

WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Government to exempt highly skilled workers from immigration cap

Home secretary, Theresa May, has announced that from April 2011, the majority of highly skilled workers entering the UK under Intra-Company Transfer (ICT) arrangements will be exempt from government's proposed immigration cap. Government has committed to introducing an annual limit of 21,000 for those coming into the UK under the skilled and highly skilled routes which is 20,700 under the skilled route and 1,000 under the new 'exceptional talent' route. The new rules will take effect from April 2011. Applicants under tier two will still be required to apply for a visa through the PBS; will have to be of graduate level; be sponsored by an employer and will be awarded points based on scarcity of skills and salary. Separately, businesses can bring in their own employees through the intra-company transfer route but they must earn more than £40,000 to stay more than 12 months, and their stay will be restricted to five years. Theresa May said: "We have set out an approach which will not only get immigration down to sustainable levels but at the same time, protects those businesses and institutions which are vital to our economy. We have worked closely with businesses while designing this system, but we have also made clear that as the recovery continues, we need employers to look first to people who are out of work and who are already in this country." (Source: Home Office) www.homeoffice.gov.uk/media-centre/news/non-european



SMMT announces new president at 94th Annual Dinner

Executives from across the UK's automotive sector gathered in London for the 94th SMMT Annual Dinner. In his final speech as SMMT president, Joe Greenwell praised the strength and resilience shown by the automotive industry during what has been a challenging 12 months and announced SMMT's new president, Nigel Stein, chief executive of GKN's global automotive business, who will take over as SMMT president in January 2011. In his speech, Mr Greenwell highlighted key achievements for industry, including the extension of the Scrappage Incentive Scheme and the founding of the Automotive Council, which have strengthened the automotive industry, helping to establish the UK as a leader in the transition to ultra-low carbon vehicles during challenging economic conditions. Mr Stein, speaking about his appointment as new SMMT president, said: "I am very honoured to succeed Joe Greenwell as president. He's led SMMT through a tumultuous period for the auto industry. Throughout this difficult time, SMMT has done a superb job in promoting the industry and ensuring it receives the recognition it deserves as an important contributor to the UK economy." (Source: SMMT)

www.smmt.co.uk/articles/article.cfm?articleid=22768

Mark Prisk hosts event to discuss local enterprise partnerships

Business minister Mark Prisk has hosted a networking event with representatives of Local Enterprise Partnerships to acknowledge the progress made so far and discuss the way ahead for the new partnerships. Attendees included representatives from recently formed partnerships and government departments. The group discussed the recently published White Paper on Local Growth and how

Local Enterprise Partnerships can deliver on their priorities for local economic development. They also discussed the relationship between government and the partnerships going forward. Mark Prisk said: "I was encouraged by the conversations taking place today between local councillors, business leaders and government about what the future will look like. It is important that this kind of work continues to make sure that the people who will be responsible for delivering our structural reforms are given the support they need to realise their vision for a strong economic future." (Source: BIS)

[nds.coi.gov.uk/content/Detail.aspx?ReleaseID=416701&NewsAreaID=2](https://www.nds.coi.gov.uk/content/Detail.aspx?ReleaseID=416701&NewsAreaID=2)

Manufacturing sector poised to fill growth gap – EEF

A report has been published by EEF and The Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) titled 'The Shape of British Industry', ahead of government's Growth White Paper and Manufacturing Framework. The report paints a picture of a successful manufacturing sector which is currently growing at the fastest rate since 1994 and whose growth strategies are centred on innovation and investment. Some 76% of companies state that their growth strategies will be achieved by increasing innovation in the UK and 69% by increasing capital investment. It is also highly export driven, with exports accounting for more than half of turnover in 40% of companies and one third having production facilities outside the UK. EEF believes these figures demonstrate the potential of manufacturing to lead private sector growth and rebalance the UK economy. (Source: EEF) www.eef.org.uk/policy-media/releases/uk/2010/Manufacturing-sector-poised-to-fill-growth-gap-%E2%80%93-EEF-Report.htm



Vince Cable leads trade delegation to Russia

Business secretary Vince Cable has led a business delegation on a three-day visit to Moscow to strengthen ties between the UK and Russia and to promote trade. He was accompanied by the largest ever UK business delegation, comprising 37 businesses such as Rolls Royce, Shell and British Airways. Over six hundred British businesses now have a base in Russia while over 2,000 UK SMEs showed an interest in doing business in Russia last year. Dr. Cable said: "We have goods and expertise that are in high demand, and UK companies are increasingly seeking out further opportunities, especially in engineering, construction and financial services. So far this year, we have exported nearly £2 billion of goods and services to Russia and I hope that, through delegations such as this, trade relations will continue to grow between our two countries."

(Source: UKTI)

www.ukti.gov.uk/uktihome/media/item/121138.html

Week ahead

House of Commons

Monday 29 November

4.00pm: Chancellor George Osborne's statement on the autumn forecast is expected

Thursday 2 December

10:30am: Transport questions (topical questions at 11.15am)

Commons Committees

Tuesday 30 November

10.15am Transport

Subject: Transport and the economy (Witnesses) CBI, Federation of Small Businesses, Unite - the Union and VisitBritain; Transport for London, The Northern Way, London Borough of Newham and HS2 Ltd; Campaign for Better Transport, Transport Planning Society, Directors of Public Health for the West of England Partnership Area and Stop HS2

Location: The Wilson Room, Portcullis House

10.30am Business, Innovation and Skills

Subject: Government Assistance to Industry

Witness(es): UK Music, PACT; Environmental Industries Commission, Renewable UK; EEF, Engineering and Machinery Alliance
Location: Committee Room 16, Palace of Westminster

Wednesday 1 December

2.45pm Environmental Audit

Subject: Green Investment Bank

Witness(es): David Paterson, Head of Corporate Governance, National Association of Pension Funds, Ben Warren, Partner, Ernst & Young, and Ingrid Holmes, Programme Leader - Low Carbon Finance, E3G

Location: Committee Room 16, Palace of Westminster

Lords Chamber

Tuesday 30 November

Grand Committee: Question for short debate on the government's assessment of the value of manufacturing to the UK economy (Viscount Montgomery Alamein, CB).