



SPEECH

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20 June 2008

BUSINESSEUROPE 50TH ANNIVERSARY

25 JUNE 2008 – 18.00 HOURS

CHÂTEAU SAINTE ANNE

ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT ERNEST-ANTOINE SEILLIÈRE

Eminent Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for joining us this evening to celebrate BUSINESSEUROPE's 50th anniversary.

I see many distinguished guests, with whom we have worked together closely over the years. I am pleased and honoured that you have joined this moment of celebration.

And I am particularly pleased that President Barroso is with us this evening. President, I take this opportunity to thank you for your availability to listen to our arguments over the years. In the name of the business community, I thank you even more for having brought Europe back on the growth track, for reinvigorating the Lisbon strategy and for keeping competitiveness aspects high on the agenda.

There are some troubled waters ahead. But you are an experienced captain, who will - I am sure - steer the boat into calmer seas.

Europe's and companies' success are dependent on each other. Europe needs successful companies, and companies need a successful and further integrated European Union.

2008 sees the 50th anniversary of formal European cooperation both at the political level, in the form of what is now the European Union, and in the business world, in the form of BUSINESSEUROPE. I am honoured to be the President of BUSINESSEUROPE at this milestone moment.



BUSINESSEUROPE today brings together 40 members from 34 countries, which makes us more “enlarged” than the EU. ***What do we stand for?***

- **50 years (of experience in) internal European integration**

It is thanks to the vision of our founding members that the Confederation of European Business exists. And thanks to the commitment of BUSINESSEUROPE’s members the whole is so much more than the sum of its parts.

- **50 years of active support to the European integration process**

The European business community has always been a staunch supporter of integration and enlargement and we have sought to help the institutions create the conditions in which European companies and citizens can flourish and prosper.

Creation of an internal market and the introduction of a common currency are some of the great achievements, which have considerably fostered business growth.

- **50 years of growing Europe and creating jobs**

European companies have been at the heart of an unprecedented technological revolution, triggered an enormous increase in world trade, created millions of jobs and created the wealth that has improved collective prosperity and helps finance welfare systems.

- **50 years of advocacy and expertise**

Our work in Brussels is underpinned by the efforts of our counterparts in national capitals across Europe. BUSINESSEUROPE sits at the apex of a huge network of experts on the most varied issues. If I can compare the European business community to an orchestra: BUSINESSEUROPE may be the conductor, but without the expertise coordinated by our national federations at all levels – Presidents, Director Generals, Permanent Delegates – there would be no music, or at least we would not have such a strong voice and be able to give concerts!

Last but not least, I would like to thank the permanent staff in BUSINESSEUROPE’s Brussels offices for their commitment. Coincidence - at our **50th** anniversary in 2008, we have also reached the number of **50 staff** in our headquarters. I am often amazed by the amount of work you manage – and am definitely proud of its quality.

The European Union is a work in progress and always will be. BUSINESSEUROPE will do everything to continue to help steer Europe towards a continuously prosperous future.

This is not an occasion for long speeches. We are here to enjoy ourselves. Thank you once again to everybody for being with us this evening, for the work we have done together and the things we have achieved. I ask you to raise your glasses to the next fifty years of Europe and of BUSINESSEUROPE and to our continued active cooperation.

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