

Press Release
For immediate release
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EU Enlargement will plug skills gaps, say UK bosses

Workers from the new EU member states can make an important contribution to the UK economy, according to a survey being carried out by the Institute of Directors.

Around 60 per cent of IoD members are set to report that workers from the 10 accession states could help to plug skills gaps in Britain. While a similar number will say they would consider recruiting these workers for their own companies.

The interim figures were released to coincide with the IoD's Annual Convention, being held at the Albert Hall in London on Wednesday 28th April. The Convention, themed Britain Competing in the Modern World, will hear from politicians and business personalities on the challenges and opportunities the global marketplace presents.

Just under one third of IoD members currently do business with the 10 new EU members. The Czech Republic and Poland are the most popular trading partners.

Commenting on the survey findings, the IoD's Parliamentary and European Adviser, James Walsh, said:

"IoD members are gearing up for the challenges of enlargement. They recognise that workers from the new member states offer the strong work ethic and skills that we need to maintain Britain's economic success."

The survey is also likely to show that the business community does not share the confidence of some politicians that adding new member states will make it more difficult for the EU to agree new regulations. Two-thirds of respondents think enlargement will increase business regulation.

James Walsh said:

"The notion that enlargement will make for a 'wider, not deeper' EU is being proved false. With enlargement now a done deal, the EU is still planning new burdens on business, not least through the new European Constitution. The IoD will keep battling to keep Europe in business."

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Notes to editors:

1. The IoD (Institute of Directors) was founded in 1903 and obtained a Royal Charter in 1906. The IoD is a non-party political organisation with upwards of 54,000 members in the United Kingdom. Membership includes directors from right across the business spectrum - from media to manufacturing, e-business to the public and voluntary sectors. Members include CEOs of large corporations as well as entrepreneurial directors of start-up companies.
2. The IoD offers a wide range of business services which include business centre facilities (including six regional centres), conferences, networking events, issues-led guides and literature as well as information services and free access to a comprehensive business library and enquiry service. The IoD places great emphasis on director development and has established a certified qualification for directors - Chartered Director - as well as running specific board-level and director-level training and individual career mentoring programmes.
3. In addition, the IoD provides an effective voice to represent the interests of its members to government and key opinion-formers at the highest levels. These include ministers, constituency MPs, Select Committee members and senior civil servants. IoD policies and views are actively promoted to the national, regional and trade media.
4. For further information, visit our website: www.iod.com