



THE BRITISH FURNITURE CONFEDERATION

The single voice of the furniture & bed industry

Political Notebook – September 2009

A monthly activity report from the British Furniture Confederation

1. Pre-Budget Report submission to the Treasury

The BFC has made a submission to the Treasury's Pre-Budget Report consultation. The Pre-Budget Report, scheduled to take place at the end of November, is an important opportunity to communicate the views of British businesses on budgetary and taxation matters. The BFC's letter, which has been signed by all members of the executive committee, sets out the key economic and business issues, identified by BFC members, which affect the furniture industry. The submission highlights three key areas where the Treasury could act to support the furniture industry.

Firstly, the BFC has asked the Government to consider a time extension to the Trade Credit Insurance top-up scheme, in order to protect firms over the Christmas period. The BFC has also asked that cover be expanded to protect firms which have found their insurance completely removed.

Secondly, the BFC has called on the Government to consider the introduction of a consumption tax. By removing the social security charges and related taxes paid at the point of manufacture, and instead replacing those with a rise in VAT for labour-intensive products at the point of sale, the Government would reduce those labour costs that are constantly scaled up through the supply chain from factory to show room. Projections have shown that this would have the effect of reducing final sale price; reducing the cost to manufacturers; and ensuring that the level of tax taken by the Exchequer would remain constant.

Thirdly, the BFC have asked the Treasury to consider the possible benefits of assisting with exports for SMEs, through the introduction of an Export Tax Credit Scheme. By providing financial relief from Corporation Tax for exporters in the form of Export Tax Credits, the Government would create a financial incentive for growth that would benefit those companies who sought out new markets for British trade and, ultimately, benefit the whole of the UK economy.

The BFC hopes to continue to contribute to Treasury policy development and will submit another policy consultation letter ahead of the Budget in the Spring. They are happy to accept any suggestions for policy ideas which would benefit the British furniture industry, and people are welcome to email the secretariat with ideas.

2. Conservative export trade consultation

Conservative MP for Shrewsbury, Daniel Kawczynski, is preparing a report for the Conservative Party on the experiences of British exporters and problems they have had with

Embassy support in other countries. The BFC are keen to take part and provide evidence of any firms which have struggled to get the help they need abroad. If you have any examples of where Embassies have failed to provide the appropriate help or advice please email: secretariat@britishfurnitureconfederation.org.uk

3. Skills intensive industries

The BFC is currently organising the first ever joint policy meeting for the trade bodies representing skills intensive industries. Organisations representing a wide range of industries, such as ceramics, textiles, footwear, woodwork and printing have been invited to take part in the forum to identify common areas of interest and coordinate mutually beneficial lobbying efforts. The BFC intends to use the meeting to discuss its policies on the failure of Regional Development Agencies and a potential Consumption Tax. The date for the meeting is 12th November at the WCFM, Austin Friars, and further details will be forwarded when they become available.

4. Early Day Motion update

The current Early Day Motions will fall and become defunct after the Queen's Speech on the 18th November. Although MPs can still sign our existing EDMs, their signatures will only be held for the two weeks which Parliament sits before the Queen's Speech. Because of this the BFC is working with Madeleine Moon, Chair of the Furniture All Party Parliamentary Group to consider our future Parliamentary campaigns and will update members shortly.

ENDS

Editors' Notes

The British Furniture Confederation (BFC) acts a single voice for UK furniture and bed manufacturers. Led by an executive, comprising representatives of BCFA, BFM, FIRA and NBF, and supported by associate members (AMUSF, GMB, Proskills and WCFM), its mission is to ensure that the UK furniture industry has a strong and sustainable dialogue with Government. Its roles include:

- Securing the long term future and prosperity of the British furniture industry
- Raising the profile of the industry at a political level
- Formulating strategies for dealing with key industry issues
- Engaging in dialogue and negotiating with Government on these issues
- Working with the All Party Parliamentary Furniture Group to promote cross party discussion and to meet with senior influencers within Government agencies
- Ensuring that the industry gains the recognition and attention that its size deserves

Address: BFC Secretary, FIRA, Maxwell Road, Stevenage, Herts, SG1 2EW.
Tel: 01438 777700
Fax: 01438 777800
email: secretariat@britishfurnitureconfederation.org.uk

Supplementary Information Full text of the BFC EDMs

EDM 1530

FURNITURE AND FIRE SAFETY GUIDE

19.05.2009

Moon, Madeleine

47 signatures

Anderson, David	Anderson, Janet	Bottomley, Peter
Browne, Jeremy	Campbell, Gregory	Campbell, Ronnie
<i>Caton, Martin</i>	Clapham, Michael	Clarke, Tom
Corbyn, Jeremy	Crausby, David	Cryer, Ann
Cummings, John	Dean, Janet	Dismore, Andrew
Dobbin, Jim	Drew, David	<i>Durkan, Mark</i>
Francis, Hywel	<i>George, Andrew</i>	Hancock, Mike
Harvey, Nick	Hoyle, Lindsay	Hughes, Simon
Iddon, Brian	Illsley, Eric	Jackson, Glenda
Jenkins, Brian	Jones, Lynne	Leech, John
Lepper, David	Llwyd, Elfyn	McCafferty, Chris
McDonnell, Alasdair	McDonnell, John	McGrady, Eddie
Moffatt, Laura	Prentice, Gordon	Riordan, Linda
<i>Russell, Bob</i>	Simpson, Alan	<i>Spink, Bob</i>
Vis, Rudi	Wareing, Robert N	Williams, Betty
Williams, Stephen		

That this House welcomes the launch of the British Furniture Confederation's Guide to the Fire Safety of Furniture and Furnishings in the Home; recognises that the UK flammability regulations have been in existence for over 20 years and in 2000 it was estimated that they had saved up to 1,860 lives since their introduction; notes the importance of the new guide in clarifying and explaining the existing regulations to account for recent precedents and changes; and further notes the high quality and standard of British furniture.

EDM 952

ASK IF IT IS GREAT BRITISH FURNITURE CAMPAIGN

03.03.2009

Moon, Madeleine

45 signatures

Borrow, David S	<i>Browne, Jeremy</i>	Burgon, Colin
Campbell, Gregory	Campbell, Ronnie	Caton, Martin
Corbyn, Jeremy	Cryer, Ann	Dean, Janet
Dismore, Andrew	Dobbin, Jim	Dodds, Nigel
Drew, David	Etherington, Bill	Foster, Michael Jabez
Francis, Hywel	<i>Goodman, Paul</i>	Hancock, Mike
Hemming, John	Howells, Kim	Iddon, Brian
Jenkins, Brian	Jones, Lynne	Kidney, David
Leech, John	McCafferty, Chris	Moffatt, Laura
Osborne, Sandra	Pope, Greg	<i>Prentice, Gordon</i>
Riordan, Linda	Robinson, Iris	Rowen, Paul
Simpson, Alan	<i>Spink, Bob</i>	<i>Taylor, David</i>
Vis, Rudi	Williams, Betty	Williams, Mark
Williams, Stephen	Willis, Phil	Wilshire, David
Wilson, Sammy	Winterton, Nicholas	

That this House acknowledges the importance of the furniture manufacturing industry to the UK economy, with an annual output of almost £10 billion and direct employment of around 124,000 people within 7,500 enterprises; notes the Ask If It Is Great British Furniture campaign, as featured on the BBC 2 programme, Working Lunch and in the national press; emphasises the qualities of British furniture which comes from craft skills which have been conceived, developed and perfected over many years, decades and centuries of tradition, producing inspirational designs, from the most traditional manufacturing methods, with the most stringent environmental and health and safety standards, the shortest delivery times and the best after-sales service; and further notes that the campaign is an important initiative that should be supported and applauded.

EDM 500**CREDIT INSURANCE AND THE FURNITURE
MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY**

19.01.2009

Moon, Madeleine

47 signatures

Anderson, David	Austin, John	Battle, John
Bottomley, Peter	Burden, Richard	Caton, Martin
Corbyn, Jeremy	Crausby, David	Cryer, Ann
Dean, Janet	Devine, Jim	<i>Dismore, Andrew</i>
<i>Dobbin, Jim</i>	Dobson, Frank	<i>Doran, Frank</i>
Drew, David	Durkan, Mark	Etherington, Bill
Evans, Nigel	Francis, Hywel	Hancock, Mike
<i>Henderson, Doug</i>	<i>Hopkins, Kelvin</i>	Howells, Kim
Hoyle, Lindsay	Illsley, Eric	Jenkins, Brian
Jones, Lynne	McCafferty, Chris	McCartney, Ian
McDonnell, Alasdair	McDonnell, John	McGuire, Anne
Meale, Alan	Osborne, Sandra	Prentice, Gordon
Robinson, Iris	Roy, Lindsay	Simpson, Alan
Simpson, David	Singh, Marsha	Taylor, Dari
Taylor, David	Wareing, Robert N	Williams, Betty
Winterton, Nicholas		

That this House acknowledges the importance of the furniture manufacturing industry to the UK economy, with an annual output of almost £10 billion and direct employment of around 124,000 people within 7,500 enterprises; further notes the problem of obtaining credit insurance in light of the economic downturn particularly in the furniture manufacturing industry; and recognises that credit insurance companies are promoting panic by removing insurance cover from furniture manufacturers and their suppliers, often without basing such action upon the risk involved or the financial viability of the individuals or firms involved.