

INTRODUCING THE SECOND COMPETITIVENESS DAY 9 DECEMBER 2004



WE NEED TO RELEASE COMPANIES' POTENTIAL



Jürgen Strube
President of UNICE



Philippe de Buck
Secretary General

The first Competitiveness Day which took place on 14 November 2003 was a great success. Over six hundred busy entrepreneurs and business leaders demonstrated for competitiveness. The message they wanted to convey to the representatives of the European Union who also attended was that there is an urgent need in Europe for an environment which is more conducive to enterprise.

If our campaign for better conditions for companies is to bear fruit, it will require policy-makers to act! We need to keep our message at the top of the European political agenda. Therefore a second Competitiveness Day is being organised on 9 December 2004 in Brussels.

The conference debates will focus on seven priority areas:

- Fostering entrepreneurship in a lean and efficient state
- Boosting innovation
- Improving employment conditions
- Completing product market reforms
- Finding competitive environmental policy solutions
- Realising global market opportunities
- Better regulation

The future of a competitive Europe depends on everyone involved in business in Europe committing to becoming ambassadors for competitiveness. We hope you will join us in debating and promoting this key issue for the success of all our businesses.

MANY ENTREPRENEURS WILL SURELY JOIN US!

WHAT DOES UNICE DO?

UNICE is the voice of more than 16 million small, medium and large European companies and has been active in European affairs since 1958. Its members comprise 35 central industrial and employers' federations from 28 countries, working together to achieve growth and competitiveness in Europe.

COMPETITIVENESS DAY 14 NOVEMBER 2003

SOUNDING THE ALARM FOR EUROPE

The first Competitiveness Day was extremely successful. A large number of distinguished speakers and panellists presented strong messages as well as solutions. Silvio Berlusconi, president of the EU Council, firmly supported the business call for improved conditions for companies. This event had a great impact in the European arena.

The debate between Commissioner Liikanen and Irish Minister Dick Roche gave us some hope that our message is getting through: the crucial role of the Competitiveness Council was accepted as well as the necessary inputs from business for its work.

The afternoon saw several powerful presentations and a lot of criticism of the red tape that surrounds many European policies. In particular, the Commission's proposed chemicals registration system (REACH) was singled out as a glaring example of how not to make rules. This was not simply a closed debate, the lunchtime press conference attracted a total of sixty journalists from all over Europe.



RELEASE COMPANIES' POTENTIAL, FREE GULLIVER



Dick Roche
Irish Minister for European Affairs

"Business is not the problem, business is part of the solution."



Erkki Liikanen
Commissioner of DG Enterprise

"The horizontal issues such as industrial policy or better regulation should always be on the agenda of Competitiveness Council meetings."

COMPETITIVENESS DAY 9 DECEMBER 2004



KEEPING UP THE MOMENTUM

Competitiveness Day 2004 in Brussels on 9 December will cover a wide range of topics and will keep the subject at the forefront of European political thinking. Once again, we will have a large number of distinguished speakers and panellists to share their views and opinions, and to offer possible solutions to this key issue facing European business.

COMPETITIVENESS BRINGS GROWTH, WEALTH AND EMPLOYMENT

This is an extremely important point that we need to convey. The general public needs to be aware of the link between competitiveness, economic growth and entrepreneurship on the one hand and living standards on the other. That is why business leaders need to become ambassadors for competitiveness and spread the word.

WE NEED AMBASSADORS FOR COMPETITIVENESS

Because competitiveness affects everyone, we need everyone's commitment in the uphill struggle to make Europe the most competitive economy in the world. We also need to ensure that the European growth model is no longer dependent on the economic motor of the USA. Enterprise is the key to this and, until it is released from its constraints, Europe's potential will not be realised. We also need to remember that competitiveness is a problem we all face, so we should have an open-minded approach and not pursue narrow, selfish interests.

A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

The enlargement of Europe, the election of a new European Parliament and a new Commission presents European businesses with exciting new opportunities. At this historic moment in time, Competitiveness Day 2004 offers participants an unrivalled opportunity to meet the President of the Commission, the President of the European Central Bank and the President of the European Parliament, and to present their views face to face.



Peter Mitterbauer
President of IV
CEO of MIBA AG

"Europe risks de-industrialisation."



Michael Treschow
Vice-President of SN
Chairman of Ericsson

"Too little is spent on R&D and too few patents are filed in Europe. The regulatory environment must become more conducive to innovation."



Ulysses Kyriacopoulos
President of SEV
President of S&B Industrial Minerals SA

"Bureaucratic obstacles prevent citizens in many Member States from starting a business, even though surveys show that many European citizens would like to become their own boss."





SMEs NEED LESS BUREAUCRACY

Regulations in Europe, particularly in the area of environmental policy, often leave European industry at a serious disadvantage. In addition, there is too little investment in R&D, and the regulatory environment must become more conducive to innovation. There are also bureaucratic obstacles in many Member States which prevent people from setting up new businesses. This is particularly true of SMEs, which generate 66% of private sector employment.

THE COMPETITIVENESS COUNCIL IS KEY

Competitiveness is horizontal by nature, so we need an integrated strategy for competitiveness throughout all European institutions and at all levels. This means that horizontal issues such as industrial policy or better regulation should always be on the agenda of Competitiveness Council meetings. Currently, almost every policy debate in the EU ends in some form of regulation. To change this, the possibility of having no imposed regulation at all should always be considered at every stage of the process.



Silvio Berlusconi
Prime Minister of Italy
President of the European Council

"The potential of Europe has not yet been fully realised. Enterprise must be key in Europe."



Antonio d'Amato
President of Confindustria
President of Finseda International Packaging Group

"We need a European model of growth that is not dependent on the economic motor in the US."

PRESS REVIEW



Daniel Janssen
Chairman of Solvay

"It is not only the US where innovation is moving. The percentage of companies' budgets devoted to R&D in Asian countries like China and India is persistently increasing."

plio, qui presentait mardi les premiers résultats de l'étude réalisée sur le sujet".

Déterminant dans l'économie régionale. En moyenne, un congressiste belge à Bruxelles dépense 122 € par

total, à l'au secteur Mice (+ 49% par rapport à 1997). A noter que le tourisme d'affaires s'effectue surtout à Bruxelles de mars à juin et de septembre à novembre.

Entreprises "Délivrez Gulliver!", exigent les patrons européens.

"Les entreprises étouffent et n'ont pas les moyens de prospérer", dénonce l'Unice. L'Europe, distancée par l'étranger, risque de "rater le coche du XXI^e siècle", dit-elle.

Libère: le potentiel des entreprises, délivrez Gulliver!" Le patronat européen (Unice) a mis les petits plats dans les grands, jeudi à Bruxelles, pour la première "Journée de la compétitivité de l'UE". Fait rare: plusieurs centaines de chefs d'entreprises ont débattu avec des personnalités politiques - le premier ministre italien Silvio Berlusconi, président du conseil européen, le commissaire Erkki Liikanen, le ministre irlandais des affaires européennes Dick Roche, etc. - des défis de la compétitivité que l'Europe doit relever et des actions à mener d'urgence.

Selon l'Unice, l'économie européenne est distancée par ses principaux concurrents américains et asiatiques et risque de "rater le coche du XXI^e siècle".

"Les rigidités structurelles ne laissent pas la place aux entreprises ont besoin pour prospérer. Au contraire, elles les empêchent de profiter des avantages concurrentiels. Production industrielle et recherche quib-

tent l'Europe. Si des décisions ne sont pas prises d'urgence, l'Europe risque une déstabilisation", a déclaré un participant.

Pour contrer ce phénomène, l'Unice identifie, à l'intention des politiques, quelques priorités: réduire les législations existantes; poursuivre la réforme de la protection sociale; réduire les déficits publics structurels; stimuler la recherche et développement; accroître la flexibilité dans les marchés du travail nationaux; achever les réseaux trans-européens, etc.

Un exemple qui nous touche de près et qui vaut plus que de longs discours: le nombre d'entrepreneurs par millier d'habitants est plus bas en Belgique que dans tous les autres pays européens, la Belgique ne comptant que 3 entrepreneurs pour 1000 habitants. La moyenne européenne est de 4,9 et aux Etats-Unis, elle atteint 16,5.

"Nous avons besoin d'un véritable engagement de toutes les institutions européennes. Il faut mettre en œuvre la stratégie de Lisbonne, qui doit faire de l'Europe l'économie de la connaissance la plus compétitive du monde pour 2010. L'UE a besoin d'une stratégie intégrée qui fasse de la place à l'entrepreneuriat", a conclu le président de l'Unice, Jürgen Strube.

20 LA LIBRE BELGIQUE

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Il presidente di turno critica la politica economica dell'Unione che, «come Gulliver, deve trovare la forza di liberarsi da lacci e laccioli»

«Troppe regole, la Ue imbriglia le imprese»

Per Berlusconi «l'Europa fa ben poco per la ripresa». E l'euro «fa cadere la domanda»

Apprezzamento, invece, per il vincolo del 3% «Ma c'è bisogno di un piano comune». «Il semestre? E' troppo corto».

dal nostro inviato MARCO CONTI

BRUXELLES - L'Unione Europea imbriglia l'economia europea con lacci e laccioli che rischiano di farla entrare in una spirale di decadenza rispetto all'economia americana che invece dà forti segnali di vitalità. L'allarme è venuto ieri mattina a Bruxelles da parte di Silvio Berlusconi nel corso del convegno dell'Unice, l'Unione delle confederazioni europee presieduta da Antonio D'Amato. Di fronte ad una folla di imprenditori provenienti da ogni parte d'Europa, il presidente di turno dell'Unione non è andato per il sottile nel denunciare l'eccesso di regolamentazione europea che "ovatta la vita delle imprese e dei cittadini".

La critica nei confronti di un'Europa "che sta facendo ben poco" è molto dura e coinvolge anche la moneta unica. Per Berlusconi "l'introduzione dell'euro è stata molto importante per i nostri commercianti ma con un contante che ha provocato anche una caduta della domanda privata", inoltre la moneta unica ha privato gli stati membri, e in particolare l'Italia, della possibilità "di attuare una politica monetaria. Ovvero di stabilire agendo sul differenziale dei cambi per favorire le esportazioni. Il meccanismo per le politiche valutarie del passato dura però poco perché il presidente del Consiglio subito dopo firma ad eleggere il patto di stabilità e il vincolo del 3% che "è stato molto positivo per le nostre economie, per quelle dei singoli paesi membri e dunque per il bilancio europeo".

La Banca Centrale Europea fa bene a tenere sotto controllo l'inflazione e a dare autorevolezza all'euro, ma occorre secondo Berlusconi che le siano presto dati gli strumenti che ha la Fed americana per intervenire nell'economia. Ciò che si sta invece facendo non basta però per garantire lo sviluppo economico in quanto "la stabilità da sola non è sufficiente a promuovere lo sviluppo. Manca all'Europa, per Berlusconi, una vera politica economica comune e solo nell'ultimo consiglio europeo si è cominciato a parlare di "nuova economia europea".

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Toghe, alla Camera le nuove regole rallentano
Tregua Berlusconi Fini

Dalla cessione

FINANCIAL TIMES WEDNESDAY

ECONOMIC OUTPUT

Business leaders warn of slow pace of EU reforms

By George Parker in Brussels

European business chiefs will warn today that Europe risks missing out on the advantages of an expanded EU because of the slow pace of its structural reforms.

They will say in a report that Europe's economic output per head is still a third lower than in the US, and the gap is narrowing only very slowly.

The report by Unice, the European business organisation, claims the EU's aim to overtake the US as the world's most competitive economy by 2010 is in serious trouble.

Jürgen Strube, president of Unice, will present the report today at a Brussels competitiveness conference.

Silvio Berlusconi, the Italian prime minister and holder of the rotating EU presidency, will be attending the gathering.

The report says Europe still lacks entrepreneurs and is weighed down by regulations, citing research which found it took more than 11 times as long to start a business in the EU compared with the US.

Dr Strube said Europe needed to work much harder to live up to the rhetoric of the campaign to raise competitiveness, agreed at the Lisbon summit of 2000.

"Our declining productivity rate isn't in line with the Lisbon strategy and is really a major problem", he told the Financial Times.

"The structural rigidities we see are not yet overcome, but I am convinced we are on the right track."

He fears that without reforms, European business will not be able to exploit fully the opportunities of a single market of 450 m people, a reality after the EU expands next year to 25 member states.

He said a priority should be the raising of the profile and effectiveness of the EU's competitiveness council.

The council was created last year but has yet to make an impact. He said the council had a pivotal role to play to make sure that the success of business is at the heart of all EU decisions, citing a lack of "horizontal thinking" in the European Commission.

"The chemicals directive, for example, was something which was primarily intended to enhance environmental protection", he said.

"It was only later on that the economic and social dimension were added".

Responding to claims by Gordon Brown, UK finance minister, that Britain was a beacon in Europe for higher competitiveness, Dr Strube said: "You can't deny that in some cases, structural reforms in the UK can serve as an incentive to other countries".

He also said that Europe's fiscal rules, the stability pact, should be preserved but must be used flexibly to ensure the right conditions for growth.

&T WIRELESS
regular says



Jacques Schraven
President of VNO-NCW

"On an international comparison, hiring and dismissing employees is very regulated and costly in Europe."



Michael Rogowski
President of BDI and Chairman of Voith AG

"Stability, growth and reforms go together. Therefore, budgetary policy today must be aimed at reducing structural budget deficits."

Berlusconi's around the world in 50 mins



Silvio Berlusconi delighted the organizers of the "Competitiveness Day" conference in Brussels last Friday (14 November) by flying in especially for the event.

Jürgen Strube, president of host UNICE, the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe, had feared the Italian premier might have to pull out of the event in the wake of last Wednesday's suicide bomb attack in Nasariyah, which left 19 Italians – most of them carabinieri – dead.

But Berlusconi delivered a 50-minute *tour de force*, which covered not just competitiveness but also took the 700 delegates on a journey through 50 years of global history since World War II. All totally unscripted, of course. Then the permatanned billionaire returned after lunch to receive the UNICE competitiveness manifesto, urging EU leaders to get the Lisbon process back on track. *Competitiveness Day conference report, Page 12.*



Signhild Hansen
CEO of Svenska Lantchips

"It is crucial that access to finance becomes easier for start-ups in Europe".

Luc Vansteenkiste
President of VBO-FEB
President of Rectical



"The internal market is a success story but remains fragile. The EU of 25 will have important impacts on the competitiveness of European companies".

België telt kleinste aantal ondernemers van Europa. Slechts drie ondernemers per duizend inwoners.

BRUSSEL, (tijd) – Het aantal ondernemers per duizend inwoners ligt in België lager dan in alle andere Europese landen. België telde in 2002 slechts 3 ondernemers per duizend inwoners. In Europa bedraagt dat cijfer gemiddelde 4,9 in de Verenigde Staten 10,5. Dat blijkt uit een studie die de Europese werkgeversorganisatie, Unice, vandaag publiceert.

De studie van Unice gaat over het concurrentievermogen van de Europese economie. Op basis van een aantal indicatoren vergelijkt Unice de concurrentiekracht in verschillende EU-landen en enkele andere landen.

Een van die indicatoren is het aantal ondernemers per duizend inwoners. In 2000 telde België nog bijna vijf ondernemers per duizend inwoners. Met de economische terugsval verminderde dat cijfer in 2002 tot 3 per duizend.

Daarmee bengelt België helaas onderaan de rangschikking van de 14 Europese landen waarvoor Unice over gegevens beschikt. Nederland telt in Europa proportioneel het grootste aantal ondernemers, met 9,1 per duizend. Gemiddeld hebben 4,9 Europeanen per duizend een eigen onderneming. Dat is minder dan de helft van het aantal in de Verenigde Staten. Want 10,5 Amerikanen op duizend zijn ondernemers. In China en Zuid-Korea bedraagt dat aantal respectievelijk

12,3 en 14,5 op duizend. Japan scoort het zwakst, met 1,8 ondernemers per duizend inwoners. Volgens Unice is de zwakke Europese score voor het aantal ondernemers vooral een gevolg van te veel regels en belastingen. Tijdens een conferentie vandaag in Brussel gaan Europese werkgevers pleiten voor een beter ondernemingsklimaat. Luc Vansteenkiste, de voorzitter van het Verbond van Belgische Ondernemingen (VBO) neemt ook deel aan de conferentie. Volgens Van-

steenkiste is er zeker in Vlaanderen veel aandacht nodig om de onderneming meer "in het centrum te plaatsen", de Vlaamse minister-president. Bart Somers, is zich daar volgens Vansteenkiste "erg van bewust". Voorge week startte een Ondernemersconferentie om Vlaanderen meer ondernemers vriendelijk te maken. JL

PAGINA 5
Alarmblik over EU-concurrentiekracht

L'Unice veut débarrasser les entreprises de leurs entraves

La compétitivité européenne reste à la traîne. L'Unice veut faire bouger les gouvernements.

LE MESSAGE n'est pas réellement neuf, mais il n'en est pas moins crucial: malgré les engagements pris par les Quinze à Lisbonne en mars 2000, le niveau de compétitivité et de productivité des entreprises européennes reste extrêmement préoccupant par rapport à celui de leurs concurrentes asiatiques et américaines. C'est le message que compte faire passer aujourd'hui le patronat européen à l'occasion d'une "journée de la compétitivité" qui réunira à Bruxelles une brochette de décideurs économiques et politiques européens, dont le Premier ministre italien, Silvio Berlusconi, président en exercice du Conseil européen. A cette occasion, l'Unice, qui représente les fédérations patronales de 28 pays européens, s'appuiera sur l'image de Gulliver pour tenter de se faire entendre. La fédération patronale juge en effet qu'à l'instar du géant imaginé par Jonathan Swift, les entreprises européennes sont littéralement liées par toute une série d'entraves qui les empêchent de donner le meilleur d'elles-mêmes. Ces entraves, l'Unice les a répertoriées dans son évaluation de la str-

tégie de Lisbonne. C'est que depuis que les Quinze ont décidé de placer la modernisation de l'économie en tête des priorités de l'UE, l'organisation patronale s'efforce de rappeler chaque année les dirigeants européens à leurs engagements. En trois ans et demi, beaucoup d'eau a coulé sous les ponts. Dans la capitale portugaise, l'UE navigait en pleine euphorie, notamment grâce au lancement réussi de l'euro et à la nouvelle économie. L'éclatement de la bulle internet, les attentats aux Etats-Unis et le prix élevé du pétrole sont toutefois passés par là, rendant impopulaires des réformes que la détérioration de la situation rendait pourtant d'autant plus nécessaires. Ce qui explique, en partie du moins, pourquoi les écarts de compétitivité entre l'Europe et ses concurrents subsistent et, dans certains cas s'accroissent. Le rapport de l'Unice met en évidence la place désavantageuse d'une partie des pays européens dans différents domaines cruciaux pour la bonne santé d'une économie: la productivité, les créations d'entreprises et le nombre d'entrepreneurs, les dépenses de recherche, les brevets, le niveau de taxation. Le tableau n'est toutefois pas désespérant, puisque plu-

sieurs Etats membres de l'UE, surtout scandinaves, s'en sortent souvent plus qu'honnêtement, notamment en ce qui concerne la recherche ou les brevets. Mais en moyenne, l'UE est souvent dépassée par ses principaux rivaux. Dans certains domaines, elle est même très largement distancée. C'est le cas notamment des biotechnologies, alors qu'elle était initialement bien armée pour briller dans ce secteur aux potentialités énormes. A chaque fois, l'Unice, qui met en exergue une série de bonnes pratiques, propose des solutions aux multiples handicaps européens. Elle préne ainsi la réforme des systèmes de santé et de retraite, la promotion de l'esprit entrepreneurial et une réévaluation des législations, afin de les rendre moins contraignantes. Elle réclame également l'accroissement de la flexibilité des marchés du travail et une réduction de la fiscalité. Si elle se dit par ailleurs favorable à l'initiative de croissance lancée récemment au niveau européen, l'Unice rappelle dans le même temps qu'au-delà de la construction de nouvelles infrastructures, il est tout aussi nécessaire de terminer la libéralisation des derniers secteurs toujours fermés à la concurrence ■

Olivier Gosset



Dominique Ristori
Director of Directorate A
DG Transport and Energy

"The image of a free Gulliver was starting to become a reality in some sectors, thanks to European policies."



Sir Iain Vallance
President of ESF

"Almost each policy debate in the EU ends in some form of regulation. This is the wrong approach."

ENTREPRENEURS: WE NEED TO HEAR YOUR VOICE ON 9 DECEMBER 2004



We know that competitiveness is a major concern for the European business community. No matter how large or small our companies may be, it affects us all. That is why it is important that we have contributions from all sectors. Your opinion counts and your contribution to this debate could make a crucial difference, not only to the future of your business, but to the future of business in Europe. Don't miss this opportunity to make your voice heard. We look forward to seeing you in Brussels.

COMPETITIVENESS DAY 2004



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

COMPETITIVENESS DAY TAKES PLACE
ON 9 DECEMBER 2004
IN BRUSSELS.
PROGRAMME AS WELL AS REGISTRATION DETAILS
WILL BE AVAILABLE SOON

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