



Scottish Council for
Development and Industry

PRESS RELEASE

23 November 2010

Embargo: None

SCDI Comment on Migrant Cap

Responding to the announcement by the UK Government of a cap on skilled migrants from outside the EU who can work in UK industry, Gareth Williams, Head of Policy, Scottish Council for Development and Industry, said:

“The top priorities for the UK are economic growth, driven by higher exports, and restoring the public finances, so it would have been perverse to reduce the essential supply of skilled international workers to UK industry - especially when the Government’s own experts have advised that they make a positive impact to the economy and public finances, and do not reduce employment of UK workers.

“Businesses recognise the work by Coalition Ministers to limit the potential harm to the economy of these proposals, especially to exempt Intra-Company Transfers. But clear evidence was presented that the temporary cap has had a negative impact in key sectors, such as oil and gas, and there is still a risk that the new limit will constrict business growth and investment, and damage competitiveness.

“Scotland has a greater need for skilled migrant workers to grow our economy because of our differing demographics. International expertise is essential in our key industry sectors, small businesses and major events programme, especially the Commonwealth Games. SCDI is disappointed that the UK Government has not yet accepted the joint representations from businesses, trades unions and public sector organisations to take a flexible approach to the annual limit and introduce a regional variation which attracts skilled migrants to work in Scotland.

“Universities and colleges are a cornerstone of Scotland’s international reputation and major export earners, and income from overseas students is vital to the international competitiveness of Scotland’s higher and further education sectors. This must be safeguarded in the forthcoming review by the UK Government.”



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Notes to editors

SCDI is Scotland's leading economic development organisation representing 1,200 companies, SMEs, public sector bodies, charities, trade unions and faith groups.

For further information, please contact Gareth Williams, Head of Policy on 07917 103 997.