



### **EUROPEAN BUSINESS SUMMIT 2014 OPENING PLENARY SESSION, 14 MAY 2014**

### **THE BUSINESS AGENDA 2014-2019 - REBUILDING A COMPETITIVE EUROPE MOVING BEYOND THE CRISIS - WHAT KIND OF EUROPE DO WE NEED?**

### **SPEECH BY EMMA MARCEGAGLIA, PRESIDENT OF BUSINESSEUROPE**

### **THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY'S VISION FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION IN 2014- 2019**

President Barroso,  
Vice Prime Minister Reynders,  
President Sioen,  
Distinguished guests and colleagues,

The Euro-pessimists are wrong. The European economy is improving. But this does not mean that we can relax our efforts because we have not yet regained the ground lost since 2008.

Furthermore, while we were repairing our economic system, the rest of the world did not stand still.

Our competitors made structural reforms, invested in infrastructure, machinery, skills and innovation. They worked hard to make the best of information technologies and improve their competitiveness.

President Barroso,

Under your leadership, this European Commission has done a lot to face the storm and sail the European ship to safer waters.

We are very grateful for that.

But you also faced resistance and were not always able to take all the necessary measures to give a better future to European companies and citizens.

Europe is walking, when the rest of the world is running.

Only 23% of the 150 European country-specific recommendations for growth-enhancing structural reforms are implemented properly.



We talk of increasing the share of manufacturing industry in the EU GDP to 20% by 2020, but we shy away from policy changes to reach that goal.

We want to reduce unemployment, but we resist reforms that will boost job creation.

We know that one European job out of ten comes from exports, but we have irrational fears about the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

It is time for Europe to become much less defensive, much more ambitious and much more future oriented.

We have a lot to offer as a region. Europeans are skillful. Many entrepreneurs are keen to develop their companies' potential. But they need a supportive environment to be successful.

Europe must stop regulating itself to death and unleash its innovation potential.

BUSINESSEUROPE and its member federations have a clear PICTURE of where the next European Parliament and the next European Commission should take Europe to by 2019, at the end of the next European institutional cycle.

We PICTURE a global Europe.

Where **P** stands for a **powered** Europe, because excessive energy prices and unrealistic climate change targets undermine growth. This cannot go on!

We PICTURE a global Europe.

Where **I** stands for an **innovative** Europe, because more research, more innovation and a digitalisation of our economies is essential to stop losing ground in the global economy.

We PICTURE a global Europe.

Where **C** stands for a **competitive** Europe, because we can remain the world's largest exporter of manufactured products if we reduce the regulatory and tax burden on European companies.

Where **T** stands for a **talented** Europe, because labour market, education and training reforms are urgently needed to put an end to a shameful European paradox: high unemployment co-existing with unfilled vacancies!

Where **U** stands for a **unified** Europe, because there is huge untapped potential in the Single Market. And because our trading partners are still too often able to score points in international negotiations by exploiting European divisions. Together we are stronger!

Where **R** stands for a **resilient** Europe, because we have not yet solved key home-made problems. Excessive public debt and fragmented financial markets hamper access to credit for companies. We urgently need to implement a Banking Union. And



there is no contradiction between fiscal consolidation and growth if you make the necessary reforms!

We PICTURE a global Europe.

Where **E** stands for an **entrepreneurial** Europe because ultimately, only enterprises can create jobs and generate the wealth that our societies aspire to.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We will have more time to discuss concrete measures to turn this PICTURE into reality during the plenaries and the workshops foreseen tomorrow.

This 12th European Business Summit is entitled “Rebuilding a competitive Europe: moving beyond the crisis”. It takes place ten days before very important European elections.

We will be joined for our closing plenary by representatives of the socialist, liberal and European people’s party groups in the European Parliament, just before the big TV debate between leading candidates of 5 European political parties.

We must tell them very clearly that the best way to reduce unemployment is to create jobs and that we count on Jean-Claude Juncker, Martin Schulz, Guy Verhofstadt to do all they can to put in place the conditions that will allow companies to grow and employ more people.

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