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Weekly Monitoring
Friday
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EIA Update

We were delighted to meet with Gill German MP, Labour MP for Clwyd North and PPS for Wales, this week. It was a wonderful opportunity to highlight the some of the growth opportunities that our sector presents and how this could be assisted through the development of a National Business Events Strategy. We explained our MRA Campaign and the need for a specific agreement for the business events industry in the EU-UK reset.



Political Update

This week saw the Chancellor deliver her Autumn Budget. The Budget unfolded under highly unusual circumstances after the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) accidentally published its economic forecasts early, meaning many headline measures were revealed before the Chancellor even reached the despatch box.

The Government had hoped the announcements would calm markets, provide clarity, and build public trust. The Chancellor reaffirmed commitments to supporting working

people and protecting public services, funded by a series of new tax measures affecting both personal finances and businesses (further details below).

Kemi Badenoch, Leader of the Conservative Party, delivered a scathing critique of Rachel Reeves's Budget, branding it "a Budget for Benefits Street" and accusing the Chancellor of breaking tax promises, rewarding welfare over work, and failing in competence. Her Commons rebuttal included declaration that this should be her last Budget and called for her resignation after what Badenoch described as the biggest tax raid in British history.

News

Autumn Budget

Of particular note to EIA members following the Budget this week are the following announcements:

- Business Rates reform: Business rates for retail, hospitality and leisure properties will be permanently lowered, funded by higher rates for the properties with a rateable value of over £500,000. The high-value multiplier will be 50.8p in 2026-27.
- Visitor Levy: Mayors in England will have the ability to raise a visitor levy on overnight accommodation. The Government will consult on the design of the levy at a later date.
- Skills development: £13 billion investment will be devolved to local Mayoral Authorities to support further skills development in local workforces.

Tourism Businesses See Strong Growth in DCMS Report

The latest DCMS economic estimates reveal tourism industries remain a major driver of UK business activity, accounting for 335,230 enterprises, 12.3% of all registered businesses in March 2025. Tourism businesses grew by 12.2% since 2019 and 2.3% year-on-year, outpacing overall UK business growth. Most firms are micro-sized, with 83.7% employing fewer than 10 people, and 66.9% reporting turnover under £250,000. London hosts 20% of tourism business sites, underscoring its role as a hub for the sector.

Landmark Deals announced at MICE Summit 2025

The International MICE Summit 2025 launched in Riyadh with over 3,000 global leaders and 20 major agreements, signalling a transformative moment for the events industry. Six leading firms announced new offices in Saudi Arabia, alongside flagship launches such as BAUMA Saudi Arabia and MIPIM Arabia. SCEGA unveiled a 32% rise in venue capacity across 923 sites, reinforcing the Kingdom's Vision 2030 ambitions and positioning Saudi Arabia as a global hub for business tourism and events.

Government U-turn on Workers' Rights Secures Passage of Employment Bill

Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy has defended the Government's decision to water down plans for day-one unfair dismissal rights, calling it "the right thing to do" to break a parliamentary deadlock. Under the revised Employment Rights Bill, protections will apply after six months, while day-one entitlements for sick pay and paternity leave remain, starting April 2026. Nandy said the compromise, agreed with unions and business leaders, ensures the legislation is workable and delivers a significant upgrade to workers' rights

Mayors Gain Power to Boost Local Growth with Overnight Stay Levy

England's mayors will be able to introduce a modest levy on overnight stays at hotels, holiday lets, and guesthouses, with funds directed towards transport, infrastructure, and the visitor economy. The move aligns UK cities with global destinations like Paris and New York, where similar charges are standard. Generating revenue from over 130 million annual overnight visits.

The Government has launched an open consultation, closing 18 February 2026, seeking views on key aspects of the policy, including levy design, rates, accommodation scope, administrative frameworks, and equalities impacts. Businesses, communities, and stakeholders are invited to contribute ideas on how revenues should be used and how to minimise regulatory burdens.

UK-EU Defence Fund Talks Collapse Over Fee Dispute

Negotiations for UK firms to access a greater share of the EU's €150bn defence loans scheme have broken down after disagreement over an entry fee. The UK accepted paying a fee but refused "at any price", limiting British firms' role in future projects. Minister Nick Thomas-Symonds called the outcome "disappointing", while the European Commission said talks could resume later.

Parliament

House of Commons

Written Question on ETAs for Conferences and Trade Shows

Alex Brewer, Liberal Democrat MP for North East Hampshire, asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department:

"What assessment her Department has made of the impact of the Electronic Travel Authorisation on European business representatives attending trade events and conferences in the UK."

Mike Tapp, Minister for Migration and Citizenship responded:

"ETAs have been introduced to strengthen the security of our border. They also make travel easier by further digitising our immigration and borders system, ensuring millions

of visitors, including business travellers, enjoy a seamless experience. The department does not hold data on numbers of visitors attending trade events and conferences."

Written Question on a Tourism Minister

Blake Stephenson, Conservative MP for Mid Bedfordshire, asked the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport:

"If she will make an assessment of the potential benefits for her policies on tourism of appointing a full-time Tourism Minister focused exclusively on tourism."

Stephanie Peacock, Minister for Sport, Tourism, Civil Society and Youth responded:

"The Government has a Minister responsible for Tourism, within a portfolio that also includes Sport, Civil Society and Youth. As ambitions to promote growth and improve the productivity of the tourism sector are reliant on a cross-government approach, DCMS works collaboratively with other government departments. This collaboration facilitates wider discussions to find solutions that help support the Visitor Economy, which in turn can help support the objectives of other departments and cross-government interests on foundational matters such as spreading opportunity, creating jobs and growth across all parts of the UK.

"DCMS is supported by the joint industry and government-led Visitor Economy Advisory Council. The Council aims to act as a candid sounding board and challenge function for Government policy decisions. It is also supporting the Government in delivering the Visitor Economy Growth Plan which will set out a long term plan to increase visitor flows across the UK, boost value, and deliver sustainable growth."

Written Question on Ticket Sales

David Mundell, Conservative MP for Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale, and Tweeddale, asked the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport:

"What assessment she has made of the potential merits of protecting authorised sales of debenture tickets above face value in proposed legislation on ticket sales."

Ian Murray, Minister for Media, Tourism and Creative Industries responded:

"The government response to our consultation on the resale of live events tickets recognised that debenture schemes operate differently from one-off events tickets and allow venues to generate secure, up-front revenue that can be invested in bringing world-class sporting, music and other live events to the public.

"As the response set out, we believe there is a good case for a narrow exemption to allow event organisers to authorise debenture holders to resell tickets in excess of the price cap. We will continue to explore how this exemption should be defined so that it does not undermine the overall effectiveness of the price cap."

