

BCC comments on Prime Minister's Florence speech

Commenting on the Prime Minister's Brexit speech in Florence, Dr Adam Marshall, Director General at the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC), said:

"In the world of business, the PM's Florence speech will be judged not on its rhetoric or delivery, but on whether it begins to break the stalemate that has left companies across the UK, Europe and around the world counting the cost of uncertainty.

"The Prime Minister's constructive tone and clearer offers, particularly on guarantees on EU citizens' rights and UK contributions to the EU budget, represent an important and welcome effort to break the impasse of recent months, which has preoccupied many in the world of business.

"The absolute priorities for business are to get trade talks moving, and to ensure a comprehensive transition period is in place that gives the certainty that companies need to take immediate investment and hiring decisions. It is our hope that the Prime Minister's offer will jump-start the process, and that the two sides can agree to move on to the critical issues of transition and trade as quickly as possible – and in all cases before the end of 2017.

"Given the complexity of the changes ahead, a significant majority of businesses want a transition that is longer than the two years being proposed by the Prime Minister. We will challenge both the UK government and the European Commission over the coming months to agree a transition that lasts at least three years from the date of our formal exit from the EU, giving businesses enough time to prepare for a final deal."

Ends

Notes to editors:

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) sits at the heart of a powerful network of 52 Accredited Chambers of Commerce across the UK, representing thousands of businesses of all sizes and within all sectors. Our Global Business Network connects exporters with nearly 40 markets around the world. For more information, visit: www.britishchambers.org.uk

Media contacts:

Allan Williams – Head of Press and Communications

020 7654 5812 / 07920583381

Orla Hennessy – Press and Communications Officer

020 7654 5813 / 07825746812