



16 June 2011

RENEWAL OF MANDATE AS PRESIDENT OF BUSINESSEUROPE AND SUMMER RECEPTION, BRUSSELS

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PRESIDENT OF BUSINESSEUROPE

Commissioner Oettinger,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Two years ago I started my term as President of BUSINESSEUROPE.

Today I am delighted to welcome all of you to celebrate – so to speak! – the start of my second term.

Dear Commissioner Oettinger, we and I personally very much appreciate that you took the time to join us tonight.

Dear friends of Europe!

When Zeus saw the beautiful girl Europa playing with her friends at the shore of Phoenicia, he was instantly overwhelmed with her beauty.

He decided to seduce her and transformed into a handsome looking snow-white bull.

We don't know about the exact details... but eventually Europa climbed on his back. Zeus spotted his opportunity and ran off with her. As soon as he turned into his original identity she fell in love with him.

And in the end, our continent took the name of this beautiful girl: Europe.

What I left out, is the place where Zeus ran off to with Europa. He carried her to the shores of Greek.

We should not forget about this interesting detail nowadays...

I am convinced that Europe can make progress.

Even when growth records are unevenly spread across the EU, and even when excessive debt and rising divergences within the Eurozone are creating serious tensions, I am convinced that Europe can make progress as long as... we stand united!



The worst of the economic crisis seems to be behind us. This year Europe can expect at least 1.8 % growth and 1 million new jobs, which shows that economic growth and job creation go hand in hand.

Of course, Europe's weaknesses are far from being fixed. And only a strong collective and united drive for reform will restore trust in the future of Europe!

Earlier today, BUSINESSEUROPE published a strong plea for the adoption of ambitious European Council conclusions next week, on the implementation of the EU 2020 strategy and economic governance. Safeguarding the Euro is an absolute must if we do not want economic recovery to be destroyed by monetary turbulence.

The damage of unilateral national moves disregarding negative effects on the EU are not restricted to economic policy. The fact that the German government decided to phase out nuclear energy production by 2022, is a serious challenge to a secure energy supply and the balance of the complete European electricity grid.

Prices of electricity and CO2 emissions will rise – and companies and citizens throughout Europe will have to deal with them. Therefore we urge the European Commission to assess the impact of this decision on European energy security and competitiveness!

This is a request we have already addressed to you, Commissioner.

Ladies and gentlemen, all this shows: there is work to do! We must stand united to overcome difficulties - and to avoid creating new ones.

Only then Europe can grow. If we want a better future for all our people, Europe must double its current growth potential.

“Go for growth”, ladies and gentlemen, is the message that I will continue to deliver. I believe in Europe. And I believe in its strength!

From stock markets we know if the trend is up, it's a bull market. Dear friends, let's be grateful that Zeus did not chose to transform himself into... a bear!

Dear Presidents, Directors General and Permanent Delegates of our member federations, thank you very much for your renewed trust. I will do my best to live up to your expectations - and I hope to count on your continuous support!
