

Proper functioning, efficiency and transparency of the EU

BACKGROUND

BUSINESSEUROPE has been present in the discussion on the reform of the treaties with the objective of ensuring a sound and well functioning institutional and legal environment for the EU in the interest of business. Now that the institutional reform has been finally endorsed by the Treaty of Lisbon, the EU should be able to function more effectively to meet its objectives. The result of the Irish referendum has temporarily delayed the entry into force of the new Treaty. BUSINESSEUROPE hopes for a positive outcome of the second Irish referendum and calls for rapid conclusion of the ratification process by Ireland, Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic. It is key that the improvements contained in the Lisbon Treaty are implemented as soon as possible.

Inter-institutional cooperation

Good communication and cooperation between the Commission, Council, European Parliament must be ensured in order for the EU to function efficiently. Each institution must be able to play its role in such a way that an effective and fast decision-making process is ensured. The Commission as guardian of the Treaty, and with its right of initiative, has a key role to play in this inter-institutional cooperation. Every effort must be made to ensure better communication about the functioning, role and objectives of the EU and its institutions.

President of the EU Council/High representative for foreign affairs and security policy

A key element in the new institutional framework will be the role and driving force of the newly created position of EU Council President appointed for two and a half years and his relationship with the ongoing rotating scheme for the rest of the Council formations (except for general affairs and external relations). This is essential for the success of the new institutional set-up. There are high expectations about the newly created position of high representative for foreign affairs. This position is key for the external visibility, the credibility of the EU and the coherence of its external messages.

Better regulation, transparency and speed of the legislative process

Better regulation must remain a priority to ensure that simplification, impact assessment and administrative cost reduction generate concrete results. The Council and Parliament should improve working methods to ensure that simplification proposals are dealt with rapidly and they should make better progress with respect to systematic impact assessment on amendments. The speed and quality of the legislative process is very important for the credibility and respect of the EU institutions. Effective consultation of all stakeholders must be ensured. Transparency of the functioning of EU institutions is of paramount importance for business and must be ensured.

Role and autonomy of social partners

The newly created article in the revised treaty on the role and autonomy of social partners is key and must be fully respected. The social partners at EU level and the social dialogue must continue to play an important role.

Better communication

The objective of the EU must be better communicated in a way that reaches European companies and citizens. Europe must explain better why reform measures for more competitiveness will eventually be in the interests of society as a whole. It has to be understood that reform is the basis for progress and therefore a prerequisite for growth, jobs and well-being. For this purpose, business urges investment in a Europe-wide communication strategy, initiated by EU institutions, implemented by national governments and parliaments, and involving social partners.