



Check against delivery

25 October 2023

Tripartite Social Summit on 25 October 2023

Delivering on building blocks for a successful European Economy for workers and companies

ADDRESS BY FREDRIK PERSSON, PRESIDENT OF BUSINESSEUROPE

Dear Presidents Von der Leyen and Michel,
Dear Prime Minister Sanchez,
Dear Ministers,
Dear Executive Vice-President Dombrovskis and Commissioner Schmit,
Dear colleagues,

When we met before the Spring European Council, I underlined that 90% of our members consider that the EU investment environment compared to our global competitors is less favourable than 3 years ago and pleaded for:

- less and better-quality legislation,
- secure energy supply at competitive prices,
- a broad industrial strategy to flank the Green Deal,
- well calibrated state aid rules.

With the adoption of the EU competitiveness strategy, the announcements of the State of the Union speech and the renewed commitment to work on the resilience and competitiveness of the European Union in the Granada declaration, a sense of direction has been given.

We welcome this but a direction and announcements are not enough. Companies need to see concrete EU actions to make business easier in Europe.



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We count on the European institutions to **take 6 key actions before the next European elections**:

- Action n°1: The EU needs to finalise the adoption of the **Net Zero Industry Act** and the **Critical Raw Materials Act** with strong simplification and a fast-tracking of permitting
- Action n°2: The EU needs to deliver a **reform of the electricity market design** supporting market-based long-term contracting
- Action n°3: The EU needs to **finalise new trade agreements** with Mexico, Chile, Mercosur, Australia, and New Zealand to diversify import and export markets
- Action n°4: The Council needs to agree on a credible and investment-friendly economic governance framework to help construct medium-term adjustment pathways needed to return to sound public finances.
- Action n°5: The European Commission needs to adopt the long-awaited e-declaration to notify posting of workers and a trilogue deal on revised EU rules on the coordination of social security systems for posted workers
- Action n°6: The European Commission needs to deliver on its commitment to reduce reporting requirements by 25% and fully apply competitiveness checks on all EU regulatory initiatives.

Turning to **the longer term**, BusinessEurope looks forward to the recommendations of the Letta report on the future of the Single Market and the Draghi report on the future of European competitiveness. We count on them to provide ambitious recommendations to strengthen the Single Market and pursue the work started under the current EU competitiveness strategy. We stand ready to contribute to both reports.

Building on the announced EU action plan to address recruitments and skills gaps, both reports will need to include responses to labour shortages and skills mismatches, which are a growing threat to Europe's prosperity and will be the key labour market challenge in the coming years.

We have distributed today an advance copy of the results of a survey on labour and skills shortages that we will publish in the coming days. Three factors are fuelling these shortages:

- demographic change,
- high rates of inactivity
- and low levels of intra-EU mobility.



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The policy response will therefore need to involve 3 policy domains:

- employment,
- education and training,
- mobility and migration.

There are no quick fixes. Competitiveness will certainly not be achieved by piling up legislation and increasing state intervention in the economy. The focus must be on making business easier in Europe. Whether you like business or not, there is a compelling case for doing so because making business easier will help to release the full potential of European companies and workers.

BusinessEurope is looking forward to working with the European institutions and with European trade unions to strengthen the European economy in the interest of European society as a whole.

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