

Vince Cable delivers Industrial Strategy overview

Secretary of State for Business, Vince Cable MP, has delivered a speech on Industrial Strategy at Imperial College, London. Dr Cable set out his vision that an industrial strategy must be cross-departmental, cross-coalition and build long-term horizons, but little detail was included on how this will actually be achieved. Dr Cable however, did outline five key elements that will form the basis of government's industrial strategy. These include the setting up of a British business bank, which could operate through challenger banks and non-bank lenders to increase competition and diversity of supply. However, critics have noted that this may just be a pulling together of existing schemes and interventions. Secondly, Dr Cable announced the implementation of sector strategies. He stated that government would look to develop 'collaborative but challenging' sector strategies with key sectors, starting with advanced manufacturing (aerospace, automotive and life sciences) due to have strategies set by the end of the first quarter of 2013, followed by knowledge-intensive traded industries (e.g. universities, professional services) and enabling industries (e.g. construction, energy, digital) by the summer, with a progress report due in autumn 2013. Thirdly, world class skills, with Dr Cable noting that this is key to growth in the UK, and using his speech to announce 34 successful applicants in the first round of the Employer Ownership Pilot (EOP) scheme, under which employers had put together 'radical plans' to develop their own training programme, securing £67 million of public funding and generating £98 million in private investment. Dr Cable also announced the launch of the second round of the total £250 million EOP scheme, which if successful would be used as a model for flexible employer-led training funding. Fourthly, commercialisation of research, with Dr Cable noting that the strategy looks at accelerating the journey from pure academic research to a commercial product being brought to market to help boost ground-breaking technologies of the future. However, no new funding or incentives were announced. Finally, procurement, with Dr Cable stating that there is a need to recognise government's role as a customer and develop a more intelligent partnership with its own supply chain, and that this

can be achieved by reforming procurement to make sure that businesses have confidence to take long-term investment decisions. (Source: BIS)
<http://www.bis.gov.uk/news/topstories/2012/Sep/cable-outlines-vision-for-future-british-industry>

New Parliamentary Private Secretaries announced

Following the government reshuffle, the list of parliamentary private secretaries for new ministers has been released. Key changes to note include:

- Lorely Burt (Solihull) appointed as PPS to Chief Secretary of the Treasury, Danny Alexander
- Tessa Munt (Wells) appointed as PPS to Business Secretary, Vince Cable
- Gavin Williamson (Staffordshire South) appointed as PPS to Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin
- Therese Coffey (Suffolk Coastal) appointed as PPS to Business Minister Michael Fallon
- Margot James (Stourbridge) appointed as PPS to Trade Minister Lord Green of Hurstpierpoint
- Stephen Gilbert (St Austell & Newquay) appointed as PPS to Energy and Climate Change Secretary, Ed Davey

(Source: Number 10)

<http://www.number10.gov.uk>



Government announces changes to health and safety regulations

As part of the red-tape challenge, government has announced that from April 2013, it intends to introduce binding new rules on both the Health & Safety

Executive and on local authorities that will exempt hundreds of thousands of businesses from 'burdensome' health & safety inspections. The announcement states that in future, businesses will only be inspected if they are operating in high risk areas, such as construction, or if they have a poor record. Government also plan to change the law so companies will only be liable for civil damages in health and safety cases if they can be shown to have acted negligently. This will end the current situation where businesses can automatically be liable for damages even if they were not actually negligent. Government states that these changes will save British companies millions of pounds in wasted time and money, and help spur economic growth and innovation across the UK. (Source: BIS)

<http://www.bis.gov.uk/news/topstories/2012/Sep/government-red-tape-blitz-to-boost-business-growth>

Government announces proposals to streamline employment law

Business Secretary Vince Cable has announced measures that aim to give firms more flexibility and confidence in managing their workforce and to reduce employment law red tape. Proposals include support for settlement agreements to help end employment relationships in a fair and consensual way, the reduction of a cap on compensation for unfair dismissal claims, streamlining employment tribunals by making it easier for judges to dismiss weak cases, and recommendations on how to improve guidance for small businesses on the Acas code of practice on discipline and grievance. Commenting on the proposals, Vince Cable stated: "Britain already has very flexible labour markets. That is why well over one million new private sector jobs have been created in the last two years, even when the economy has been flatlining. But we acknowledge that more can be done to help small companies by reducing the burden of employment tribunals, which we are reforming, and moving to less confrontational dispute resolutions through settlement agreements". (Source: BIS)

<http://www.bis.gov.uk/news/topstories/2012/Sep/new-proposals-to-streamline-employment-law>

Week ahead

The Autumn Statement will take place on Wednesday 5 December at 12:30

House of Commons

The House of Commons is in recess

House of Lords

The House of Lords is in recess