



SPEECH

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

23 March 2021

Tripartite Social Summit on 23 March 2022

A united tripartite response to the social and economic impact of the Russian military aggression against Ukraine

ADDRESS BY

PIERRE GATTAZ, PRESIDENT OF BUSINESSEUROPE

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

BusinessEurope is strongly condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Our companies are doing their utmost to provide humanitarian help.

We are faced with a dramatic situation and unity is essential. Human lives are at stake and this is of course our first concern. But we must also address the social and economic impact of this crisis. Discussing how to minimize this impact with the social partners is extremely important.

The EU's global strength and ability to defend its values comes from its economic power. It is of utmost importance that the EU takes good care of its economy and its companies. Allow me to underline 4 key action points to meet these goals.

Action point n°1: sanctions and support measures

To mitigate negative effects of sanctions for the European economy, 2 things are necessary:

1. Sanctions must be well-targeted.
2. Companies must receive as quickly as possible clear guidance and detailed information on sanctions and on support measures.

Action point n°2: energy and supply disruptions

The war in Ukraine exacerbated challenges linked to rising energy prices, inflation and global supply chain disruptions. Many companies have to decrease production or close plants. We therefore need speedy and targeted action to tackle the high energy prices and we must avoid abrupt disruption of energy supply.

The Green Deal is an important part of the answer. Yes, we must accelerate deployment of low-carbon energy, renewable energy, hydrogen and alternative fuels. But with realistic policies and feasible timelines! And we absolutely need to expand much faster our energy interconnections and speed up the permitting of industrial projects.

The challenges of the green transition of industry have dramatically increased and can only be shouldered by competitive companies. New, comprehensive impact assessments and energy generation scenarios are needed to take into account present circumstances. In other words, we need a reality check.

Action point n°3: defence

We welcome the strengthening of the EU defence pillar. From the business perspective, let me underline one important thing:

- European companies in the defence and space industry encounter difficulties in accessing finance on private markets. This must be addressed and solved.

Action point n°4: strengthening our economy

Successive shocks reinforce the urgency of building a more resilient economy. On top of the COVID crisis, we are faced with the dramatic consequences of the war in Ukraine.

BusinessEurope's Reform Barometer 2022 shows that Europe has made progress regarding innovation and entrepreneurship. But, not at the same speed as international competitors. This means we are falling behind, despite the progress made.

To ensure that Europe keeps up with competitors, EU leaders must:



1. Continue to pursue an ambitious trade policy
2. Address labour market mismatches
3. Accelerate innovation and digitalisation
4. Make the best future-oriented use of EU Recovery funds
5. Improve the overall business environment in Europe by:
 - strengthening our Single Market,
 - reducing legislative complexity and creating a business-friendly environment.

Europe is faced with a dramatic situation. You can count on our support. Let us build a stronger and more united Europe based on security and prosperity.