
BRITISH SCREEN ADVISORY COUNCIL

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Monday, 16 September 2013

Mr Edward Bolton
Committee Office
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

Dear Mr Bolton

The British Screen Advisory Council welcomes the Committee for External Affairs' inquiry into the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). We are responding to your call for evidence on behalf of the audiovisual industries.

BSAC is an independent, industry-funded umbrella group bringing together many of the most influential people in the audiovisual industry. Our Membership includes Broadcasters, ISPs with content interests, games developers, film and TV producers and new digital media companies. We have a history of engagement with international trade negotiations. During the Doha Round, DG Trade requested that we act as a European advisory body for film interests and our work was actively supported by a broad cross section of audiovisual companies in the UK. We are particularly well-placed to advise on trade issues given the breadth of our membership across the audiovisual sector and our ability to draw on specialist legal and economic expertise where necessary.

Recognising the potential benefits for the EU in strengthening the already successful trade relationship with the US we recently commissioned two reports on the audiovisual sector to build the factual basis for negotiations. This is important as the audiovisual sector is a major creative and economic success story for the UK. We are a large part of the wider creative economy, which has been identified by Government as one of the areas with the greatest potential for future economic growth. Indeed, the DCMS estimated that the creative industries accounted for 10.6% of the UK's exports in 2009. Against this background we wished to explore whether the sector's historical position, where we are considered a special case and excluded from internal negotiations, remains valid.

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Chief Executive Fiona Clarke-Hackston

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The first report, 'Review of the Trade Barriers in the US Audiovisual Market', responds to requests from Government to identify any barriers to trade and the benefits of an agreement for the sector. Undertaken by the legal firm, Reed Smith, it found that there were no legislative and regulatory barriers that may restrict or impede the participation of UK firms in the US, and so there are no offensive interests for our sector. The second report was prepared in response to Government's request to explain the economics of the audiovisual industries and how these bear on the proposed EU – US free trade agreement. The paper explains the economic characteristics of the sector, the nature of the public policy interventions and the future challenges in an industry that is changing extremely rapidly.

The conclusion of both reports is that there are clear benefits to retaining a 'carve out', as has been agreed in the opening mandate. We are aware that the 'carve out' emerged from pressure from the French. Having considered these reports we believe that the benefits of the current position may be even greater for the UK audiovisual sector, which already enjoys a healthy trading relationship with the US that would not be enhanced by the treaty and which needs to maintain maximum freedom of manoeuvre to adopt regulatory interventions as necessary across the sector in response to a fast-changing and uncertain market and technological developments.

We hope that these reports prove valuable to your deliberations over the next few weeks and would be happy to provide further information on request.

Yours sincerely,



Fiona Clarke-Hackston
Chief Executive