

EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

British Chamber of Commerce | EU & Belgium

Boulevard Bischoffsheim 11, B-1000 Brussels
Wednesday 13th September 2023
17:00 – 18:30

Attendees

Brian	Ager	BritCham
Damla	Baran	BritCham
Melanie	Barker	BritCham
Ales	Bartl	Keller & Heckman
Laura	Batchelor	Fipra
Carmen	Bell	Portland Communications
Peter	Bell	Expedite/BritCham
Maria	Bonastre Roca	BritCham
Michel	Bruneel	AWEX
Gabriel	Buda	Degroof Petercam
Alphi	Cartuyvels	AWEX
Antoine	Collard	BritCham
Greg	Collette	Barclays
Nicola	Cosentino	City of London
Jill	Craig	PentaGroup (Hume Brophy)
Elizabeth	Crossick	RELX
Andreea	Cuciureanu	Vitis Regulatory
Mohamed	Elzareii	Haleon
Hannah	Garrett	Diageo
Philippe	Gauthier	BritCham
Stefan	Hillstroem	BMW
Matt	Hinde	National Grid
Patrick	Janssen	Shell
Andrew	Johnson	Rud Pedersen
Gregg	Jones	Coventry University
Helki	Kerrigan	BritCham
Louis	KInd	BritCham
Paul	Lavery	Clover Group
Justus	Loebler	BMW
Elise	Loncol	BritCham
Gary	McIndoe	Latitude law
Tom	Murray	EUK Consulting
Alexandra	Nagy	Linklaters
Oran	O'Connor	BritCham
Magdalena	Pacholska	Coventry University
Tom	Parker	SEC Newgate

At the heart of Business in Europe

Erik	Persson	BAT
Natalie	Pettinger Kearney	Freshfields
Cristina	Rascon	Brussels Business Flats
David	Reed	KREAB
Marie-Louise	Risoud	BP
Yacin	Saadi	Clover Group
Jevon	Snell	NATS
Dinah	Steppe-Mndebele	BritCham
James	Stevens	Rud Pedersen
Samuel	Suchel	Smiths Group
Szilvia	Szakacs	BritCham
Hugues	Thibaut	SD Worx
Karel	Van Eetvelt	Hill & Knowlton Strategies
Catherine	Van Reeth	Toy Industries of Europe
Melanie	Warnes	BSB

The meeting is quorate.

Brian Ager welcomed all to the meeting. The year so far had seen many positive changes and developments and this Extraordinary General Meeting had been arranged to present these changes and give the membership the opportunity to discuss items and raise any questions with the Board. **Brian Ager** then introduced **Tom Parker**, President, who talked through a detailed presentation.

2023 – Our Pivotal Year

In summary, this presentation outlined the progress since publishing the **Strategic Roadmap** in November 2022 and how this has helped to make 2023 a truly pivotal year for the Chamber.

Events

Throughout this year BritCham has responded actively to a number of external developments that have provided a range of opportunities to engage more with our members and to address the issues and matters that are most important to them. This has resulted in an unprecedented programme of committee and Chamber-wide events which has always been an integral element of the value that the Chamber provides for its members.

New Committees

In parallel with this, and further to extensive consultation with members and industry partners, 4 new committees and working groups have been established which will further enrich our platform on the sectoral areas of interest for our members. These new committees cover Financial Services, Defence & Security, and Trade Policy with a Chemicals Working Group formed under our Sustainability Committee.

These initiatives were launched with an open approach that has resulted in significant interest in our programme and work from companies and organisations that have previously not engaged with the Chamber. Extending our reach and creating the platform for prospective new members is a core part of the 2024 strategy.

Policy Council

In addition to the expansion of the committee structure there have been numerous calls for the Chamber to take positions on behalf of members. In response, the Board has formed a cross-chamber Policy Council to oversee this advocacy work and to provide support and guidance to the committees. The Policy Council will be led by the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the EU and Bilateral pillars of the Chamber with the Chairs and Co-Chairs of all committees forming the Policy Council membership.

Governance

This Policy Council effectively replaces what was previously known as the EU Policy Hub and brings governance of EU and Bilateral pillars into one structure. Whilst BritCham will always be a hybrid Chamber for members with interests in EU-UK and/or UK-Belgium business and trade, the Board is committed to ensuring a 'One Chamber' philosophy and collectively benefitting from the shared knowledge and common interests.

2024 Strategy

2024 is billed as our Year of Investment. This looks forward to the huge opportunities BritCham now has to both build on the foundations put in place this year and for the Chamber to grow in stature, value and membership. A growing membership is a key indicator not only of the Chamber's continued relevance and the importance of the work done but also adds cumulative value as our network is extended, enhancing connectivity both in Brussels, Belgium and internationally.

International Reach

Our international capabilities are underpinned by our affiliation with the British Chambers of Commerce in the UK and our membership of the Global Business Network with over 60 chambers of commerce around the world. BritCham is unique being the only chamber with an EU component and this position will be leveraged to a much greater extent in 2024 by providing EU insights and access to our committee work and events to prospective overseas members.

Funding our Growth

To maximise the potential for growth and for the Chamber to deliver its' 2024 strategy to Develop, Invest and Grow, there is a need to make significant investments in our people, our premises and technological infrastructure. With the definitive move towards advocacy and the development of new committees, the Chamber will be recruiting dedicated resource to support the policy work, events programme and strategic communications.

There has been investment in a new website which will provide an enhanced member experience for events registration, a payments system and CRM integration and this investment will continue into 2024. Further investment is needed in the facilities at the Chamber to provide updated hybrid meeting facilities and generally upgrade the events capability.

Membership Fees

As a not-for-profit organisation, historically budgets are not set to create large surpluses which would then finance such step-change investments. Our income streams are made up of membership fees and event sponsorships, the latter being unpredictable.

As a result, membership fees are the only source of funding available to facilitate the changes which need to be made in order to implement the strategy. The Board has been assessing the current fee levels for a number of years and now, with an immediate requirement to make fundamental advances as a Chamber, 2024 is the year that fees must be adjusted to reflect the value provided.

Slides 30-33 of the presentation showed the Board's assessment of membership value. This is after considering the fee structures of equivalent organisations and the difference between the current membership fees and those now proposed for 2024.

Understanding that there is a significant gap between these figures, the Board has recommended that the increase in fees should be implemented in an incremental manner so that the 2024 'value' membership fee will finally be applied in 2025 for members of the bilateral chamber and 2026 for members of the EU chamber. There will be no indexation during these periods.

All new members signing up from 1 Jan 2024 will pay the full 'value' fee which will be fixed, again with no indexation until existing members and new members are aligned in 2025/26 respectively.

The implementation of a fee increase has been made with great consideration and sensitivity towards our existing members and the Board believes this is structured in a way that demonstrates our reciprocal loyalty and the appreciation of the members' support.

Chamber Brand and Position

As the external business landscape has moved significantly over the last few years and BritCham's strategic direction and position is adapting to meet new challenges and opportunities, the Board has taken the moment to refresh our branding.

Slides 34-46 showed the development work undertaken that has resulted in an exciting new brand for the British Chamber of Commerce |EU & Belgium as well as sub brands for our two pillars which will now be referred to as BritCham EU and BritCham Belgium.

The new branding will be launched once the new website is made live by the end of October, but it will be appearing in some documentation which from now on will be produced with the new logo to avoid duplication of effort, wasting of paper etc.

Brussels New Generation

We are delighted to announce a re-purposing of our young professionals' network Brussels New Generation (BNG). With extensive consultation within the 500+ membership of under-35 year old participants the focus will be on the development of this exciting movement towards 'Young Professionals Making an Impact'.

The 2024 programme will include networking events, a mentorship scheme, jobs fair and the establishment of committees and workgroups on topics such as sustainability, diversity and inclusion and EU-UK relations.

Member Feedback

The 2-part meeting had Q&A sessions at the end of each which gave members the opportunity to comment on everything presented. There was an overwhelming positive response and support for the plans and strategy with the request for more information on some of the items covered.

There were also a number of excellent suggestions on how to further enhance the strategy and the Board will be writing to Members again to outline how these ideas can be integrated into the 2024 programme.

Date: 24.04.2024



Signed: Tom Parker
President