# Parties Urged to Tone Down Narrow-Minded Bickering and Speak Up on Growth

**Monday 13 April, 2015**

Britain's manufacturers are urging the leaders of the main political parties to tone down the current narrow-minded bickering and blame-driven politics and, instead, demonstrate to the electorate they have real vision and ambition for the UK economy in the next parliament and, the policies to back it up.

The call, made by EEF, the manufacturers' organisation, comes ahead of the publication of the main party manifestos this week.

Commenting, EEF Chief Executive, Terry Scuoler, said:

"What the public and business want to see is not the narrow-minded, blame-driven politics we are currently witnessing but a vision of where we are going as a country and an economy.

"They want see manifesto pledges that will support the creation of the skilled jobs we need, equip their children with the education and skills they will need for the future and anchor value creating businesses in the UK. In short they want to hear what the big picture is for very critical issues.

"If the last five years have been about survival and rebuilding, the next five must be about delivering a better balanced economy and sustained growth. UK manufacturing is in good shape to help deliver this. Some important groundwork has been laid and it is vital the next government, however it is made up, commits to immediate policies which will build on and encourage growth, boost private sector investment and job creation."

EEF has today published a top ten priority list for the first year of an incoming government, with a scorecard of measures against which efforts to boost growth and create jobs will be judged.

The list builds on the key objectives included in EEF's manifesto for a new government 'Securing a manufacturing renaissance' which sets out the core foundations for boosting investment, supporting growing businesses, improving skills, making it easier to do business as well as securing Britain's membership of the EU.

According to EEF, the longer term aim should be to restore the public finances, improve productivity and secure real wage growth. In particular, the next government should set an ambition for measurable improvements in productivity relative to our international competitors, a step change in investment behaviour in the private sector and a marked improvement in the UK's trade performance.

According to EEF, the top ten policy priorities to help achieve these aims should be to:

1. Announce a roadmap for company tax reform, especially reform of the tax allowances that support companies investing for the future

2. Upgrade the transport networks on which business relies, especially by fixing the £12 billion road maintenance backlog, as part of a new long-term national infrastructure plan. This should include the announcement of a National Infrastructure Authority.

3. Ringfence the science and innovation budgets in the same way schools are protected.

4. Focus UKTI's work on providing help for smaller companies to access global markets with advice, local market expertise and business-focussed embassies abroad.

5. Support a successful Transatlantic trade deal (TTIP) with the United States.

6. Implement the commitment to give employers real buying power for training, through digital training vouchers.

7. Restore an effective careers service with real employer engagement all the way up the schools system from primary to sixth form.

8. Commit to reforming the over-complicated and uncompetitive system of carbon taxes and levies.

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9. Double this government's cut in the costs of regulatory compliance in the UK, and press for Brussels to introduce compliance cost assessments for EU Directives on the UK model.

10. Commit to making the case for Britain's continued membership of a reformed Europe.

**ENDS**

EEF represents 20,000 companies of all sizes, from start-ups to multinationals, across engineering, manufacturing, technology and the wider industrial sector. EEF directly represents over 5,000 businesses who are members of EEF. Everything we do – from providing essential business support and training to championing manufacturing industry in the UK and the EU – is designed to help British manufacturers compete, innovate and grow.

From HR and employment law, health and safety to environmental and productivity improvement, our advice, expertise and influence enables businesses to remain safe, compliant and future-focused.

More information at www.eef.org.uk

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