



THE BRITISH FURNITURE CONFEDERATION

The single voice of the furniture & bed industry

Political Notebook – June 2009

A monthly activity report from the British Furniture Confederation

1. Further success on Credit Insurance Top-up Scheme

The British Furniture Confederation is celebrating the successful completion of one of its key objectives, following Lord Mandelson's statement on credit insurance (9th July). Business Secretary Lord Mandelson announced the backdating of the Government's trade credit insurance top-up scheme to include suppliers who had their cover reduced since 1 October last year. Previously, the Scheme was only available to companies who had cover reduced since April this year.

Commenting on the news, Martin Jourdan, Chairman of the British Furniture Confederation said:

"This is a huge victory for members of the British Furniture Confederation. Whilst the BFC welcomed the launch of the trade credit insurance top-up scheme in April, we were concerned with that the Government had not backdated this scheme to protect firms which had previously lost vital insurance support.

"However, after some very positive meetings and active dialogue with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, I know that they have taken these concerns seriously and worked to address the problem. I wholeheartedly welcome their decision to backdate the credit insurance top-up scheme to support firms who have lost their insurance cover since 1st October 2008.

"The backdating of this scheme will be a huge boost to British furniture, and shows the commitment of the Government to engage with British business and provide the support which we need to weather the recession."

2. All Party Parliamentary Furniture Group - Annual General Meeting

This month's meeting saw a new Executive Committee elected at the AGM. Those elected were:

Chair:	Madeline Moon MP
Vice Chair:	Jeremy Browne MP
Vice Chair:	Lord Davies of Coity
Secretary:	Paul Goodman MP
Treasurer:	Gordon Prentice MP

Executive: Anne Snelgrove MP
David Liddington MP
Lord Hoyle

3. John Cridland and the Confederation of British Industry

John Cridland, Deputy Director-General of the CBI attended the APPFG's AGM, and gave a speech after the election of a new executive. In his speech he explained the CBI's view of the current economic situation and potential future trends. He quoted Richard Lambert's comment that any "green shoots have shallow roots" but noted that the rate of decline is slowing. He expected real growth in 2010 although remarked that present Government forecasts were optimistic. Mr Cridland also explained that intervention measures such as quantitative easing were having a positive effect but low business investment was still a problem resulting from the unavailability of credit. He then positively compared the labour market flexibility of the UK against European countries and identified the merger of DIUS and BERR into BIS as a positive move which would improve skills and the connection between business and education.

4. Early Day Motion update

The Furniture and Fire Safety EDM now has 47 MPs supporting it, rising from just 19 MPs last month. Members of the BFC are encouraged to write to their MPs asking them to sign EDMs 1530, 952, and 500 and support British furniture!

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

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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**

19.01.2009

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

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.