



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **INDUSTRY COMES TOGETHER TO MAXIMISE TOURISM OPPORTUNITY FROM THE 2012 GAMES: NEW WORKING PARTY TO BE ESTABLISHED**

VisitBritain, Visit London, the European Tour Operators Association (ETOA) and UKinbound have agreed to set up a joint working party to develop a strategy that will encourage visits to Britain and London throughout 2012 and beyond as London hosts the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Tour operators and the travel trade will be crucial in promoting the message that Britain and London are open for business as usual in the build up to the Games and throughout Olympic year itself. London and Britain have distinct advantages over previous Olympic hosts given the accessibility of the country to the rest of the world, its long-established tourism industry, a plentiful supply of accommodation across all price ranges and a strong cultural offer.

An events industry "Fair Pricing and Practice Charter" has already been established by VisitBritain and Visit London to encourage fair pricing during the Games – a first for any Olympic host city and which around 300 organisations have already signed up to.

VisitBritain's chief executive, Sandie Dawe, said: "Our aim is to maximise the tourism benefits of the Games. Together we will show that the whole country will be welcoming visitors throughout 2012 and we welcome the opportunity to work with Visit London, ETOA, UK Inbound and other partners to look at how we can maximise the benefits to our industry.'

Visit London's director of communications, Ken Kelling, said: "London has so much to offer sports fans and non-sports fans alike and visitors are well used to travelling to and from the city for business or pleasure. We are expecting the atmosphere to be amazing during 2012 and no-one will want to miss out. Now's the right time to be getting the message out as the travel trade starts to think about "brochuring" for the next few years."\*

Patrick Richards, Chair of ETOA said: "Perceptions about the accessibility and costs of visiting host cities and nations during the year of major events do not always match the reality and we need a strategy in place to address this. In particular, we must develop concrete plans to ensure a competitive market operates. We are delighted to be working with VisitBritain and Visit London on ensuring those plans are realised."

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#### **Notes to Editors**

##### **About VisitBritain**

- VisitBritain is responsible for promoting Britain as a world class tourist destination and for developing the UK's visitor economy. It has representatives in 35 countries around the world and has expanded into India, China, throughout Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia
- Overseas residents made 31.9 million visits to the UK in 2008, down by -2.7% on 2007. They spent £16.3 billion, which before adjusting for inflation, rose +2.3% in nominal terms
- Every year 17 million visits are made by international consumers to the 46 websites that make up VisitBritain's global family of websites, [www.visitbritain.com](http://www.visitbritain.com), which together provide information in 26 different languages.
- VisitBritain is a Non-Departmental Public Body whose prime sponsor is the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

##### **About Visit London**

Visit London is the official visitor organisation for London. A leader in best practice destination marketing, Visit London promotes the UK capital internationally, across Britain and to Londoners targeting leisure and business visitors. Visit London works in partnership with the Mayor of London, the London Development Agency, London Councils and the tourism industry.

**About ETOA**

ETOA provides representation at European government level for companies involved in bringing tourists to Europe. The Association promotes greater awareness of the benefits provided by the group travel industry in Europe – particularly increased income and employment. ETOA also influences European tourism policy and legislation and runs a number of industry events throughout the year, including conferences, seminars and networking events.

Areas of specific activity include:

- Promoting Europe as a tourism destination
- Establishing commercial opportunities between buyers and sellers
- Establishing codes of conduct and guidelines for its members
- Working with other travel & tourism associations to raise the industry's profile

**About UKinbound**

UKinbound is the only trade association to represent and unite the UK's inbound tourism businesses. For over 30 years we have helped our members manage successful profitable businesses, which are part of a vibrant and sustainable inbound tourism industry. Originally known as BITOA (British Incoming Tour Operators Association), we now have around 200 members, and are one of the leading trade associations in the UK tourism industry and the only association to focus exclusively on the vital export-earning inbound sector.