

Birmingham hosts meeting of top business minds

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The world's largest meeting of international trade economists commences today at the University of Birmingham for the fifteenth **European Trade Study Group** (<http://www.etsg.org/>) conference.

Following on from Athens, Rome and Copenhagen, the prestigious 3-day conference, which runs from 12 -14 September 2013, will bring together more than 300 participants from Europe, USA, Japan, China, India and beyond. They include representatives of international institutions such as the World Bank, the WTO, the Department of Trade and Industry, the OECD and a large number of leading universities from around the globe.

This unique forum for the discussion of international trade, foreign investment and the study of multinational companies provides a platform for presenting pioneering research and sharing best practice in the field. 289 papers will be presented covering a diverse range of leading thinking. Presentations include: Foreign direct investment: Do corporate tax havens matter; Ethnic diversity and firm's export behaviour; An anatomy of online trade: evidence from eBay exporters; Globalization and the gender wage gap; International terrorism as a trade impediment; and Does immigration attract foreign capital? Evidence from Spain.

Professor Robert Elliott, conference co-convenor said: 'We're delighted to be hosting this prestigious conference at Birmingham this year, given the city's historic role as a centre of manufacturing expertise and international trade. We look forward to welcoming guests from around the World to experience the best of UK education and to witness the rejuvenation of Birmingham's city centre to reflect its world class manufacturing and its thriving service and retail sector.'

Showcasing the dramatic transformation in the city, the conference coincides with a site selector visit from US experts in partnership with Marketing Birmingham. This visit is the largest of its kind in Europe, welcoming 10 experts to view Birmingham and highlight its potential as a site for new business premises. The experts will take part in a panel debate at the ICC on Friday night where the discussion will focus on whether their perceptions of the city have changed during the visit, how Birmingham is performing against its international competitors, and the role of universities in attracting foreign investment. The site selectors will be joined on the panel by a number of academics who also specialise in inward investment.

Professor Elliott added: 'It is Birmingham's time. As a centre of UK manufacturing, our city has a wealth of knowledge and expertise to offer businesses and is a fitting venue for the gathering of world trade experts. The UK is renowned as a trading nation and so it is important for Britain to continue to hold this type of global event.'

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