



Wednesday, 21 March 2007

No. 2007-10

REFORM TO PERFORM: EUROPE IS OUR BUSINESS



E.-A. Seillière, J.M. Barroso, J.C. Daoust

The 5th European Business Summit, co-organised by BUSINESSEUROPE and its Belgian member federation FEB-VBO, started on 15 March 2009 with a solemn opening session. [President Ernest-Antoine Seillière](#) was a guest speaker at this session, which attracted hundreds of participants and triggered a series of workshops and plenary sessions. The BUSINESSEUROPE family was well represented with speakers, panellists and moderators, as well as in the audience. At a press conference organised during the summit, our reply to the Commission green paper on [labour law](#) was presented: flexible labour law

fosters job creation and employment security; however, taking a top-down legislative approach at the EU level is not desirable and would be counterproductive for national reforms. In a plenary session on 16 March, President Seillière also presented the [business message](#) on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Rome treaties and, handing it over to the German Presidency, urged European and national political leaders to [give a boost to Europe](#) and particularly to progress in six priority areas. Philippe de Buck headed an interesting session on young entrepreneurship; Adrian van den Hoven moderated another one focused on globalisation and trade with Commissioner Mandelson. Contact: [Carsten Dannöhl](#) on the event, or [Jeanne Schmitt](#) on labour law.

ERNEST-ANTOINE SEILLIÈRE INVITED TO THE TRILATERAL COMMISSION

BUSINESSEUROPE President participated in the annual plenary meeting of the Trilateral Commission held in Brussels on 17 March. Joining a panel devoted to “Europe’s internal dynamics” with Jean-Claude Trichet, ECB President, and Reiner Hoffmann, ETUC Deputy General-Secretary, he stressed the need to break out of the institutional deadlock. He said he was anxious for the vigorous economic recovery to be sustained. From the business point of view, the monetary policy had up to now proved to be appropriate. Promotion of “flexicurity” in the labour market was key to ensure the sustainability of European social systems. [Read more](#) or contact: [Jean-Paul Mingasson](#)

HOW CAN ENERGY EFFICIENCY BE IMPROVED?

Meeting on 16 March, the Alliance for a Competitive European Industry reviewed the results of the spring summit in the areas of energy and climate and agreed to prepare both an input and an event on how to improve energy efficiency. On 2 April, the Alliance is set to meet Mr Italianer, Chairman of the Commission’s Impact Assessment Board. The revised directive on integrated pollution prevention and control, due to be presented by the Commission at the end of this year, will be a test case for implementation of the better regulation approach in this area. Contact: [Daniel Cloquet](#)



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PRESIDENT SEILLIÈRE EXCHANGES VIEWS WITH JACQUES BARROT

At a meeting in Paris on 19 March, BUSINESSEUROPE President Ernest-Antoine Seillière had an exchange of views with Transport Commissioner Jacques Barrot. Issues focused on in the meeting included the need to accommodate transport growth whilst promoting both the economic and environmental efficiency of transport, the need to complete the single market for transport as a key driver of European industrial competitiveness and the need for a global approach to handling emissions from transport, which will take into account impacts on the global competitiveness of Europe and must not disadvantage EU business with respect to its global competitors. In a letter to the EP Transport and Tourism Committee, BUSINESSEUROPE Secretary General Philippe de Buck expressed support for the draft report of Mrs Barsi-Pataky on the mid-term review of the 2001 Transport White Paper. [Read more](#) or contact: [Vincent McGovern](#)

BUSINESSEUROPE AT THE EURO-MED SOCIAL PARTNERS' CONFERENCE



For the first time, the German Presidency hosted in Berlin on 16 March a conference devoted to the employment and social dialogue within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Participants included Ministers from Member States and South Mediterranean countries, representatives of the European Commission, trade unions and employers' federations. Mrs Dimitra Mitrogiannopoulou, Vice-President of the Federation of Greek Industries, represented BUSINESSEUROPE at Forum I to introduce the point of view of the Confederation of European Business on the employment dimension of the Barcelona Process. Mrs Mitrogiannopoulou strongly emphasised that there is no way that a common area of security and prosperity can be created without new jobs in the Mediterranean region. Other member federations (MEDEF, BDA) and UMCE (The Union of Mediterranean Confederation of Enterprises) were also represented with speakers in different panels. [Read more](#) or contact: [María Soriano](#)

CONSUMERS IN THE FRONT ROW OF THE INTERNAL MARKET!

On 13 March the Commission adopted a consumer policy strategy for 2007-2013. BUSINESSEUROPE agrees with its five pillars: improve the legislative framework, ensure proper enforcement and redress, safety on markets, integration and coherence between consumer policy and other Community policies and better information. Consumer policy must be understood in the context of the internal market, which is an EU cornerstone. This is why the right balance should be sought between competitiveness of companies and an appropriate level of consumer protection. The debate on the review of the consumer acquis is of particular importance and, for European business, it must result in simplification and clarification of existing rules, as well as ensure a level playing-field and avoid further national regulatory fragmentation. Judicial solutions for enforcement of consumer powers must be treated with extreme care. Mechanisms such as arbitration and mediation should be promoted before new instruments of collective redress are considered. Contact: [Carlos Almaraz](#)



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TELECOM A KEY INPUT TO COMPETITIVENESS

On 7 March, BUSINESSEUROPE General Adviser Jean-Paul Mingasson and Adrian Whitchurch, Chairman of the Telecommunications Working Group, met Fabio Colasanti, Director General of DG Information Society, to discuss the review of EU electronic communications legislation. The delegation highlighted the significant influence the regulatory framework has on the nature of services available to business and supported the move to give a spur to deregulation of retail markets as these become competitive. European business also supports the Commission's proposal for more action to deliver a true internal market in this sector, based on the principles of better regulation and subsidiarity. [Read more](#) or contact: [Miriam Munnich](#)

MEETING TOP ACCOUNTING STANDARD SETTERS IN LONDON

On 13 March in London, BUSINESSEUROPE Accounting Working Group met a delegation of the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) headed by its Chairman Sir David Tweedie. Business representatives raised concerns about the current general direction IASB is taking in changing the accounting standards in use, a direction which is increasingly contested not only by preparers but also by users of financial statements. The process to converge international accounting standards with their counterpart across the Atlantic, US GAAP, was welcomed, but IASB was warned that convergence must not serve as an excuse to "revolutionise" the current accounting model. Contact: [Folker Franz](#)

MEMBER STATES MUST STEP UP EFFORTS TO PREPARE FOR POPULATION AGEING

An overall strategy is essential to address the challenge of population ageing. EU Member States must ensure the sustainability of public finances, boost employment and productivity growth, and reform social systems. While recent years have seen some welcome progress, much still remains to be done. Policy-makers should take full advantage of the current economic recovery to keep up the reform momentum. These views were also outlined on 15 March by Philippe de Buck, who participated in a workshop on the demographic challenge at the European Business Summit. [Read more](#) or contact: [Steven D'Haeseleer](#)

EUROPEAN BUSINESS RECALLS ITS MESSAGE ON TRADEMARK FEES IN USERS' MEETING

In a meeting between OHIM, the Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market, and users of the trademark system in Europe on 9 March, BUSINESSEUROPE reiterated its support for the Commission proposal to introduce a method of regular and automatic review of trademark fees to OHIM. This could allow fee reductions to address budget surpluses in order to return them to users by whom they were generated. This should be discussed in the Council and the European Parliament before the Commission comes forward with a concrete legislative initiative. Contact: [Ilias Konteas](#)