



Wednesday, 14 March 2007

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SPRING SUMMIT AND TRIPARTITE SOCIAL SUMMIT

Speaking at the Tripartite Social Summit convened by the German presidency on 8 March BUSINESSEUROPE called on the European Council to use the opportunity of an improved economic situation to keep up the reform momentum. To restore confidence in the European project, we need growth, employment and efficient institutional governance, said President Seillière. [Read more](#) or contact: [Thérèse de Liedekerke](#)

On the outcome of the European Council, BUSINESSEUROPE President called for a more concrete plan on how the agreed targets for CO₂ reduction and renewables can be met. These very ambitious goals need to be checked against the economic and technological possibilities. Europe should engage in international negotiations in order to tackle the issue of climate change and maintain Europe's competitiveness. [Read more](#) or contact: [Carsten Dannöhl](#)

BUSINESSEUROPE MEETS US AND AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADORS

On 6 March, President Ernest-Antoine Seillière met US Ambassador Boyden Gray for an exchange of views. Close EU-US cooperation is needed on industrial and services trade, the EU and the US should overcome their agricultural differences. A new transatlantic initiative should require regulators on both sides of the Atlantic to take account of transatlantic trade and investment when adopting new regulations and to reject investment protectionism. BUSINESSEUROPE wishes to engage with US business and with the US Government on how to cooperate better in addressing the climate change challenge. On the same day, Secretary General Philippe de Buck met Australian Ambassador Thomas to discuss the WTO Doha Round and how to foster cooperation between the EU and Australia on climate change and energy issues. He called on Australia to use its links in Asia to make the case for industrial and services trade liberalisation, and mentioned interest in meeting Australian business to cooperate on climate change. Contact: [Adrian van den Hoven](#)

EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY: WHAT'S IN IT FOR COMPANIES?



The European Institute of Technology needs to create poles of excellence that directly contribute to more innovation and thereby more growth and jobs, said BUSINESSEUROPE on 6 March during a workshop it organised in the EP. To an audience of more than 100 persons including MEPs and both rapporteurs on the issue, high-level representatives of companies, Wilfried Kraus for the German Presidency and the Director General of DG

Education and Culture Odile Quintin, industry's position was outlined by the Chair of BUSINESSEUROPE's "Research and Technological Innovation" Working Group, Leif Kjaergaard, and the Secretary General of the European Industrial Research Management Association, Andrew Dearing. Two Q&A sessions offered the audience ample opportunity to participate in the discussion. [Read more](#) or contact: [Vincent McGovern](#)



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INNOVATION IMPORTANT TO MAKE ECONOMIES MORE COMPETITIVE

On 7 March, at the opening session of the conference “Regions for Economic Change”, Philippe de Buck explained to Commissioner Hübner and participants from regional authorities that innovation is an entrepreneurial activity and regional authorities can do a great deal by providing the best framework conditions for entrepreneurship, for example by reducing the overall administrative burden. Also, only clear objectives, clear participation rules and effective coordination amongst all EU resources can offer good opportunities for synergies in support of the strategy for growth and jobs. The present economic recovery should provide room to move the reform agenda forward. [Read more](#) or contact: [Eva Maria Revilla](#)

THERE IS NO NEED FOR AN EU DIRECTIVE ON SOCIAL SERVICES OF GENERAL INTEREST

Ahead of the vote on the European Parliament report on social services of general interest, BUSINESSEUROPE adopted a position paper reacting to the Commission communication on the issue. Social services of general interest do not constitute a legal category distinct from the broader concept of services of general interest, but proposing an EU directive on such services is neither necessary nor desirable. European business welcomes the Commission’s clarification that SSGI excluded from the scope of the recently adopted services directive will nevertheless continue to be directly subject to the principles of freedom of establishment and freedom to provide services as defined in the EC Treaty. [Read more](#) or contact: [Steven D’Haeseleer](#)

EU EXPORT CONTROLS REGIME: NOT AS AMBITIOUS AS HOPED

In a statement released on 9 March BUSINESSEUROPE thanked the Commission for its proposals for reform of the EU export controls regime but expressed its considerable disappointment that the reform proposals are not as ambitious as it had hoped. In light of the Lisbon agenda a more dramatic reform would have been expected, given the administrative and cost burden placed upon business as a result of the current export control system, which represents a serious drain on EU competitiveness in high-tech sectors. BUSINESSEUROPE therefore urges the Council to improve seriously upon the proposals in its discussions over the coming months. [Read more](#) or contact: [Eoin O’Malley](#)

BUSINESSEUROPE HAS ITS TWOPENNYWORTH ON METRIC UNITS

Metric units are an important technical issue as it has implications for European industrial exports to foreign markets, like the US, that may not have adopted the SI metric system of measurements. Europe has officially had a policy of labelling products using only SI units, with a transition period allowing for dual labelling of SI and non-SI units which is due to expire at the end of 2009. If SI units only are to be used in Europe from 2009, increased bureaucratic burdens will be encountered as European business comes to terms with these export markets that will require one set of units while the EU requires another. The right course of action is one worldwide system of units but striving for this goal should not give rise to situations which can be damaging to market actors. [Read more](#) or contact: [Vincent McGovern](#)