

1 December 2008

MEETING WITH MR GÜNTHER HORZETZKY, MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS OF GERMANY

3 DECEMBER 2008

PARTICIPANTS

German delegation:

- Dr. Günther Horzetzky, State Secretary for Social Affairs (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs)
- Dr. Christoph Schumacher-Hildebrand, Director of the department of European employment and social policies (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs)
- Patricia Steiner, Coordination unit (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs)
- Iris Kröning, Head of unit for Labour and Social Affairs (Permanent Representation in Brussels)

BUSINESSEUROPE delegation:

- Philippe de Buck, Director General of BUSINESSEUROPE
- Steven D'Haeseleer, Director for Social Affairs in BUSINESSEUROPE
- Brigitte De Vita, Adviser in BDA Brussels office

- European Works Councils

Following publication of the Commission proposal for a recast directive on European works councils, European social partners have developed a joint advice, which recognises the Commission proposal as the basis for the revision and includes a number of amendments on which both sides could agree.

BUSINESSEUROPE welcomes the positive reception the joint advice has been given by the Commission and in the Council. However, it is concerned that the additional amendments which have been adopted by the European Parliament Employment Committee will upset the balance found in the joint advice.

BUSINESSEUROPE wants an agreement enabling the Council and the European Parliament to adopt the recast directive before the end of 2008. In this perspective, a continuous support from Germany for the joint advice is crucial.



- Working Time Directive

BUSINESSEUROPE is concerned that the result of the vote in the EP Employment Committee on 5 November will put in danger the fragile compromise agreed between member states. In addition, many of the changes proposed by the Employment Committee, particularly concerning the opt-out and on-call time, would hamper the flexibility that is necessary for workers and companies to operate in today's global economy.

We support the council common position as the most appropriate solution to an issue which has been blocked in council for many years. We would also urge member states to stand firm in their support of the council common position. If a compromise cannot be found, this is likely to run to a conciliation procedure, which would be difficult to complete before the next European Parliament elections.
