



Wednesday, 14 February 2007

**No. 2007-05****PRESIDENT SEILLIÈRE AT THE « FORUM DE PARIS » ON 50 YEARS OF EUROPE**

On 12 February, BUSINESSEUROPE President Ernest-Antoine Seillière addressed the closing session of the “Forum de Paris” organised by UNESCO (Paris). He outlined BUSINESSEUROPE’s expectations for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of European Union in front of a distinguished French and European audience. Mr Seillière explained how European business supports a strong European Union capable of action and able to deliver reforms. It is essential to set clearer objectives, to focus more strongly on priorities and to show political will and support for these reforms. On 13 February, President Seillière also presented this message to an important representation of Belgian business people in a “Cercle de Lorraine” conference lunch. [Read more](#) or contact: [Philippe de Buck](#)

**SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY TO REFORM THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL MODEL**

On 9 February 2007, BUSINESSEUROPE Secretary General Philippe de Buck addressed the conference on the European social model organised by the German Presidency. Against the backdrop of improved economic growth and declining unemployment, Member States must seize the opportunity to implement the necessary structural reforms of labour markets and social systems in order to make the recovery sustainable and prepare for population ageing. [Read more](#) or contact: [Steven D’Haeseleer](#)

**SWEDISH TRADE MINISTER VISITS BUSINESSEUROPE**

On 12 February, BUSINESSEUROPE Secretary General Philippe de Buck met Mr Tolgfors, Swedish Minister for Foreign Trade. BUSINESSEUROPE reiterated its position on the need for an ambitious outcome of the WTO Doha negotiations in industrial market access, services and trade facilitation. It also presented its strategy to mobilise business in support of the Doha Round at European and international levels. The two sides also discussed other key issues on the EU’s agenda such as the new generation of bilateral agreements, the EU Presidency initiative for a Trans-Atlantic Economic Agreement and the proposed reform of the trade defence instruments. Contact: [Adrian van den Hoven](#)

**CURRENT UPTURN CAN BE PROLONGED WITH THE RIGHT ECONOMIC REFORMS**

Ahead of the Competitiveness Council meeting on 19 February, President Seillière has urged Michael Glos, the German Minister of Economics and current President of this Council, and his colleagues from all over Europe to give a boost to economic reforms in view of this year’s Spring Economic Council in March. Europe is currently enjoying strong company-led growth, which can only be sustained if policy-makers deliver more effectively on economic reforms for growth and jobs. President Seillière strongly welcomed the Competitiveness Council’s first steps towards a stronger involvement in the current discussions on energy and climate change, issues which are inextricably linked with Europe’s competitiveness. [Read more](#) or contact: [Folker Franz](#)



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### MEETING SENIOR COMMISSION OFFICIALS ON THE WTO AND BILATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

As part of its trade strategy, BUSINESSEUROPE met the Commission's DG Trade Director General David O'Sullivan and the Deputy Director-General Mr Falkenberg on 7 and 8 February. Discussions focused on the resumption of DDA negotiations and on the launch of new EU bilateral negotiations in the next few months. Business representatives stressed once again their strong support for relaunch of the DDA talks and their readiness to keep pushing in the coming months for an ambitious outcome to the Round. On bilateral negotiations, BUSINESSEUROPE called for free-trade agreements based on economic and commercial objectives and on reciprocity. It also called on the Commission to consult business throughout the negotiations. Contact: [Adrian van den Hoven](#)

### EUROPEAN ALLIANCE FOR CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: FIRST HIGH-LEVEL MEETING

Vice-President Verheugen and Commissioner Spidla invited CEOs of companies supporting the CSR Alliance as well as BUSINESSEUROPE, CSR Europe, UEAPME and Eurochambres to a meeting on 8 February in order to exchange views about CSR activities, priorities and challenges and obtain information about developments in relation to the CSR Alliance. More than 20 company representatives were present and provided examples of their CSR engagement. They highlighted the usefulness of companies integrating CSR into their business strategies and expressed their commitment to move forward on the CSR agenda. BUSINESSEUROPE has widely promoted the CSR Alliance and will continue to do so. In 2006, with real GDP growth reaching 2.9% and 2 million new jobs, companies throughout Europe have contributed considerably to growth and job creation, competitiveness and sustainability. [Read more](#) or contact: [Natascha Waltke](#)

### BETTER REGULATION PRINCIPLES MUST GUIDE DEBATE ON EU CONSUMER LEGISLATION

Reacting to the green paper adopted by the Commission on 8 February, BUSINESSEUROPE strongly believes that the review of the consumer acquis must adhere to the better regulation principles and pursue simplification and clarification of existing rules. It should be proportionate, practical and targeted; and review proposals must be based on real evidence of need and backed up by impact assessments and a competitiveness test. A level playing-field and reduction of red tape in this field will contribute to a better functioning of the internal market. Full harmonisation should be sought to avoid national fragmentation while striking a balance between the competitiveness of companies and an appropriate common level of consumer protection. [Read more](#) or contact: [Carlos Almaraz](#)

### LATEST SEC PROPOSALS A POSITIVE IMPROVEMENT IF ADOPTED

Replying to the US Securities and Exchange Commission on the proposals on interpretative guidance for management to improve Sarbanes-Oxley 404 implementation and on the new rules allowing foreign private issuer deregistration, BUSINESSEUROPE considers both proposals a positive improvement for European companies if adopted: on the one hand European companies listed in the US or wanting to enter the US market will benefit from a streamlined application of Sarbanes-Oxley; on the other hand European companies wishing to enter or leave the US market will now benefit from a real deregistration option. [Read more](#) or contact: [Marta Alegrias](#)