

Mr Bertie Ahern TD  
An Taoiseach  
Government Buildings  
Uper Merrion Street  
Dublin 2 - Ireland

26 September 2007

Dear Taoiseach,

We are in a critical time for Europe and important steps will need to be made on key dossiers. The European business community sees a fairly confident scenario for growth in the EU, averaging around 2.7% for 2007. However, in an increasingly challenging environment marked by financial market turmoil, a decelerating US economy, high oil prices and a weak dollar, the resilience of growth in Europe in 2008 and beyond will rely on decisive policy measures to restore confidence and to implement the necessary reforms.

In this context, the European business community asks policy makers to restore confidence in the economy and to focus on key issues for European enterprises.

First, the **Future of Europe**, the June Summit was decisive in defining a clear mandate for the intergovernmental conference (IGC) on the Constitutional Treaty. European business is satisfied that Member States have engaged to complete the institutional reform treaty by October. Improving the efficiency and transparency of European institutions while preserving the "Community method" will be vital for the success of the EU. BUSINESSEUROPE at European level and IBEC at national level will continue to make an active contribution in the debate on the future of EU institutions.

Second, as part of the social agenda, the Union is undertaking important discussions on **flexicurity**, with a view to adopting a set of common principles for national reforms. BUSINESSEUROPE and IBEC agree that flexicurity provides the right framework for discussing the modernisation of European labour markets, embracing a mix of flexible labour regulations, efficient active labour market policies, effective lifelong learning systems and modern social protection. European social partners are currently seeking to develop a common understanding and recommendations around the key components of flexicurity, which would undoubtedly be a significant input into the debate in the run-up to the December 2007 Council.



Third, the EU is facing an impressive international agenda with the **Doha round negotiations** at the core of the discussions. The European business community cannot accept a failure because it is key to meet the needs of the European economy for new access to emerging countries' goods and services markets.

Fourth, concerning **energy and climate change** challenges, European business and policy-makers will have to find solutions to implement the ambitious EU goals set by the Council in March, but Europe also needs to push for comparable efforts by other industrialised and industrialising countries, otherwise EU initiatives will have minimal effects. Obviously, it is with the United States that we have the most comprehensive agenda, including on issues of climate change, trade, intellectual property and accounting standards.

Last but not least a word on **better regulation**, a dossier which we know is of personal importance for you. Even if the Commission has significantly improved the way they handle better regulation issues and conduct impact assessments, so far European companies have felt no real relief on the ground. BUSINESSEUROPE and IBEC expect from the European Institutions and the Member States concrete steps in the simplification process and the reduction of administrative costs which are also vital for EU companies. In addition, we would really appreciate it if you and your colleagues decide at the March 2008 Spring Council to set up a group of *independent* experts to advise the Institutions on better regulation (as envisaged at the last Spring summit).

We will like to thank you in advance for the attention you will devote to European business concerns,

Yours sincerely,

*(original signed by)*  
Ernest-Antoine Seillière  
President of BUSINESSEUROPE

*(original signed by)*  
Maurice Healy  
President of IBEC