



European Pillar of Entrepreneurial Rights

In order to maintain and strengthen the EU's social market economy, EUROCHAMBRES considers it necessary to prepare a **European Pillar of Entrepreneurial Rights** concurrently with the foreseen European Pillar of Social Rights.

The **European Pillar of Entrepreneurial Rights** should encompass the key policy elements that need to be defined at EU level and rigorously pursued and implemented across the member states to make Europe an attractive place to create, develop and run a business.

Entrepreneurs are a cornerstone of Europe's economy and society. Beyond fiscal contributions, entrepreneurs are creators: creators of jobs, creators of new products and services, creators of opportunities, creators of growth, creators of wealth and consequently creators of prosperity for society as a whole.

Entrepreneurs do not normally talk in terms of their 'rights'. Nonetheless, there is growing awareness among these creators of the need to ensure that their crucial and multi-faceted socio-economic role is not taken for granted and that it is explicitly factored in to policies and measures. Reflecting the underlying premise of the European Pillar of Social Rights, we therefore argue that policy makers must also act as the guardians of entrepreneurial rights.

The **European Pillar of Entrepreneurial Rights** should thus ensure:

- **A single market that is not impaired by unnecessary administrative requirements or excessive legal obligations**
- **Favourable trading conditions outside the EU, based on far-reaching free trade agreements**
- **Available and appropriate financing solutions that respond to the increasingly diverse range of business models and capital needs**
- **An adequately skilled and flexible workforce that is able to support businesses as they drive change and adapt to evolving market opportunities**
- **Efficient public administrations that develop and implement legislation and measures in a business-friendly manner and minimize reporting requirements**
- **Affordable and secure supplies of energy and raw materials to facilitate cost-effective production**

None of these elements are in themselves revolutionary. What would be ground-breaking is their full, effective and coherent delivery across the EU to the benefit of its 20 million+ businesses, the vast majority of which are small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). **Europe's business community needs, expects and deserves better.**

On 13 October in the Brussels hemicycle, this initiative for the preparation of a **European Pillar of Entrepreneurial Rights** was announced to 800 entrepreneurs during the 4th edition of the European Parliament of Enterprises. It was then formally adopted by the members of EUROCHAMBRES at their 120th Plenary Assembly the following day.

Background note:

The pursuit of competitiveness has ostensibly been a basic principle of the European project since its origins nearly 60 years ago. This was demonstrated in recent years by the Lisbon Agenda and Europe 2020. Yet such strategies and their follow-up have not had the desired impact on the real economy; far from it. This shortfall in delivering specific policy measures to enhance competitiveness must be addressed if the real economy and society at large are to thrive in an increasingly competitive global environment.

The single market is an example of this delivery deficit. 30 years on from the signing of the Single European Act and nearly 25 years on from the agreed deadline for the creation of a single market, much as been achieved, but many unnecessary and burdensome obstacles to trading within the EU remain in place. Trading across the EU should by now be the norm, not the exception.

A *European Pillar of Entrepreneurial Rights* could revitalize the pursuit of a more business friendly climate at EU and national level. The objective is not to redefine EU SME policy or to revise the Small Business Act. Nor is the aim to devise a new approach to stimulating entrepreneurship or to displace the forthcoming start-up and scale-up initiative. Each of these actions has its merits, but also its limitations.

The aims of the *European Pillar of Entrepreneurial Rights* are both broader and deeper:

- To provide a long-term roadmap towards a more favourable and integrated European business environment
- To stipulate a range of prerequisites to better business conditions that the EU institutions and member states must ensure through policy measures and tools
- To galvanize member state commitment to the effective and coordinated delivery of measures of tangible benefit to entrepreneurs

The *European Pillar of Entrepreneurial Rights* would complement recent Commission packages such as the Capital Markets Union, the Digital Single Market, Upgrading the Single Market, Trade for All, Energy Union and the New Skills Agenda. It would also provide momentum to the European Semester process. Indeed, as is anticipated for the new Pillar of Social Rights, the *European Pillar of Entrepreneurial Rights* should be integrated into the yearly European Semester cycle of economic monitoring.

The business community and the Chamber network do not shy away from the social, environmental and economic responsibilities that come hand in hand with their role in driving growth and job creation. This is evident from the vast range of services that Chambers of Commerce & Industry deliver to the grassroots business community every day across Europe; it is evident from their efforts to tackle youth unemployment, to support the economic integration of refugees, or to respond to climate change.

Conversely, policy makers cannot shy away from their responsibilities to the business community. They must no longer leave their pro-business agreements in EU meeting rooms. They must reiterate and reinforce them back in their capitals and regions and ensure that they are delivered. They must liaise with the business community in converting them into measures that have a perceptible, positive impact in the market place.

EU institutions and member states are masters in the business of politics. They must demonstrate that they can also become masters in the politics of business.

The 'social triple A' objective mooted in last year's 5 Presidents' Report cannot be pursued in isolation. It would certainly not be sustainable unless the EU also strives for an entrepreneurial triple A rating.

A *European Pillar of Entrepreneurial Rights* will provide a framework for such a process.

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