



27 June 2013

BUSINESSEUROPE PRESIDENT MARCEGAGLIA MEETS THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL

*“**Youth unemployment** is the painful symptom of badly functioning labour markets. It is a structural problem, exacerbated by the crisis. We must address the causes of this unacceptable waste of talents through structural reforms. Refocusing European and national policies on **improving competitiveness** is not a gift to companies. It is working for present and future generations. Heads of State and Government must adopt in full the Commission’s **Country Specific Recommendations** and Member States have to take these recommendations seriously.”* – said Emma Marcegaglia, President of BUSINESSEUROPE.

For the first time ever, BUSINESSEUROPE and the other social partners were invited to attend the European Council meeting today to discuss youth employment and access to finance in the European economy.

The European social partners have recently negotiated a framework of actions on youth employment, setting out recommendations for actions at EU and national levels. President Marcegaglia stressed that fighting youth unemployment is a priority for BUSINESSEUROPE. Special support to smoothen the transition from school to work is helpful. But the real answer is to facilitate job creation in general.

She highlighted that only growth can create jobs, therefore growth must be our common priority. Sustainable growth is not possible without sustainable public finances and without a competitive framework. There is no alternative to fiscal consolidation and ambitious structural reforms. But this is not enough. The progress made so far remains fragile and implementation of crucial decisions announced one year ago is far too slow – she added.

President Marcegaglia welcomed the progress on direct recapitalisation of banks and on a bank resolution mechanism but underlined the urgency of walking the next steps to establish a full **banking union**, which is a necessary basis to alleviate the credit crunch affecting SMEs.

She reiterated BUSINESSEUROPE’s regrets that competitiveness chapters had suffered cuts as part of the Council compromise on the EU budget. However, she appreciated the efforts made to come to a final agreement on a **Multannual Financial Framework for 2014-2020**. She urged the European Parliament to accept this agreement to avoid any delays in EU support for research and innovation, European infrastructure and SMEs.

Urging the European Council to set the right priorities in access to energy and raw materials, in opening up global markets and in leveraging the Single Market, she referred to the 7 concrete policy recommendations BUSINESSEUROPE has just adopted on how to rebalance climate and energy policies 2030. These must be taken into account by the Commission and during European Council discussions on industrial policy in February 2014 – said Emma Marcegaglia.



NOTE TO THE EDITOR

BUSINESSEUROPE represents small, medium and large companies. Active in European affairs since 1958, BUSINESSEUROPE's members are 41 leading industrial and employers' federations from 35 European countries, working together to achieve growth and competitiveness in Europe. For the full list of our members, please visit our website.

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