



BusinessEurope statement of values

On the occasion of BusinessEurope Day 2018, which coincides with the 60th anniversary of our organisation, we want to recall that **entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in society**:

- Entrepreneurs invest, create jobs and make the economy grow.
- Enterprises give individuals the possibility to develop their talents, to improve their prospects in life and to reach personal goals.
- Entrepreneurs constantly innovate to find sustainable solutions to today's economic, societal and environmental challenges whilst providing products and services responding to the needs and desires of citizens and consumers.
- Directly and indirectly, enterprises contribute to the public resources which are necessary to provide welfare to those in need and to invest in key infrastructures like schools, hospitals and transport.

Over the last 60 years, European integration has been a crucial driver of companies' success in fulfilling this role. **BusinessEurope has supported European integration and the aims pursued by the Treaties of Rome from the outset.** The European business community has been centre-stage at important moments in the integration process. A thriving business community will always be essential for Europe to succeed and remain one of the best places in the world in which to live and work.

The fundamental values of freedom and democracy, which are part of Europe's DNA, are fully shared by the European business community. The rule of law as well as the EU freedoms and values underpin our social market economy model, in which economic progress is the basis for social progress. There can be no freedom of enterprise without freedom of thought and speech, and the freedoms which are at the core of the European Single Market are essential to optimise the contribution of entrepreneurs to society.

For BusinessEurope and its members the following **freedoms and values are essential to have thriving European economies and societies**:

- Freedom to create and conduct a business, with protection of investment and property rights.
- Freedom to trade in a rules-based global economy.
- Freedom to innovate, with balanced risk management.
- Freedom to engage in work relations, under mutually agreed conditions.
- Freedom to engage in social dialogue, with full respect for social partners' autonomy.
- Free movement of capital, goods, services, persons and data in the single market.
- Respect for the rule of law, with easy-to-implement rules and a fair, effective and independent judicial system.
- Respect for the diversity of national specificities, cultures and traditions in the European Union.
- A proper balance between solidarity and responsibility among member states.
- A proper balance between individual rights and obligations of both companies and citizens.



Living up to ethics requires daily efforts by companies and there is a lot to improve in practice to answer people's concerns and doubts. On this day of celebration, we also want to reaffirm the business ethics and values we stand for:

- Striving for excellence to propose quality goods and services at competitive prices for customers and a just return for shareholders and investors, while respecting all legal obligations and contractual commitments.
- Striving for cutting-edge innovation, converting science and research into new technologies, products and services, with reasonable risk-taking.
- Developing business models which are adaptable to change and competitive worldwide.
- Taking necessary decisions in good time to minimise negative social and environmental effects for society and contribute to reaching sustainability goals.
- Providing fair treatment at work, respecting people's dignity and promoting well-being of employees.
- Valuing diversity and equal opportunities in talent management, taking competence-driven HR decisions.
- Engaging at local level to optimise the environmental and social benefits of business activity for communities.

Last but not least, BusinessEurope and its members also want to reiterate that they fulfil their mission as a business and employers' organisation in accordance with the following principles and values:

- Our positions aim to identify appropriate means for promoting economic and social progress, and to strengthen Europe's competitiveness in the interest of society as a whole.
- We engage in the European social dialogue to fulfil the mandates given by our members in good faith.
- We defend voluntary membership to legally constituted business organisations and the autonomy of business and employers' organisations.
- We seek to express the consensus view in the European business community, taking into account the different needs of small, medium-sized and large European companies from all sectors of activity across Europe.
- When consensus is not possible, we adopt the majority view and find appropriate ways to reflect minority opinions.
- Once agreed and communicated to the European Union institutions, our positions are available to the general public.
- We are transparent about the contacts we have with the European institutions and act in accordance with the European Transparency Register.

These are the three complementary sets of values that BusinessEurope has been defending and promoting since 1958, alongside our members' actions at the national level. Convinced that these values remain valid in the digital era, we will continue to promote them, when accompanying the European integration process in the years to come.

