



## **British Educational Suppliers Association**

### **The British Council APPG: Education and Culture in the UK's relationships with Europe**

#### **The British Educational Suppliers Association**

The British Educational Suppliers Association (BESA) is the trade association covering the entirety of the UK educational suppliers sector. BESA represents over 300 educational suppliers in the UK, including manufacturers and distributors of equipment, materials, books, consumables, furniture, technology, ICT hardware and EdTech to the education market. Our members sign up to a Code of Practice that assures schools that they are suppliers of quality products and services and can be trusted. BESA organises a number of high profile events in the UK and abroad, and founded the annual BETT show which brings together 800 leading companies in the educational technology sector and over 34,000 attendees. This year's event was opened by Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP.

#### **Executive Summary:**

1. The UK education sector has a global reputation for excellence and continues to be a key area of export potential to European markets.
2. As English is the common global language for business, there remains a high demand for English language learning services and products in Europe.
3. British educational suppliers' are adapting their resources into a variety of formats to suit the differing needs of international education systems.

#### **Education export market:**

British educational services and products, from the early years through to higher education, remain highly sought-after and are a key area of export potential both to European markets and beyond. Exports from the UK education suppliers' sector were valued at £656 million in 2016, a 7% increase from the previous year.

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In addition, Britain remains the European leader of education technology; with almost a quarter of Europe's EdTech companies based in the UK. A sector survey of 400 EdTech firms found that export revenues for UK education companies are predicted to grow to 40% of revenue by 2020.

### **English language learning**

English is the dominant global language – it is spoken by approximately a quarter of the world's population as the primary language for business, science and academia. The recent Department for International Trade and Department for Education *International Education Strategy* highlighted the importance of the English language on emerging and developed economies and its role in national development and global connectivity. The strategy also identified Europe as a key English Language Training growth market<sup>1</sup>.

The importance and subsequent demand of English language learning services will not dissipate in a post-Brexit world. It is therefore important to collectively engage with European markets to tailor English language learning services to their needs and industries.

### **Resources**

Education systems differ tremendously from country to country and a variety of formats of resources are required to suit these contrasting systems. British educational suppliers' are becoming adept at adapting their resources to suit the specific needs of international education markets – resources are now available in a range of formats, including text, digital, and face-to-face.

However, in order for English to remain the dominant global language for business, academia and trade, and for British educational suppliers' to harness this important export potential, it is vital that countries are made aware of the range of resources available, the variety of formats, and how they can be tailored specifically to their education system. It is also essential that British educational suppliers' continue to adapt their resources and services to suit the needs of the ever-changing international education market through collective engagement and consolidation.

BESA would be very happy to share further details with the APPG at an oral evidence session.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/international-education-strategy-global-potential-global-growth>

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