

CPI sets out priorities for support of UK manufacturing



By Andy Barnettson, Director of Packaging Affairs, Confederation of Paper Industries

The Confederation of Paper Industries (CPI) joined other leading manufacturing organisations in Parliament last week to present five major recommendations to Government, designed to stimulate long-term growth in UK manufacturing.

CPI believes that, if David Cameron's "March of the Makers" is to become a reality, swift action needs to be taken in all these areas, namely:

1. Skills and STEM

We need a more highly skilled workforce if we are going to be the destination of choice for international investors and multinational manufacturing companies.

Science and maths education in schools, providing the foundation for a solid understanding in key STEM subjects - science, technology, engineering and maths – needs urgent attention.

As a target, CPI proposes the proportion of 16-18 year olds who take one or more sciences at A-level should be increased from 17% to 25%.

2. Strategic Support and Procurement

The Government should do more to encourage manufacturers to invest in this country and facilitate the research and development programmes that will keep us at the forefront of innovation. Our objective must be to put the UK at the top of the international league tables on R&D spending as a proportion of GDP.

3. Regulatory Environment – Energy Policy

We must ensure that the environmental imperative of decarbonising the economy, is balanced against the potential for the UK to become an internationally uncompetitive manufacturing destination because of exorbitant energy and carbon costs. CPI urges the Government to hold a fundamental, cross-departmental review of the impact of environmental legislation on the UK's growth strategy and competitiveness as a manufacturing nation.

4. The Political Culture

No one can overestimate the importance of concrete political will in inspiring the belief that the UK will evolve as a high-value manufacturing economy, growing it as a proportion of GDP in order to offset the low-cost manufacturing activity which decamps to second-tier economies. CPI's programme of engagement with MPs, which includes visits to factories as well as Parliamentary lobbying, has worked hard at communicating the importance of corrugated packaging to UK manufacturing as a whole.

5. SMEs: The Supply Chain and Trade Finance

A healthy manufacturing sector requires a healthy supply chain. In order for SMEs to thrive as part of the supply chain, a light-touch regulatory environment is crucial. We need concerted action which helps SMEs to grow by giving them access to overseas markets. More needs to be done to attract foreign suppliers to the UK, to rectify the emerging capability gaps in domestic supply chains and to ensure that top-tier manufacturers benefit from low logistical costs.

This Parliamentary event was attended by CPI's David Workman (Director General) and Andy Barnettson (Director

of Packaging Affairs). David Workman commented: "A joined-up long term vision for manufacturing is essential to ensure regulation is workable rather than stifling. The cumulative effect of regulation is making it uncompetitive for companies to be here. By 2020 we will have no energy intensive manufacturing in the UK unless there are significant changes in government policy."

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Notes to Editors

- CPI is the voice of the paper industry in the UK, representing papermakers, tissue manufacturers, corrugated packaging producers and recovered paper merchants.
- CPI represents 72 Member Companies, with a combined annual turnover of £4 billion and 19,600 personnel.
- For additional information on the UK paper industry, in the first instance, please contact Annabel Acton, Communications Manager, on 01793 889612 or email aacton@paper.org.uk. Alternatively, please visit: <http://www.paper.org.uk>.