

EUROCHAMBRES outlines business priorities to Bieńkowska, Ansip, Thyssen and Malmström

EUROCHAMBRES President Richard Weber, accompanied by a delegation of Deputy and Vice Presidents, met four European Commissioners today, outlining the business community's expectations for the next five years.

"We want this EU legislative term to be pro-business! We want a European Union that drives the completion of the internal market, proves a strong player on the global stage and oversees the effective delivery of a revitalised growth strategy. We trust that the new European Commissioners will be key drivers of the reforms that we need," said Mr Weber.

Elżbieta Bieńkowska (Internal Market and SME policy)

84% of entrepreneurs at the European Parliament of Enterprises in 2014 voted that the EU single market does not allow businesses to operate and compete freely. This is mainly due to poor implementation of existing measures, so the Commission over the next five years must oversee a vast improvement in the delivery of the legislative framework that is largely in place, starting with the crucial Services Directive. Similarly, more robust governance and implementation of the Small Business Act are necessary in order to convert the laudable aims of this package into tangible improvements in conditions for EU SMEs.

Andrus Ansip (Digital Market)

A 2014 European Parliament study estimates that deepening the single market in the digital field offers potential efficiency gains of EUR 340 billion per year, dwarfing the impact of the Juncker Plan! EUROCHAMBRES told Vice-President Ansip that this cannot be achieved only through tackling technological aspects like cloud computing, broadband availability, access to big data, etc. In addition, established policy areas – such as VAT requirements, company law, labour mobility rules, licences, standards, dispute resolution and consumer protection – must be fit for the digital era. This is far from being the case at present.

Marianne Thyssen (Employment)

EUROCHAMBRES highlighted the need for a stronger push to promote apprenticeship schemes across the EU and to encourage SMEs to host apprentices. This must be reflected in the anticipated re-launch of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships and the Riga Communiqué on Vocational Education and Training, but also in the introduction of a new Europe 2020 target: half of all vocational training schemes should take the form of apprenticeships (the figure is currently only 27%).

Cecilia Malmström (Trade)

With the 8th round of negotiations ongoing, TTIP was on top of the agenda. EUROCHAMBRES pleaded for an ambitious SME Chapter, which is closely connected to other items such as the regulatory convergence, trade facilitation and improved mobility of workers. Also the concept of European Economic Diplomacy was discussed, insisting on a stronger coordination between all stakeholders.

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