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AUTUMN 2007 REFORM BAROMETER: DISAPPOINTMENT BECAUSE BIG MEMBER STATES STILL LAG BEHIND IN REFORM IMPLEMENTATION

BUSINESSEUROPE today presented its report on structural reform progress in 2007, based on the assessment of its national member federations. This detailed analysis of 17 policy areas in 27 countries across Europe precedes the publication of the European Commission's own assessment to be released on 11 December.

The key findings of the Reform Barometer are:

1. The pace of reforms did not pick up in 2007, despite the opportunities offered by still robust economic growth, and was particularly slow in a number of large EU member states.
2. Efforts to improve the Lisbon strategy will need to concentrate on closing the substantial implementation gap at the national level. Past recommendations to EU member states remain relevant for 2008 and Integrated Guidelines must be left broadly untouched.
3. Labour market reforms and measures to support the sustainability of public finances remain the highest priority at national level. Yet, progress in these two areas was altogether disappointing in 2007. Nevertheless, the report expresses confidence that an increasing political consensus around the so-called flexicurity approach could help remove important stumbling blocks to the modernisation of European labour markets.

BUSINESSEUROPE Secretary General Philippe de Buck said: *“At the time when the competitiveness of the European Union should be the first priority, there is no alternative but for all policy decision-makers to live up to their responsibilities as decided in the Lisbon strategy. BUSINESSEUROPE has already worked constructively in the social dialogue by addressing key recommendations on flexicurity.”*

Chart 3 Overall reform progress in 2007 and GDP growth estimates

Source: BUSINESSEUROPE Autumn 2007 Reform Barometer Survey and Autumn Economic Outlook

		2007 annual GDP growth		
		Below EU average	Close to EU average	Above EU average
Reform progress in 2007	Above EU average	France, Denmark Hungary	Malta, Netherlands Sweden, Austria	Ireland, Cyprus, Slovenia Luxembourg, Greece, Latvia
	Close to EU average	Portugal	United Kingdom Belgium	Finland, Lithuania Czech Republic Poland, Norway
	Below EU average	Italy	Germany	Spain, Bulgaria Estonia, Slovakia

NOTE TO THE EDITOR

BUSINESSEUROPE – the Confederation of European Business represents more than 20 million small, medium and large companies. Active in European affairs since 1958, BUSINESSEUROPE Members are 39 central industrial and employers' federations from 33 countries, working together to achieve growth and competitiveness in Europe.

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