

Press release: UK named “Country of Honour” as trade mission heads to flagship Chinese International Industry Fair

A business delegation including some of the UK’s best advanced manufacturing and innovation companies will head to China this week to boost growing bilateral trade and investment ties.

Minister for Trade and Export Promotion, Baroness Rona Fairhead, and Minister for the Northern Powerhouse, Jake Berry, will be joined by 100 leading business figures from across the Northern Powerhouse, Midlands Engine and the East of England to represent Britain at the Chinese International Industrial Fair (CIIF), where the UK has been named Country of Honour.

The UK and China enjoy strong trade links, with bilateral trade increasing by 8.9% last year to more than £59 billion, and goods exports to China rocketing by 32%.

Ministers believe there is huge potential to build on this progress and expand trade ties, especially for smaller businesses based in the East of England, Midlands and the North. The trade mission to Shanghai has been designed to showcase these companies and demonstrate what they have to offer to their Chinese counterparts.

Delegates include:

- Johnson Matthey, a global leader in sustainable technology who have made a strong commitment to support the Chinese alternative energy vehicle industry
- Liverpool Vision, who are seeking to attract further Chinese investment into the Liverpool City Region through city-city links
- Domino Printing, a provider of coding and marking solutions for Chinese enterprise, who are looking to build on their relationships which have been established since 1995

Baroness Fairhead will also meet with prominent UK businesses based in China to explore how the Department of International Trade can continue to expand support for new exporters as well as companies with an existing presence in the Chinese market.

China’s services imports have more than tripled since 2010, making China already the second largest importer of services worldwide. China’s middle class is expected to number 600 million by 2020, greater than the current entire population of the European Union, presenting unrivalled opportunities for UK business.

Minister for Trade and Export Promotion, Baroness Rona Fairhead, said:

UK exports to China are growing strongly, but it's clear that there is still vast untapped demand for British goods and services in the Chinese market.

The opportunities for growth are there, and we will continue to use trade missions not only to build the UK culture of exporting, but also to help businesses of all sizes forge ties and cultivate relationships with potential buyers and investors.

As part of his visit Jake Berry will be attending the Northern Powerhouse Day that the Chinese International Industrial Fair is holding along with key members of the UK delegation.

Minister for the Northern Powerhouse, Jake Berry, said:

Northern Powerhouse businesses have so much to offer so it's fantastic to see them at this year's Chinese International Industrial Fair in Shanghai, demonstrating the strengths and opportunities for investment in the region.

This trade mission represents an exciting opportunity for the UK and China to build on an already flourishing commercial relationship.

The CIIF is the flagship event for advanced manufacturing in China, with more than 2,500 exhibitors and 160,000 visitors. It covers new energy vehicles, big data, robotics, aerospace and clean energy amongst other innovative technology.

As the Country of Honour, the UK trade mission will demonstrate the strength of British advanced manufacturing and emphasise that Britain is open for business as we prepare to exit the European Union.

The UK pavilion will exhibit the very best of the UK business, featuring companies including Jaguar Land Rover, Rolls Royce, Graphene Institute, Shadow Robotics and McLaren.

Baroness Fairhead will also visit Chongqing where she will attend the China-UK graphene standards working group, promoting the UK's leading role in the research, development of and commercialisation of graphene. UK companies are already benefiting from the use of the innovative material, which is 200 times stronger than steel, and it is expected to open up vast new markets around the world for British businesses.

Contact the DIT Media and Digital Team on 020 7008 3333

Follow us: [@tradegovuk](https://twitter.com/tradegovuk), [gov.uk/dit](https://www.gov.uk/dit)