



18 June 2012

DEBATE WITH SOCIAL PARTNERS ON THE EMPLOYMENT PACKAGE

1. BUSINESSEUROPE is currently developing its position on the Employment Package.
2. As an initial reaction, we welcome the Commission's focus on job creation, which we consider to be Europe's number one priority right now;
3. BUSINESSEUROPE believes that only growth can create jobs. Our ambition is to double Europe's long-term annual growth rate. We will make recommendations to the European Council on how to achieve growth;
4. Doubling our growth potential would mean 2 million new jobs created every year allowing us to reach the target of 75% of working age people in work by 2020, as outlined in the Europe 2020 strategy;
5. BUSINESSEUROPE considers that the Commission could have put further emphasis in the Package on the principles of flexicurity. A system of flexicurity that combines labour market mobility and employment security must be a key element of well-functioning labour markets;
6. To further encourage growth, efficient, flexible labour markets are needed, which includes flexible contracts to allow companies the manoeuvrability to address peaks and troughs in demand for their goods and services while helping to raise employment and productivity levels;
7. BUSINESSEUROPE also stresses that minimum wages are a national competence and that it is up to each Member State to individually decide whether they want to introduce a national minimum wage and at what level;
8. It is particularly important to tackle the alarming levels of youth unemployment across Europe (currently 5.5 million people under 25 years old) by facilitating young peoples' transition from education to employment;
9. BUSINESSEUROPE advocates the expansion of access to dual-learning systems, which see young people combine education and work-based learning, such as in the form of apprenticeships;
10. Evidence suggests that countries that have successfully implemented dual-learning systems, such as such as Germany, Austria, Denmark and Switzerland have achieved lower rates of youth unemployment compared to other European countries. For example, as of April 2012, the youth unemployment rates of Germany stood at 7.9%, Austria at 8.9% and the Netherlands at 9.4%;
11. BUSINESSEUROPE welcomes the Commission's recognition in the Package of the valuable role that the social partners play at national level;
12. The economic and financial crisis has highlighted the role of constructive social dialogue at Member State and EU levels in contributing to growth, employment and social cohesion. Nevertheless, governments should fulfil their responsibilities when social dialogue does not deliver the reforms needed.