



Mr José Sócrates  
Prime Minister of Portugal  
Rua da Imprensa à Estrela, 4  
1200-888 Lisboa  
Portugal

8 June 2007

Dear Prime Minister,

The Portuguese Presidency starts at a critical time for Europe. Important steps will need to be made on key dossiers, and the present economic revival is a unique opportunity to support a positive dynamic for change, notably in the agenda for growth and jobs. In this regard, we fully support the emphasis that the Portuguese Presidency is putting on stimulating the potential of small and medium-sized enterprises.

The main issues we would like the Portuguese Presidency to tackle over the next six months are detailed in the note I have attached to this letter, but there are three elements on which I would put particular emphasis.

First regarding the Future of Europe, the German Presidency has made progress in recent months and the June Summit will be decisive to define a clear mandate for the intergovernmental conference (IGC) on the future of the Constitutional Treaty, in order to reach a conclusion by the end of 2007. Improving the efficiency and transparency of European institutions while preserving the "Community method" will be vital for the success of the EU. A positive outcome in the IGC discussions will be a fundamental objective for the Portuguese Presidency, and BUSINESSEUROPE will continue to make an active contribution in the debate on the future of EU institutions.

Second, as part of the social agenda, the Council will discuss flexicurity during the Portuguese Presidency, with a view to adopting a set of common principles for national reforms. BUSINESSEUROPE agrees that flexicurity provides the right framework for discussing the modernisation of European labour markets, embracing a mix of flexible labour regulations, efficient active labour market policies, effective lifelong learning systems and modern social protection. European social partners are currently seeking to develop a common understanding and recommendations around the key components of flexicurity, which would undoubtedly be a significant input into the debate in the run-up to the December 2007 Council.



Third, the EU will face under the Portuguese Presidency an impressive international agenda. This will be the opportunity to discuss the global energy and climate change challenges. European business and policy-makers will have to find solutions to implement the ambitious EU goals set by the Council in March, but Europe also needs to push for comparable efforts by other industrialised and industrialising countries, otherwise EU initiatives will have minimal effects. Obviously, it is with the United States that we have the most comprehensive agenda, including on issues of climate change, trade, intellectual property and accounting standards. The German Presidency has created a new momentum in transatlantic relations which we hope the Portuguese Presidency will pursue with determination.

We are looking forward to working with you and your government in the upcoming six months. I wish you a successful EU Presidency,

Yours sincerely,

*(original signed by)*  
Ernest-Antoine Seillière