



27 June 2012

### **BUSINESSEUROPE-KITA BUSINESS ROUND TABLE**

**EESC - 93-99 Rue Belliard (Room JD63)  
Wednesday, 27 June 2012 - 14:00 – 17:30**

#### **Concluding remarks**

#### **Philippe de Buck, Director General, BUSINESSEUROPE**

Dear Chairman HAN, Chairman & CEO of KITA,  
Dear Minister CHOI, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Korea  
Dear Director General LEE, Director General, Ministry of Knowledge Economy, Korea  
Dear Director Petriccione, European Commission, Director for Asia, DG Trade,

Dear colleagues from Korea,  
Dear friends from the European businesses,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to make some concluding remarks to this event. This is the first BUSINESSEUROPE-KITA Business Roundtable and we hope that it will not be the last time.

In fact, I am sure that it will not be the last time, since this morning Chairman Han, Chairman of KITA and prominent Korean Politician has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Mr Jürgen Thumann, President of BUSINESSEUROPE. Mr Thumann had unfortunately to leave this morning, but he wanted to be there for the signature of this MOU, this Gentlemen Agreement between BUSINESSEUROPE and KITA.

This agreement between our two organisations will set up a cooperative channel between us and will serve to coordinate our activities in developing closer and productive regular contacts between business circles of the European Union and the Republic of Korea. This is indeed important to ensure that the business communities from both sides actively monitor and contribute to the proper implementation of the EU-Korea FTA.

As you know, this event corresponds to the first anniversary of the entry into force of the EU-Korea FTA, and you have heard all the details during the last three hours.

I will not come back to the substance of the agreement. The important is to keep in mind that this is the most ambitious trade agreement that the EU has never negotiated so far, and I understand that this is also the case for Korea. More importantly for Europe, it is also the first trade agreement by the EU with an Asian country.



If we look at the figures, for this first year of implementation, the FTA is a win/win success story, where both parties are increasing trade and investment respectively. Of course, we have to be prudent with the figures, and we have to continue to monitor how both parties are going to respect their commitments undertaken in the FTA. The agreement has not yet provided its full impact, notably because some provisions have been phase out.

BUSINESSEUROPE will play its role in checking that the European Union will respect its obligations towards Korea and the Korean business community, and I am sure that KITA will do the same in Korea, so that all commitments by the Korean government will be implemented in due course. Trade of goods at the border is easy to monitor, but the removal of the non-tariff barriers (NTBs) are more complex, and sometimes subject to transitional periods. It is the tasks of the business communities to look at the development of the various legislation and regulations that are meant to fully implement the FTA, and report to our respective authorities. Our companies are at the forefront of the implementation of the FTA, and BUSINESSEUROPE and KITA are the necessary intermediaries. We are the link between the real economic world and the negotiating authorities.

BUSINESSEUROPE is member of the European Domestic Advisory Group that was established by the FTA, and the EU-Korea Civil Society Forum - gathering representatives of the civil society from both sides - met this morning in this very same room. We have to acknowledge the willingness of transparency by the negotiators of the agreement, and we will play our role here also.

We can understand that the specialised committees that have been put into place are restricted to the officials, but I must say that it would have been probably more efficient to allow participation of business representatives in the various sector specific working groups (automotive, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, government procurement, etc.), given that they are the one that are directly in contact with the reality and that have the relevant expertise. We urge the Commission and the Korean ministries concerned to be as much transparent as possible on the activities of these groups.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Let 'us meet next year in Seoul and pursue our task by gathering the second EU-Korea Business Roundtable, to which I wish an as big success as this first one.

Thank you for your attention.

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