



## **Media Release**

**Thursday, February 18, 2016**

### **PM's EU talks unlikely to sway North-east business**

More than half the business leaders in the North-east (55%) say that the outcome of David Cameron's EU negotiations are unlikely to influence how they vote in any upcoming referendum.

According to an Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce survey, support for membership remains strong in the North-east, as the results reveal that three in four business leaders will vote to remain in the union.

When asked how committed they are to their decision, 80% say they are either completely committed or unlikely to change their mind. This compares with 60% of business leaders in the rest of the UK, and 69% in Scotland.

While this figure confirms previous results which found similar levels of support for remaining, there has been a rise in the number of business leaders who say they would vote to leave the EU, with 18% indicating this, compared with 11.5% in September last year.

There has also been a marked quickening of interest in the subject, with more than two-thirds of North-east business leaders (68%) now following the debate "closely", that is at least weekly, compared with 37% in September.

This close attention is evident as the Prime Minister this week labours over the UK's renegotiation package, as most businesses said they were familiar with every objective of the package.

Sixty-nine per cent said that if the Prime Minister's negotiation process was successful, the results would have a positive impact in reducing red tape and boosting competitiveness.

Similarly, nearly a half (48%) expected a positive impact from negotiating an exemption from "ever closer union", although less than a third (29%) saw restricting EU migrants' access to tax credits as having a positive impact on business.

Liam Smyth, membership director of Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce, said: "It appears the Prime Minister's negotiations are not affecting our members' decisions as the number saying that

the results are unlikely to sway them has actually risen since we last surveyed our members in September.

“Despite more than nine out of ten of our members saying that the referendum has had no material impact on their business so far, they know that it is a subject that will affect everyone.

“We welcome the findings that more businesses are paying closer attention to the debate, and we will continue to provide detailed and unbiased information on the subject to our members.”

**Ends**

#### **Notes to editor**

- This EU Referendum survey was carried out by the British Chambers of Commerce between January 25 and February 4, 2016, before Donald Tusk’s letter of response to David Cameron’s negotiations was published. There were 115 responses from the Aberdeen & Grampian area, 458 responses in Scotland (including Aberdeen & Grampian responses) and 2,133 responses UK-wide.
- Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce (AGCC) is North-east Scotland's leading private sector, member-focused, business organisation. The Chamber represents more than 1,300 businesses with almost 130,000 employees in the private sector covering all industry sectors, ranging in size from sole traders to multi-national corporations.
- The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) sits at the heart of a powerful network of 52 Accredited Chambers of Commerce across the UK, representing thousands of businesses of all sizes and within all sectors. For more information visit: [www.britishchambers.org.uk](http://www.britishchambers.org.uk)

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