



7 December 2007

COUNCIL OF PRESIDENTS, LISBON 7 DECEMBER 2007

SPEAKING NOTES FOR PRESIDENT SEILLIÈRE

ADDRESS TO COMMISSION PRESIDENT MR JOSÉ MANUEL BARROSO

Dear President Barroso,

On behalf of my fellow colleagues, Presidents of BUSINESSEUROPE member federations, I am very pleased to welcome you to our Council of Presidents Luncheon in the beautiful city of Lisbon, where you were born and where we are holding the traditional meeting of the highest of our statutory bodies.

It is an important sign for all of us that you have accepted the invitation from the AIP and CIP Presidents to be here and to address this audience because that shows the interest and the support you give to the European business community.

One week before the European Council in Brussels we would like to hear from you what we can expect from the European institutions once the Union finally exits its governance crisis and can devote its time to resolving the real problems we are facing.

And I am sure your Commission will share our view that energy and climate change and the follow-up of the strategy for growth and jobs are the priorities that need to be tackled most urgently.

Energy and climate change:

We are all concerned about the energy and climate change issue and we expect a positive outcome from the Bali conference taking place at this moment.

Just before your arrival we had an intensive discussion about energy and climate change and I can assure you that the conclusion of this discussion shows that the business community is well aware of the need to promote a secure but competitive and climate-friendly energy system.

If I may I would like to highlight which are the main achievements the business community wants to see, which can be summarised as follows:

- Fully implement the internal energy market,
- Move to a new energy model inspired by a far-reaching vision, and
- Foster an international solution to the climate change threat



I have been very honoured to be a member of the Commission High-Level Group on Competitiveness, Energy and the Environment which concluded three years of work with an important conference in Brussels. I hope our recommendations will be taken into account in future communications from the Commission.

Just to finish on this issue, please let me tackle briefly on the importance of energy efficiency, which has been recently addressed by BUSINESSEUROPE in a publication in which we show its enormous untapped potential.

European industry is using energy up to five times more productively than industry in the big emerging economies. Many cost-effective solutions, developed by European companies, to reduce energy consumption are already available on the market. Therefore the right framework and positive incentives must be provided to spread these solutions in Europe and around the world.

What the business community asks the EU to do is to strengthen the political weight it assigns to its 20% energy efficiency goal to help meet the other two targets on greenhouse gas reduction and renewable energy in a cost-effective way.

Strategy for growth and jobs:

Next week (11 December) and in view of the Spring Council during the Slovenian Presidency, the Commission will present the strategic report and the accompanying documents on the renewed Lisbon Strategy as well as the Community Lisbon Programme with the aim of supporting and complementing national policies.

You know how keen BUSINESSEUROPE is on the Lisbon Strategy as we are convinced it is the right way to make the Union the most competitive economy in the world; but you also know that we are still far away from the results expected, especially if we remember that we are only two years away from the deadline of 2010.

BUSINESSEUROPE has recently published its European Reform Barometer, a comprehensive review of structural reforms across the 27 EU member states based on a survey of BUSINESSEUROPE's national member federations. This Barometer presents recommendations to member states and European institutions in the context of the EU Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs.

I must say that in view of the answers given by BUSINESSEUROPE's member federations, the European business community is quite disappointed because big member states are still lagging behind in reform implementation.

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. We count on you also to transmit this sense of urgency to the capitals.



Joint labour market analysis – flexicurity:

President Barroso,

Let me finish my intervention by recalling an important milestone which was the adoption of the social partners' joint labour market analysis. I had the opportunity to present this important achievement of the Social Partners Work Programme at the last Tripartite Social Summit in October, and we warmly appreciated your personal words about the work done by the social partners.

The joint labour market analysis shows the social partners' commitment to help address the challenges facing European economies. We hope that our common understanding of and recommendations around the key components of flexicurity will contribute to the European Council – taking place next week - when it adopts a set of common principles.

We hope to help steer labour market reform efforts at national level. BUSINESSEUROPE and all employer organisations look forward to further cooperation with the trade unions to turn the joint analysis into reality and we believe that the negotiation of a framework of action on employment would be a good start.

President Barroso, thank you again for your presence and the floor is yours.

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