is still a priority for him?"

Nick Thomas-Symonds, Minister for European Union Relations responded:

"My hon. Friend makes a good point, and I can confirm that our priority remains ensuring that UK artists can continue to perform and promote themselves around the world. That is why the Department for Culture, Media and Sport is working collaboratively with the creative sector and across Government to address key issues for our brilliant artists and their support staff touring the EU. As we set out in our manifesto, we will work with the EU and member states to explore how best to improve those arrangements, but without seeing a return to freedom of movement."

Tourism Tax

Saqib Bhatti, Conservative MP for Meriden and Solihull East asked the Secretary of State for Culture, Media, and Sport:

"If she will make an assessment of the potential implications for her policies of the proposal by the Welsh government to enable local authorities to charge a visitor levy?"

Sir Chris Bryant Minister for Creative Industries, Arts, and Tourism responded:

"Tourism is a devolved policy matter and we work closely with the Devolved Administrations. My department will carefully monitor the proposal by the Welsh government. Tax policy is a matter for HM Treasury and there are currently no plans to introduce a similar tax in England"

For any queries regarding this round-up
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Get in touch



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