

The Business Visits & Events Partnership
House of Commons Reception, 20th October 2010
Presentation by Michael Hirst OBE

My Lords, Ladies, Members of Parliament, Distinguished Guests, it is my pleasure, on behalf of the Business Visits & Events Partnership and our sponsors for this evening, International Confex, to introduce this double celebration.

It's the Partnership's 10th birthday celebrating a decade of the Industry's leading representative bodies and government agencies working together to provide a cohesive voice and to influence policies for a higher quality, more competitive and more profitable events sector in Britain.

And this week we're also celebrating– The National Meetings and Events Week - "Britain for Events", focussing on why Meetings and Events are so important to Britain, as it rebuilds and rebalances its economy. And in a new report published yesterday, we show how Events benefit the economy by £36 billion, support 25,000 businesses and 530,000 jobs.

Conferences, exhibitions, trade fairs not only enrich the visitor economy, but they provide a global platform for Britain's products and expertise, boosting trade and export opportunities and facilitating a cost effective communication of Britain's excellence, in key economic areas such as engineering, technology, scientific research and development and creative enterprise.

And that creativity is evident too in great cultural and sporting events and festivals that spearhead the well-being and regeneration of many of the Country's destinations, instilling so many positive social impacts and contributing to community cohesion, civic pride and a big Society.

Both the Meetings and Events Manifesto and the report "Britain for Events" detail how Britain can become the natural destination choice and an international hub for all sectors of the Events industry, through greater national and local recognition and support.

Some of the recommendations on how this can be achieved include:

- More involvement by Ministers across Whitehall Departments in the bid process for international events
- Greater provision for subvention funding.
- Greater local authority engagement and understanding of how events can contribute to success of a destination.
- Alignment of business events with Britain's priority economic sectors.

- A more competitive regulatory environment, including a review of health and safety guidelines at Outdoor events.
- Incentives for activities that bring international events and visitors to the UK stimulating both exports and inward investments.
- Establishment of an All Party Parliamentary Group for the Events Sector.

So just as a former Prime Minister famously once said that it is “events dear boy events” that will determine the success or failure of a government’s policies, we believe it is indeed the business of Events that will shape much of Britain’s future prosperity.