

Press release: Lord Price visits Africa to build shared trading links

Minister of State for Trade Policy Lord Price will visit South Africa and Namibia this week to meet trade ministers from the Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU) and Mozambique to discuss ways to avoid disruption to our current trading relationship.

While there he will also meet trade associations and local businesses. The UK government is committed to working with the Southern African regions and nations across Africa, building upon the announcement by the Prime Minister at the G20 Summit to support trade, investment and growth in Africa.

The visit comes after the [recent joint commitment by Dr Liam Fox and Priti Patel](#) to protect duty free access to the UK for 48 developing countries around the world.

Ahead of his visit, Lord Price said:

This visit shows the commitment of the British government to securing trade links in both developed and developing countries around the world. As we look towards our future outside the EU, we will continue to be a champion for free trade and an advocate for the benefits trade can bring, socially as well as economically.

I am excited to be travelling to South Africa and Namibia this week, to strengthen existing trading links with the region and build a mutually beneficial trading partnership. These discussions will allow us to continue to work together into the future to generate employment, prosperity and investment through free trade.

Lord Price will attend a roundtable with SACU and Mozambique trade ministers to begin discussions over how to work together to build on our existing trading relationship after the UK leaves the EU.

At this roundtable, Lord Price is expected to meet representatives from Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, and Swaziland – all 6 of which are partners in the EU's Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with Southern Africa. This development-focused trade agreement aims to create the right conditions for trade and investment to accelerate growth, helping to support regional integration and poverty eradication. Discussions are also likely to focus on steps to replicate as far as possible the effects of the EPA once the UK has left the EU.

[News story: infocus global: EMERGE Boston 2017 mission – apply to take part](#)

Applications are now open for the first Innovate UK infocus global entrepreneur mission for women focusing on human and machine interaction.

Innovate UK, Digital Catapult and the British Consulate General Boston are inviting female entrepreneurs to take part in a new global trade mission to the US.

EMERGE Boston 2017 is a one-week delegation of female founders to Boston, Massachusetts. It takes place from 10 to 15 October 2017.

The mission will coincide with Boston's [HUBweek](#), a collaboration that will bring together the most creative and inventive minds in technology, science and innovation.

EMERGE Boston 2017 will provide access to new international market opportunities for up to 15 UK SMEs looking to grow globally. It offers:

- access to Boston's innovation community and networks
- a chance to pitch your ideas to investors
- mentoring support
- practical workshops
- coaching and training
- a technology showcase at HUBweek's Demo Day

Are you eligible?

EMERGE is for female-led innovative startups and SMEs based in the UK. You can apply if you are a female founder working in human and computer interaction innovation with high growth potential. These can include:

- artificial intelligence / machine learning
- robotics
- the Internet of Things
- virtual and augmented reality

How to apply

- [register your interest](#) and receive application details by email
- complete the application form and provide a link to your 2-minute video pitch
- contribute £1,500 towards the cost of the mission

- the deadline for applications is Monday 4 September 2017
- we will notify successful applicants on Friday 15 September 2017

About infocus

Innovate UK launched the infocus programme in 2016. Its aims are to:

- get more women innovating in business
- give female entrepreneurs the support they need to grow their businesses
- create new role models for the next generation

Why go on a mission?

Take part in EMERGE Boston 2017 and you could:

- get a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities in exporting to the US
- find potential customers, investors and partners
- get insight into new markets for human machine interaction
- discover fresh ideas and insight from international thought leaders
- boost your profile in the UK and overseas through the GREAT Britain campaign
- improve your company and product pitches for international customers and investors
- learn how to develop a market-entry strategy

[News story: £325 million invested in NHS transformation projects](#)

On 19 July 2017, Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt and NHS England Chief Executive Simon Stevens announced £325 million of capital investment for local projects that will help the NHS to modernise and transform care for patients.

Local capital investment schemes in 15 areas of the country have been given the go ahead, with the largest sums being used for urgent care in Dorset, surgery in Greater Manchester and cancer care in Cumbria.

The projects receiving funding include the following:

- in Greater Manchester, hospitals will deliver significant improvements in urgent and emergency care by concentrating services in 4 hub sites across the city, expected to save around 300 lives each year in general surgery alone

- in Bedfordshire local doctors and nurses are developing a primary care hub on the site of Bedford Hospital, which is expected to improve access to same-day appointments for around 50,000 patients and reduce the number of patients attending the hospital's A&E department unnecessarily
- in Derbyshire an 'Urgent Care Village' will be created at the Royal Derby with GP services, a frailty clinic and mental health services, to ensure patients receive the right care in the right place, first time, and avoid going to A&E unnecessarily

This initial funding has been targeted at the strongest and most advanced schemes in the STP categories based on an assessment of leadership and service performance. All plans have been developed locally in consultation with the public.

The funding was secured in the Budget in March when the government also committed to make further capital investment available in the forthcoming Autumn Statement.

Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt said:

This funding will support strong local plans to help the NHS modernise and transform care for patients.

A measure of success of these transformation partnerships is that people can see and feel improvements being made in their local area – there are already excellent examples of this across the country and this money will allow them to go further and faster.

NHS England Chief Executive Simon Stevens said:

Today we're firing the starting gun on the first wave of major service upgrades and care redesign which will benefit people living in counties, towns and cities across England. For patients it'll mean easier GP appointments, modern A&Es, and better cancer and mental health care. For staff, we're putting our money where our mouth is in backing these practical plans developed by doctors, nurses and local NHS leaders.

This is the first down payment of much needed investment in modern equipment and NHS facilities, with more promised in the autumn and beyond. Today is proof positive that when you back the NHS with investment, both patients and taxpayers see the practical benefits.

The strongest STPs have performed well across indicators in 3 broad areas: hospital performance, patient-focused change, and transformation.

Press release: RPC Corporate Report – 16-17

Having scrutinised over 300 submissions last year, from government departments and regulators the RPC still finds much of their analyses wanting when considering the impact of their actions on wider society. “Following the tragic events at Grenfell Tower, it is important more than ever, that the risks to and impacts on society should be rigorously scrutinised on an equal footing with business costs and benefits, as we have previously recommended. The RPC believes it should be able to “Red rate” inadequate appraisals of both sets of impacts,” says Michael Gibbons CBE, Chairman of the Regulatory Policy Committee.

Equally concerned about the direction of travel is Frances O’Grady, General Secretary of the TUC said: “we welcome this report, once again the RPC is showing that the issue is not about what we regulate or deregulate, it’s about how we can make the system work for all of society. That means that we need to gain a consensus for strong, effective regulation that is enforced appropriately and having a body such as the RPC to oversee the process is invaluable”.

Michael Gibbons CBE says “the independent Regulatory Policy Committee stands ready to scrutinise the evidence base for regulatory changes associated with Brexit. The RPC’s recent Opinion on the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill, notes that there are likely to be various forms of regulatory change as a result of EU exit, for example as to freedom of movement of goods, services, labour and capital, and such changes are likely to have significant impacts on business and wider society. The RPC emphasises that all such regulatory changes should be subject to impact assessment and independent scrutiny.”

Also urging caution in this period of significant transition and change is Dr Adam Marshall, Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC), who says “it is vital that any regulatory changes which impact the UK’s business communities are justified and rational. Government departments must be extremely careful in making and implementing regulatory changes which may have unintended consequences. In this time of uncertainty, businesses need as much regulatory continuity as possible to sustain confidence and investment.”

In addition as the system shifts to domestic regulatory oversight, Terry Scouler Chief Executive of EEF, the manufacturers’ organisation, said: “the critical work of the RPC is particularly important as we prepare to leave the EU and as the effectiveness of regulatory regimes come under greater scrutiny.”

The RPC’s annual report (highlights listed below) states there is concern at the fitness for purpose of departmental impact assessments. The RPC is at the same time mindful of the need to review the framework itself and aims to work

closely with the government to ensure it is proportionate yet robust moving forward. Martin McTague, Policy Director of the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), said: “The FSB continues to be the leading voice in championing the great work the RPC does. In particular, its efforts to hold those Government Departments, which produce new regulation, to account by improving the quality of Regulatory Impact Assessments. We hope that Government continues to value the role of the RPC by ensuring that it is sufficiently resourced and at the heart of improving the regulation agenda.”

NOTES TO EDITOR

1. The Regulatory Policy Committee (RPC) is the independent advisory body set up to provide external, transparent, real time scrutiny on the quality of evidence and analysis supporting regulatory changes affecting business and civil society.
2. We give Ministers opinions in advance, to help ensure decisions on legislative proposals are based on a robust evidence base, which provides businesses and the public with confidence that the government’s claims on regulatory reform are credible.

3. KEY [REPORT](#) HIGHLIGHTS

- We scrutinised 324 proposals; 231 from government departments and 93 from regulators.
- It is of concern that only 69% of government impact assessments were fit for purpose at first submission.
- The numbers of Post Implementation Reviews (PIRs) being conducted are still too low. We are still waiting for and remain concerned that we have yet to see PIRs for some of the most significant measures from the pre 2015 parliament, e.g. relating to pensions.
- RPC took over the Chairmanship of RegWatchEurope this year– an EU wide group of like-minded national independent scrutiny bodies.

For further information or interview requests please contact; Comms Adviser Sara Coakley 07956 233 167

[News story: CMA considers proposals to protect London to Exeter rail passengers](#)

Last week the Competition and Markets Authority’s (CMA) investigation into the award of the franchise to FirstGroup and MTR [raised concerns because FirstGroup already operates the Great Western Railway \(GWR\) franchise](#), which runs the only other train service between London and Exeter.

As the only operator running rail services between the 2 cities, the CMA

found that FirstGroup could potentially take advantage of the reduction in competition to increase fares for the half a million passengers a year who use the route.

FirstGroup and its joint venture partner MTR were given the opportunity to avoid an in-depth ('phase 2') investigation by offering proposals (known as 'undertakings in lieu of reference') to the CMA to address the concerns identified.

The companies have now offered to cap unregulated fares between London and Exeter on both South Western and GWR services by linking these to prices on a number of other comparable routes. They have also proposed to maintain the availability of cheaper advance fares on both services – again by comparing with similar routes.

The CMA has decided that there are reasonable grounds for believing that these proposals, or a modified version of them, might be acceptable to remedy the competition concerns it has identified by protecting passengers using both London-Exeter rail services.

The CMA has until 20 September 2017 to consider whether to accept the undertakings, although it may decide to extend this deadline to 15 November 2017 if it decides that there are special reasons for doing so.

As part of its process, the CMA will now undertake a public consultation, which will commence shortly. Details on this consultation will be found on the [case page](#) along with full text of the decisions and all other information about the investigation.

The CMA's decision to consider the proposals comes in advance of the start of the franchise, due on 20 August 2017.