



19 March 2025

Tripartite Social Summit on 19 March 2025

***Bringing Europe back on track in a challenging
geopolitical environment as an attractive, competitive and
investment friendly location that protects and creates quality
jobs***

**ADDRESS BY FREDRIK PERSSON, PRESIDENT OF
BUSINESSEUROPE**

Dear Presidents Von der Leyen and Costa,
Dear Ministers,
Dear Executive Vice-President Minzatu,
Dear colleagues,

In this highly uncertain global environment, strengthening the economic backbone of the European Union is more urgent than ever. Tangible improvements in the EU investment location are urgently needed.

BusinessEurope's Reform Barometer 2025 shows that overregulation, high energy prices and labour shortages continue to be the 3 main factors holding Europe back. Furthermore, an overwhelming 85% of our members underline that the current deregulation agenda in the US will further divert investment away from Europe if concrete signals are not given that the EU is walking the talk on prioritising competitiveness.

In all the contacts I have with companies across Europe, I hear the same message: the recent proposals of the European Commission go in the right direction but are insufficient to lower the energy cost gap with our main

competitors and bring the regulatory overburden to a digestible level.

The EU's strength is directly tied to the strength of its economy. To ensure we remain competitive and resilient, EU leaders must take urgent action across several key areas.

First and foremost, we must explore further measures to lower energy costs. While the Clean Industrial Deal introduces important steps, it is unlikely it will be enough in the short term. Companies cannot wait until the end of the year for the actions of the Industrial Decarbonisation Accelerator Act – we must act now.

At the same time, stopping the clock on excessive reporting requirements and regulatory burden will be crucial. The postponement proposed in the first Omnibus must be adopted swiftly and the simplification measures foreseen should be improved to address remaining issues such as insufficient harmonisation on due diligence.

Beyond reporting obligations, putting in place a rolling regulatory burden reduction program with clear targets and timeline is essential. To contribute to the well needed simplification exercise, BusinessEurope has come up with 68 concrete proposals. These do not question the goals pursued and can be implemented rapidly.

Another key priority is tackling labour and skills shortages. For this purpose, turning the Union of Skills into effective member states commitments will be key. Obstacles to skills development differ across Europe. Respecting national competences and working with the social partners is therefore essential to find efficient solutions.

The Single Market is the backbone of Europe's economic strength. Sixty percent of the barriers to cross border provision of services identified more than 20 years ago still persist today. Delivering an efficient strategy to remove cross-border obstacles in our Single Market by June this year must therefore be a top priority.

Furthermore, concluding ongoing trade negotiations and ratifying the Mercosur and Mexico agreements is another crucial step. Trade and investment



diversification is fundamental in building resilience and mitigating risks.

Finally, we must show unity towards the US and safeguard European interests with the ultimate objective of finding a negotiated solution. Transatlantic investments and value chains remain very integrated, and increasing tariffs is a lose-lose situation.

We are in a rescue operation for companies and workers. There can be no quality jobs without quality companies that can act in an investment-friendly location. Things need to change fast so that the essential – our European values and way of life - can be preserved and protected.

In this rescue operation, the European social partners must raise their game. We just signed a Pact for the European Social Dialogue, pledging to work together to help weather the enormous challenges facing Europe.

You can count on BusinessEurope to live up to this pledge.