



Wednesday, 28 March 2007

No. 2007-11

### **FUTURE OF EUROPE: A CLEAR COMMITMENT**

Reacting to the Berlin declaration, published to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signature of the treaties of Rome, BUSINESSEUROPE welcomes the fact that key elements for the European project, as highlighted in its [declaration](#) on the future of Europe on 23 January 2007, are part of the Berlin declaration: the fostering of the growth and jobs strategy, the importance of the internal market, the fight against protectionism and individualism, the opportunities of enlargement and the European model based on economic success. President Ernest-Antoine Seillière underlined that with the target of 2009, the Presidents of the European institutions had now given a clear commitment to institutional reform. A roadmap on the way forward now needs to be presented at the June European Council. He called on the Member States to support Chancellor Merkel in her efforts to solve the institutional crisis. [Read more](#) or contact: [Carsten Dannöhl](#)

### **PRESIDENT SEILLIÈRE ON 50 YEARS OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION**

The day after the adoption of the Berlin declaration, Mr Ernest-Antoine Seillière, President of BUSINESSEUROPE, accepted an invitation in Paris to participate in a panel discussion on Europe's competitiveness in the framework of the anniversary of the Treaties of Rome. Mr Seillière, who shared the panel with Lord Brittan, UBS Investment Bank Vice-President, Mr Jean-Louis Bourlanges, MEP and "Sciences Po" professor, and Mr Hervé Jouanjan, European Commission Deputy Secretary-General, explained the position of BUSINESSEUROPE on how to reactivate the European project to strengthen Europe's competitiveness. Mr Valéry Giscard d'Estaing concluded the debate. [Read more](#) or contact: [María Soriano](#)

### **TOPICAL ISSUES DISCUSSED IN ADVISORY AND SUPPORT GROUP OF BUSINESSEUROPE**

A well-attended meeting of the Advisory and Support Group of BUSINESSEUROPE (ASGroup) took place on 22 March, gathering European representatives of 26 major global companies. Ms Odile Quintin, Director General of DG Education and Culture, presented in detail the plans for an European Institute of Technology and answered numerous questions on this Commission initiative. ASGroup members were updated on the state of play in current WTO negotiations and EU relations with Russia by Peter Balas, Deputy Director-General of DG Trade, followed by a lively exchange of views. Contact: [Wytze Russchen](#)

### **ABOUT SPRING SUMMIT DECISIONS ON ENERGY**

Meeting the Energy group of the "France-Europe Club" on 27 March, Secretary General Philippe de Buck outlined BUSINESSEUROPE expectations for implementation of the energy package. The logical approach for introducing an effective unbundling of energy production and transport must start with complete implementation of the existing legislation on legal and functional unbundling. If application of the existing Community regulation proves insufficient, a next step will be needed (new Commission initiatives). Philippe de Buck also detailed priority action for implementing EU strategies in the area of climate protection and renewables. Contact: [Daniel Cloquet](#)



Wednesday, 28 March 2007

No. 2007-11

**BUSINESSEUROPE PUSHES FOR TRANSATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP**

On 21 March BUSINESSEUROPE Secretary General Philippe de Buck met Mr Gerald W. Shaheen, Chairman of the US Chamber of Commerce, to discuss the organisation's wide-ranging cooperation on transatlantic economic relations including preparations for the EU-US summit on 30 April. A delegation also spoke with Mr John Farnell, Director with responsibility for the international aspects of competitiveness in DG Enterprise, to make clear companies' strong wish to see meaningful steps towards building a transatlantic single market agreed at the EU-US summit. BUSINESSEUROPE also held discussions with representatives of the US Trade Representative on transatlantic cooperation in relations with key third countries. Contact: [Eoin O'Malley](#)

**TOWARDS AN EU-KOREA FREE-TRADE AGREEMENT?**

On 20 March, BUSINESSEUROPE met a delegation from the EU Chamber of Commerce in Korea, which represents EU companies in South Korea. The meeting was an opportunity for a discussion on the business environment in Korea, on issues of common interest for the EU and Korea and notably on the proposal for an EU-Korea Free-Trade Agreement. With that in view, both organisations agreed to strengthen cooperation to better support business views throughout the negotiations when launched. Contact: [Carlos Gonzalez](#)

**EP COMMITTEE VOTE CREATES SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES FOR SUPPLEMENTARY PENSION SCHEMES**

On 21 March, the EP's Employment and Social Affairs Committee adopted its report on the Commission's proposal for a directive on the portability of supplementary pension rights. While the report usefully removes provisions on transferability, it also contains various troublesome amendments. In particular, the report introduces a highly problematic ban on vesting conditions for workers older than 25 years old. In addition, the text still does not cover the main cross-border obstacle in this field: taxation. Contact: [Steven D'Haeseleer](#)

**BETTER REGULATION: A NEW HEAD FOR OUR WORKING GROUP**

Mr Jens Hedström is the chairman of BUSINESSEUROPE's Better Regulation working group. Mr Hedström has extensive national and international experience with better regulation matters and is President of the Board of Swedish Industry and Commerce for Better Regulation (NNR), a non-profit body active in EU- and OECD-related work on regulatory reform. Contact: [Erik Berggren](#)