

*We need to talk about*  
**The Global Future of Business**



COBCOE conference in partnership with HSBC

**International Business Festival 2018**

**Liverpool, 12 June**



**COBCOE – COUNCIL OF BRITISH CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE IN EUROPE**

COBCOE is the British business organisation supporting international trade across Europe. As the not-for-profit membership organisation for British chambers of commerce and business associations in the region, COBCOE represents a unique pan-European business network of around 12,000 business in more than 30 countries.

## Conference concept and programme

**Change is coming and every business needs to prepare. The pattern of international trade is being re-drawn, the geopolitical landscape is shifting and ever more disruptive technologies are on the way.**

### **What is the conference about?**

We all benefit from international trade. It's vital to the global economy and the prosperity of all nations.

To make this vital trade happen, we rely on businesses of all sizes. Whether through suppliers, contractors, customers or distributors, every business is affected by international trade, as is every consumer.

Momentous changes are now taking place. And with uncertainty over Brexit, it has become more difficult than ever for businesses to make plans to ensure continuity, growth and development.

We do know that there will be challenges and opportunities for businesses of all kinds, but where will they come from?

This one-day conference is for businesses that want to plan for a prosperous future. Our aim is to give you a new understanding of what the future holds and provide new insights from government and business representatives.

We will hear from senior government figures on what the desired Brexit agreement will look like and the strategies the government will pursue to promote productivity, skills and foreign direct investment (FDI), as well as trade with the EU post Brexit.

Business leaders and government representatives will discuss changes to supply chains and changes to the way we work, that will likely be brought about by new trade relationships and new technologies.

Whether or not Brexit causes a seismic shift in the UK's trading relationships, UK and European businesses will still need to compete in fast-changing global markets and we'll explore how this can be done with our colleagues from continental Europe.

The conference will also provide an opportunity for businesses to network with their international counterparts, who will be attending from across the COBCOE network and beyond.

## Conference sessions and panels

### **SESSION 1** *We need to talk about:*

#### **Brexit as a catalyst for change**

**Opening address:** David Thomas MBE, COBCOE Executive Chairman

**UK Government keynote opening address**

**Panel 1: UK business** – Trade organisations discuss how to prepare for the changes

**Panel 2: European business** – Effects of Brexit and the need to develop a competitive edge

*The conference will join the wider festival programme for the opening of the event.*

### **SESSION 2** *We need to talk about:*

#### **The ultimate Brexit trade agreement**

**UK Government Keynote address**

**Panel discussion:** What is the strategy for driving competitiveness, growth, productivity FDI as well as frictionless trade?

**Closing session Keynote**

### **SESSION 3** *We need to talk about:*

#### **Reshaping the supply chain and changing how we work**

**UK Government Keynote address**

**Panel 1:** Skills, growth and industrial strategy

**Panel 2:** Central Eastern Europe – from poor relation to industrial powerhouse

## Confirmed speakers

- Helen Brand OBE, CEO Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
- Jonathan Branton, Partner, DWF
- Mike Cherry, Chairman, Federation of Small Business (FSB)
- Christopher Dottie, President, British Chamber of Commerce for Spain
- Michel de Fabiani, Member of the Board, Franco British Chamber of Commerce
- Nicolas Georghiadis, COO, Alison Hayes Romania
- Paul Hardy, Brexit Director, DLA Piper
- Vedrana Likan, Managing Partner, Colliers Croatia & Slovenia
- Stephen Phipson CBE, CEO, The Manufacturers' Association (EEF)
- Ronan Quigly, Executive Director, British Chambers of Commerce (BCC)
- Matej Skocir, Head of Internationalisation Division, Ministry of Economic Development & Technology, Slovenian Government
- Wouter Schuitemaker, Managing Director, EMEA, Hickey & Associates
- Daniel Shillito, President, British Chamber of Commerce for Italy
- Andy Snell, Head of Strategic Partnerships and International Trade, Wirral Chamber of Commerce
- Thomas Spiller, President British Chamber of Commerce in Belgium
- David Thomas MBE, Chairman, COBCOE
- Anton Valk CBE, Chairman, Netherlands British Chamber of Commerce
- Andrew Wrobel, Editor, Emerging Europe

## Others, TBC

## More information and booking

Please contact [events@cobcoe.eu](mailto:events@cobcoe.eu) or go to the booking page [here](#).

## About the International Business Festival



2018 INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS FESTIVAL



The festival takes place in Liverpool over three weeks from 12 June to 28 June 2018, with the programme focusing on nine key industry sectors with activities taking place every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The industry sectors are as follows:

- Tuesday 12 June - Global Economics
- Wednesday 13 June - Urbanisation & Cities
- Thursday 14 June - Sustainable Energy
- Tuesday 19 June - Future Transport
- Wednesday 20 June - Manufacturing
- Thursday 21 June - Global Logistics & Shipping
- Tuesday 26 June - Health & Life Sciences
- Wednesday 27 June - Creative Industries
- Thursday 28 June - Sport, Culture & Travel

The event will feature an international marketplace, festival incubator, TED style talks from leading business minds, an innovation hub and brokered business meetings to make new deals happen.

The 2018 International Business Festival is an open market to new deals, a gathering of ambitious international companies looking to meet new investors, suppliers and partners.

The festival will take place at Exhibition Centre Liverpool, a state-of-the-art event complex on the city's picturesque waterfront. There will be a rich and varied cultural programme for delegates to enjoy while in Liverpool – a former European Capital of Culture.

The festival is sponsored by the main partners HSBC, DWF and British Airways. Media partners are BBC Worldnews and BBC.com.

[www.internationalbusinessfestival.com](http://www.internationalbusinessfestival.com)