A MESSAGE FROM CBBC CHIEF EXECUTIVE MATTHEW ROUS

Dear Member,

Many of you will have seen the article published in The Times on 21st August, reporting concerns among certain Members of Parliament at funding provided to CBBC by the Department for International Trade (DIT). This funding – incorrectly described as a “subsidy” – has of course been paid to CBBC under contract for the delivery of support to British exporters.

The Times contacted me for comment before publication of the article. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to set the record straight on the contractual point, and to highlight our achievement in helping to deliver £2.35 billion worth of Export Wins for UK businesses over the course of three years.

Nonetheless The Times’s choice of headline, describing CBBC as “a pro-China group”, is disappointing. So too is the paper’s decision to include in the article an unsubstantiated allegation that CBBC “seems to lobby on behalf of Beijing’s interests”.

CBBC emphatically refutes the allegation that CBBC is a pro-China group. We are pro-UK and pro-business. Above all, we are committed to working for you, our Members.

I rejoice in the freedoms which CBBC enjoys as a not-for-profit membership organisation based in the UK, to speak up for our beliefs and to operate under the transparent and impartial rule of law. Having lived and worked in China for many years, I know some of the challenges which arise when those freedoms are not available in the same way. Perhaps for that reason, I find it all the more ironic that some of our critics advocate the importance of free speech while calling for CBBC to be penalised for exercising our democratic right to advocate for a relationship which we passionately believe to be essential to the UK’s national interest.

CBBC will continue to make the patriotic case for the UK to engage with the world’s second largest economy and our third largest trading partner. The benefits from that engagement include more than 100,000 British jobs; a £2 billion education market for Chinese students in our world-class universities and schools; and a million Chinese tourist and other visits to the UK each year.

CBBC remains committed to positive, open and realistic engagement with China as the best course for Britain. And we remain committed to helping you, our Members, to realise the fruits of that engagement by providing practical advice and support.

Yours ever,

Matthew Rous
Chief Executive

21 August 2020