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# **Tourism**Alliance

**the voice of tourism**

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## JULY 2008 NEWSLETTER

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### **Select Committee Report – What Now?**

Well, the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee have released their report on the Government's handling of its tourism responsibilities and the conclusion is pretty succinct and damning. In essence, the findings of the Committee were almost an exact copy of the points that the Tourism Alliance has been making for some time – that the Government has paid scant regard to the industry over the last 10 years, has put forward spurious arguments as a rationale for reducing funding for VisitBritain and has abdicated its responsibilities in the lead-up to the 2012 Olympics. If anything, the Committee has been even more strident in their view than the Alliance. Here's a couple of examples:

“no-one has demonstrated that there are inefficiencies in the way (VisitBritain) conducts its operations, and certainly not of the scale to justify the cut in its resources that is proposed. Instead, we share the view that VisitBritain is generally a well-run and efficient organisation and regard the Government's attempted explanation of its decision as wholly unconvincing ... The decision to cut resources is simply baffling and should be reconsidered.”

“We believe that it is not too late to realise fully the benefits of the (2012) Games, but a greater investment from the Government is necessary. We recommend that provision is made as soon as possible for additional funding for VisitBritain specifically for this purpose.”

The Government now has until when Parliament reconvenes in October to consider the report and respond to the recommendations. The problem it faces in doing so will be that with the down-turn in the economy and the perilous state of the Government's finances, there is very little room for the Government to manoeuvre even in the unlikely event that it had a Damascus-like change of heart on tourism. The Government simply has no money to give anyone as economic growth (and therefore tax-take) is set to be far lower than budgeted for in the next few years. The dire state of the Government's finances can be seen by the sudden re-examination of the rules on which the Labour's economic credibility is based – and this is happening before the impact of the slowdown has fully hit the real economy.

So, apart from maybe a small raid on the fast disappearing contingency funds within DCMS, the only thing that the Department can really do for tourism is to concentrate on being a champion for it across Whitehall. But even this undertaking will be difficult given the current restructuring within DCMS which will see many analysts lose their jobs over the next 6-12 months. It doesn't give much hope that any concrete actions will be contained in October's response.

**Regards**



**Kurt Janson**  
**Policy Director**  
**Tourism Alliance**

## NEW TOURISM ALLIANCE EXECUTIVE

As part of its annual rotation policy, a new Tourism Alliance Executive was elected at the Annual General Meeting which was held at the Thistle Barbican in London on 17<sup>th</sup> July.

### The New Executive is:

Chairman	Bob Cotton OBE
Vice Chairman	Ken Robinson CBE
Secretary	Tony Millns
Treasurer	Michael Hirst OBE

In taking up the position of Chairman, Bob Cotton emphasised the priority for the next year would be to ensure that the government takes tourism seriously – which it has failed to do in the past. He also thanked previous Chairman, Ros Pritchard OBE, for the work that she had done over the past year in forwarding the views and concerns of the industry with Government.

[Click Here](#) for a copy of the press release

## AND NOW A LICENSING INQUIRY

Fresh from undertaking its inquiry into Tourism, the CMS select Committee has announced that it is to undertake an inquiry into the impact of the Licensing Act 2003.

Specifically, the Committee is seeking evidence on the following issues:

- Whether there has been any change in levels of public nuisance, numbers of night-time offences or perceptions of public safety since the Act came into force
- The impact of the Act on the performance of live music
- The financial impact of the Act on sporting and social clubs
- Whether the Act has led, or looks likely to lead, to a reduction in bureaucracy for those applying for licences under the new regime and for those administering it
- Whether the anticipated financial savings for relevant industries will be realised.

The Tourism Alliance has long been advocating that changes should be made to simplify licensing for businesses with very low alcohol sales and those staging temporary large scale events. It will therefore be raising the need to make progress on these issues while, at the same time, not simply transferring costs to other sectors such as pubs, which are already under considerable financial and regulatory pressure.

Written submissions should be sent to the Committee Secretary by 30 September 2008.

Rowena Macdonald  
Secretary of the Culture, Media and Sport Committee  
House of Commons  
7 Millbank  
London SW1P 3JA

The Select Committees with responsibility for tourism in both Westminster and the Scottish Parliament have released reports on the status of tourism. The Culture, Media and Sport Committee's report on the Government's handling of its tourism brief was particularly critical and has received considerable coverage (see the link the article in the Telegraph below as an example).

The conclusions and recommendation in the report are very much a reflection of the Tourism Alliance's submission and oral evidence to the Committee and reinforce the Alliance's call for Government to "Take Tourism Seriously". The Report is also very supportive of two other policy issues that the Alliance has been pursuing – the need to reduce the cost (and hassle) tourists encounter in obtaining visas to enter the country and that the benefits that can be derived from introducing Daylight Saving should be further examined by Government. The Alliance will therefore be following up on these recommendations over the forthcoming months.

In Scotland, the Economy, Energy and Tourism Committee tabled a report focusing on whether the Scottish tourism industry could achieve the target of growing by 50% by 2015. The report acknowledges the importance of tourism to Scotland, accepts this target, and provides a series of recommendations on how tourism related structures can be streamlined and public/private investment focused through a National Tourism Investment Plan to achieve this target. Overall, the aim of the report is to get joined-up thinking on tourism across the Scottish Parliament.

[Click Here](#) for a copy of the CMS report on tourism

[Click Here](#) for Telegraph's coverage of the report

[Click Here](#) for a copy of the report from the Scottish Parliament

## HOME OFFICE REVIEWS THE STATUS OF 11 VISA WAIVER COUNTRIES

The Home Office has announced that it has examined the visa waiver status of all non-European countries to determine the level of risk they pose to the UK in terms of illegal immigration, crime and security. As a result, it has been decided that eleven countries (Bolivia; Botswana; Brazil; Lesotho; Malaysia; Mauritius; Namibia; South Africa; Swaziland; Trinidad and Tobago; and Venezuela) are to have their visa waiver status overturned unless they strengthen their border security processes before the end of the year.

This list of countries includes three important emerging tourism markets of Brazil, Malaysia and South Africa which already generate over £400m in tourism revenue for the UK and will raise the level of tax on potential visitors from these countries to £105 per person. This comes at a time when the UK's inbound tourism industry is already under severe pressure from the global slowdown and high oil prices and the Government should be finding ways of lowering the already considerable costs faced by international visitors.

As well as impacting upon the UK's inbound tourism industry, the move also raises the prospect that these countries will impose retaliatory restrictions on UK visitors which will affect UK Tour Operators and Travel Agents serving these countries.

The announcement is particularly disappointing as it comes despite reassurances to the Tourism Alliance that the tourism industry would be consulted before any announcement was made.

[Click Here](#) for a copy of the Tourism Alliance Press Release

### **SINGLE EQUALITY BILL ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Tourism Alliance's submission to the consultation on the development of a Single Equity Bill last year stated that in developing such legislation the tourism industry needed to retain the ability to provide products and services targeted at specific markets (ie., club 18-30 or holiday parks for the over 50s) that would provide the experience that these customers sought and to also ban groups such as hen and stag groups that cause damage to properties and adversely affect the enjoyment of other customers.

The Government has now responded to the consultation and announced that it is pressing ahead with a new Equity Bill which will;

- impose a duty on public bodies to ban discrimination on grounds of age, sexual orientation or religion;
- require public bodies to use their £160bn purchasing power to award more contracts to companies with a good equality record;
- allow companies to recruit more women or people from ethnic minorities by favouring them in job interviews over equally qualified white men;
- require public bodies to publish information showing the gender pay gap.

While proposals to impose these requirements on the private sector have been dropped, the Tourism Alliance is concerned that the Government Equality Office has announced that it will be establishing a working group to inform the development of the legislation to prohibit age discrimination in all sectors other than financial services and health and social care. Any proposals generated by this working group need to allow tourism operators to target and, in some cases, restrict, certain market segments.

[Click Here](#) for a copy of the Government's response to the Equality Bill Consultation

### **BETA UNVEILS YOUTH TOURISM RESEARCH**

At its recent annual parliamentary reception in the House of Commons, BETA (British Educational Travel Association) unveiled new research from the United Nations World Tourism Organisation on the size and importance of the global youth travel market.

This research, entitled "Youth Travel Matters" shows that, rather than being a low value niche sector, the global market for youth travel is worth £68bn per annum and accounts for 18% of worldwide international tourism receipts.

The study also shows that youth travel is one of the fastest growing sectors of the tourism industry with average travel expenditure increasing by 39% between 2002 and 2007;

[Click Here](#) for a copy of the Report

## CONSULTATION ON MUSIC COPYRIGHT EXEMPTIONS

The UK Intellectual Property Office has launched a consultation in which it is reviewing current exemptions to copyright law that means that certain charitable and not-for-profit organisations are able to play copyright music in public without the need to pay for a Phonographic Performance Ltd Licence (PPL licence).

The exemptions apply where charitable bodies play CDs or other recorded music if certain conditions are met and where not-for-profit bodies play radios or TVs if the broadcasts include recorded music and the audience has not been charged entry. These exemptions will be of relevance of certain tourism attractions that are operated in accordance with the exemptions.

The consultation is looking at three options – these being:

- Recasting the exemptions so that they apply only to smaller charities
- Introduction of an alternative scheme requiring payment of equitable remuneration for playing music
- Repeal of the exemptions

The consultation will be open until 31 October 2008.

[Click Here](#) for a copy of the Consultation Paper

## THE TOURISM ALLIANCE

The Tourism Alliance is the Voice of the Tourism Industry.

Established in 2001 with the support of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, the Tourism Alliance comprises 50 Tourism Industry Organisations that together represent some 200,000 businesses of all sizes throughout the UK.

The purpose of the Tourism Alliance is to identify and develop policies and strategies to raise standards and promote quality within the industry and work with and lobby government on all key issues relevant to the growth and development of tourism and its contribution to the economy.

Registered Office Details:  
The Tourism Alliance Limited  
6 Pullman Court, Great Western Road, Gloucester, GL1 3ND.  
Company No: 05106422

Chairman: Ros Pritchard OBE  
President: Richard Lambert  
Policy Director: Kurt Janson  
E: [kurt.janson@tourismalliance.com](mailto:kurt.janson@tourismalliance.com)  
T: 020 7395 8246 Fax: 020 7395 8178 M: 07964428123  
W: [www.tourismalliance.com](http://www.tourismalliance.com)  
Centre Point, 103 New Oxford Street, London, WC1A 1DU