

**19<sup>th</sup> February 2013**

## ***Press Release***

### **TOURISM ALLIANCE CALLS FOR IMPROVED INDIAN TOURISM VISA SERVICE**

With the news that Prime Minister David Cameron will introduce 'same-day' business visas to Indian investors, the Tourism Alliance is calling on the government to widen its approach on visas to include tourism visitors.

The visa restrictions currently in place is making the UK less competitive to international visitors and potentially costing the economy a slice of India's £6.5bn tourism industry.

UK visitor numbers from India were less in 2012 (348,000) than they were in 2006 (367,000), while the UK's share of the Indian outbound market has almost halved in the last 6 years. The decline in tourism from India has reached the point that VisitBritain recently reported that, despite our strong historic and cultural ties, France now receives 20% more visitors from India than the UK.

If the UK's market share was the same as 6 years ago, we would have 675,000 Indian visitors this year; this would have generated almost £300m in additional tourism revenue and created almost 6,000 more jobs.

"India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world and while we welcome this news on business visas from the government, the Tourism Alliance feels that the UK will continue to miss out on the economic boost offered by tourist visitors" comments Michael Hirst, Chair of the Tourism Alliance. "Visitors from India spend on average £900 per stay in the UK, about 60% more than the average visitor – carrying out a similar change for tourism visas will generate larger visitor numbers and an immediate and long-term financial boost to the UK economy."

Visitor numbers from India have decreased for the last two years (by 6% in total) while total Indian outbound has increased by 18% over the same period. While investing money in the tourism industry it makes sense to make it easier for visitors to get on a plane and visit.

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For further information, please contact:

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**Notes to Editors**

- A copy of *Aviation APPG report* is available at:  
[www.epolitix.com/fileadmin/epolitix/APPG\\_AviationReport.pdf](http://www.epolitix.com/fileadmin/epolitix/APPG_AviationReport.pdf)
- The Tourism Alliance is the Voice of the UK Tourism Industry. It was established in 2001 with the support of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and comprises almost 50 Tourism Industry Associations that together represent 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 key issues relevant to the growth and development of tourism.
- Tourism is the sixth largest industry in Britain. It generates £125bn p.a. for the UK economy (8.9% of GDP) and directly supports over 2.7m jobs (9.1% of the total workforce) and is the UK's third largest export earner.
- For further details on the Tourism Alliance and its policy objectives, visit the website, [www.tourismalliance.com](http://www.tourismalliance.com)

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