



26 September 2011

### **EUROPEAN FORUM FOR NEW IDEAS 28-30 SEPTEMBER 2011 SOPOT, POLAND**

**OPENING CEREMONY  
28 SEPTEMBER, 10H00 – 11H30**

**ADDRESS BY JÜRGEN R. THUMANN  
PRESIDENT, BUSINESSEUROPE**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be in Sopot today and to have the opportunity to open the European Forum for New Ideas, organized by our member the Polish Confederation of Private Employers – Lewiatan.

Welcome everyone and thank you for your presence!

As President of BUSINESSEUROPE I have the honor and pleasure of participating in many events of our 41 member federations from 35 European countries. And I know well what it actually means to develop and organize such a forum.

So first of all, ladies and gentlemen, please join me in congratulating the President of Lewiatan, Dr. Henryka Bochniarz and her team for organizing this forum!

During the next three days I am sure we will all enjoy and benefit from the many panel discussions and the great opportunities for dialogue amongst ourselves.

Being one of the speakers in the opening session, it is a challenge not to say what other speakers may say so I will be very short!

In this particularly historic moment for Europe it is of utmost importance that the business community and institutional actors gather together to discuss concrete new ideas to make Europe grow.

Many of our member states are confronted with gigantic public deficits and a decrease in economic growth. In addition we experience growing public skepticism towards further European integration.



A large question mark also hangs over Europe's position on the global stage. Europe is clearly at a crossroads. We must ensure that we choose the right path!

European business calls on our political leaders to secure the stability and credibility of our common market. Safeguarding the Euro is an absolute must. Fiscal consolidation and strengthening our competitiveness through structural reforms are the core ingredients for accelerating growth and job creation.

Only a strong European Union will be able to compete successfully in the new global reality and ensure the future well-being of our citizens.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the European Forum for New Ideas provides an excellent platform to exchange views and to come up with answers to these wide-ranging questions.

Europe is in need of a vision and we, business, must contribute to this process. I count on everybody present here today to take part actively in the discussions and to help draw up this vision for our common future.

Let us strive to defend the peace and prosperity on our continent that recent generations have come to enjoy!

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