

State of the Union Address 2018: EUROCHAMBRES supports call of the Commission for an ambitious agenda ahead of European elections

EUROCHAMBRES welcomes the agenda presented today by European Commission President, Jean-Claude Juncker, to finalize an agreement on the legislative proposals still pending before the end of his term.

Christoph Leitl, President of EUROCHAMBRES, reacted to the President's State of the Union Address with the following statement: *"Today, I was glad to hear President Juncker outline an ambitious agenda ahead of the European elections of next year. Working together with the European institutions, I am hopeful we can turn the Commission's proposals into business-friendly actions"*.

Concerning the Commission's announcements:

- Regarding **economic issues**, EUROCHAMBRES considers that the announcement on the Monetary Union will make the euro stronger and more flexible, creating new solutions to help countries cope with problems as part of Europe's economic security architecture. In addition, a more stable, resilient and competitive Monetary Union must be coupled with better economic governance to strengthen the EU itself.
- EUROCHAMBRES welcomes the '**Africa – Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs**', as a positive step to promote investment and growth and to create jobs. It remains to be seen if this includes not only public institutions, media and large multinationals, but also SMEs as creators of employment, social cohesion and innovation across the continent. *"Chambers are ready to contribute to shaping the skills of the future and the sustainable development of Africa"*, President Leitl said.
- In relation to tackling the **migration crisis**, EUROCHAMBRES underlines that there is no integration without business and attracting more high-skilled workers while also organising rapid labour market integration for migrants and refugees already in Europe is a must.
- EUROCHAMBRES supports the **proposal for Qualified Majority Voting** in the Common Foreign and Security Policy. EU political processes must keep pace with the global economy if our businesses are to compete effectively.
- The message to the UK Government on **Brexit** was clear and corresponds with the view of EUROCHAMBRES: The Single Market is a fixed menu, not *à la carte*, but the EU wants to maintain strong trading ties with the UK. President Leitl pointed out however that *"this does not bring us any closer to an agreement on the UK's withdrawal, just six months away from the negotiation deadline, so the emphasis has to switch from swapping political statements to finding workable solutions."*

"SMEs across the continent are working incessantly to provide innovative solutions for consumers. This is what Europeans want and what Europe needs: a dynamic business community able to deliver high-quality products and services and create jobs and growth. EUROCHAMBRES is convinced that giving the economy the appropriate incentives instead of limiting their options is the best way forward to achieve our targets", stated President Leitl.

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