

Greetings,

Please find below an on the record comment in my name as the CEO of the Association for International Retail (AIR) on the Chancellor's Budget Statement this afternoon and its lack of support for the international retail sector:

*“The Chancellor’s decision to support the High Street to the tune of £5bn is welcome, but he should not also neglect the importance of attracting international visitors back to the UK. They spend over £28bn annually here in the UK, directly supporting 120,000 retail and hospitality jobs, and are vital to our economic recovery.*”

*“The Chancellor is right that now is not the time for tax rises. That’s why it’s so odd that he should be imposing a new tourist tax that most British businesses oppose. Abolishing tax free shopping will drive high spending international tourists to shop VAT-free in other European destinations where it remains widely available, threatening our own recovery.*”

*“We urge the Chancellor to think again about this tourist tax hike, and work with us to produce a roadmap for restoring international travel to welcome visitors once again, particularly from high value markets like China, the Middle East and America.”*

Please do not hesitate to get back in touch with me directly should you require any further information, or email Anna Bailey at [anna.bailey@drdpartnership.com](mailto:anna.bailey@drdpartnership.com)

Best wishes,

Paul Barnes  
CEO