



European Parliament Hemicycle, Brussels

Wednesday 10 October 2018

5th EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT OF ENTERPRISES the EU must be open for business!

The final European Parliament of Enterprises of the 2014-19 legislative term - gathering more than 700 entrepreneurs in the Brussels Hemicycle - sent a clear message to the ongoing debate on the Future of Europe: the EU must be open for business!

Entrepreneurs from across Europe debated and voted in sessions on skills, trade and the future of Europe in the presence of high-level institutional representatives, including European Parliament President **Antonio Tajani**; Trade Commissioner **Cecilia Malmström**; Chief Brexit Negotiator, **Michel Barnier**; and the Principal Advisor to the Austrian Presidency of the EU, **Andrä Rupprechter**.

The discussions and votes revealed concerns among entrepreneurs about skills mismatches, single market access and the direction of the global trade agenda. At the same time, the Members of the European Parliament of Enterprises expressed support for a strong, efficient and unified EU in order to tackle these challenges effectively.

On **skills**, EUROCHAMBRES President, Christoph Leitl, highlighted the problem of mismatches between supply and demand: *“We have more graduates than ever in Europe and incredibly talented young people entering the labour market, but what good is this if they cannot find work and employers cannot find staff with the right skills? We must do better in ensuring that education prepares young people for current and emerging employment opportunities.”*

On **trade**, following Michel Barnier’s comments, President Leitl stated: *“Brexit negotiators from both sides must focus fully on avoiding a no-deal outcome next March. This is not about high politics, it’s about businesses, communities and jobs. The clock is ticking, so we must work efficiently to ensure an orderly, trade oriented UK withdrawal.”*

On **the future of Europe**, President Leitl stated: *“Today’s event has demonstrated that business is open to the EU, but the EU must be open for business! As entrepreneurs, we want a solid single market, external strength, a stable economy and a skilled workforce. The EU is part of the solution to these challenges, not part of the problem, but it will only succeed if its policies reflect the needs of entrepreneurs.”*

In relation to the 2019 European Parliament elections, President Leitl stressed that *“we must encourage Europeans to believe in the future.”*

Voting highlights from the European Parliament of Enterprises 2018 included:

- An alarming 84% stated that the **skills mismatch** problem is more acute than 5 years ago

Press contact in EUROCHAMBRES:

Luis Piselli, piselli@eurochambres.eu and communication@epe2018.eu,

Phone +32 2 282 08 92

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- 93% voted that the integrity of the Single Market and EU unity take precedent over a favourable **Brexit** deal with the UK
- 99% believe that the EU must do more to help SMEs benefit from **free trade agreements**
- 69% do not believe that the **Single Market** is fit for business

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ANNEX

Full results of votes

SKILLS SESSION

1. Is the business community sufficiently involved in education policy, such as the development of education/VET curricula?
Yes: 21,6% No: 78,4%
2. Is it harder to recruit staff with the right skills than five years ago?
Yes: 84,1% No: 15,9%
3. Should the employability of graduates be a more prominent criterion in rating the performance of higher education institutions?
Yes: 86,3% No: 13,7%
4. Should work-based learning be integral to all initial vocational education & training programmes?
Yes: 97,1% No: 2,9%
5. Is cost a significant barrier to businesses offering more work/training opportunities to refugees and migrants?
Yes: 38,5% No: 61,5%

TRADE SESSION

1. Has the European Union done enough to address the needs of small and medium sized enterprises in the substantive rules of EU FTA' s and their implementation?
Yes: 8,5% No: 91,5%
2. Do you feel that the EU needs to take more leadership on the global stage in standing up for open markets and the multilateral rules-based system in view of recent tensions with global partners?
Yes: 98,7% No: 1,3%
3. Should the EU and the US re-engage in FTA negotiations?
Yes: 89,9% No: 10,1%
4. The outcome of the Brexit negotiations must not jeopardize the unity of the EU and thus of the internal market, even if that is detrimental to trade with the UK?
Yes: 93,4% No: 6,6%
5. Do you think that every major European FTA should be accompanied with an implementation action plan in Europe to help bring the agreement closer to entrepreneurs and SMEs?
Yes: 98,9% No: 1,1%

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FUTURE OF EUROPE SESSION

1. Is the Single Market sufficiently integrated, allowing your company to operate and compete freely?
Yes: 30,7% No: 69,3%
2. Despite overall budgetary constraints, is the Commission right to propose an increase in funding for research, development and innovation for the next EU multiannual financial period?
Yes: 98,0% No: 2,0%
3. Should the EU focus more closely on initiatives with clear European added value?
Yes: 98,5% No: 1,5%
4. Is the EU still relevant to me and my company?
Yes: 95,2% No: 4,8%
5. Should the European Commission continue its enlargement strategy?
Yes: 81,5% No: 18,5%

More information on the European Parliament of Enterprises on
www.parliament-of-enterprises.eu

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