



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

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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

Annexes

Annex 1: full **results & analysis** of the votes

Annex 2: **Audiovisual material**, courtesy of the European Parliament and Europe by Satellite.

Annex 3: **MEPEs interventions in video**, in “original language” (as spoken in the hemicycle), ready to download

Annex 4: Other **documents**.

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ANNEX 1: Full results & analysis of the 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%

The fact that three-quarters of MEPEs voted 'no' to this question underlines a willingness among entrepreneurs to contribute to the development and delivery of education curricula.

2. Is it harder to recruit staff with the right skills than five years ago?

Yes: 84.1% No: 15.9%

This question was also asked at the 2010 and 2016 editions of the EPE and the percentage of 'yes' votes has risen each time. The skills mismatch is a Europe-wide problem which merits a coordinated Europe-wide response.

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%

The EU has more graduates than ever in, but what good is this if they cannot find work and employers cannot find staff with the right skills? The strong 'yes' response to this question emphasises the need to do better in ensuring that education prepares young people for current and emerging employment opportunities."

4. Should work-based learning be integral to all initial vocational education & training programmes?

Yes: 97.1% No: 2.9%

This is another question that has been asked at previous EPEs and the almost unanimous 'yes' vote in 2018 reinforces the importance that entrepreneurs attach to the work-based component of vocational education & training.

5. Is cost a significant barrier to businesses offering more work/training opportunities to refugees and migrants?

Yes: 38.5% No: 61.5%

Ensuring work opportunities is vital to the socio-economic integration of refugees and migrants. The outcome of this vote indicates that the barriers are not necessarily financial and may relate more to other aspects of a process that is extremely complex on many levels.

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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%

Over the past years the European Commission has invested noteworthy efforts in addressing the needs of SME's in the EU's trade policy, such as through dedicated SME chapters in EU FTA's, or through tailor made information for traders provided through the Market Access Database (MADB). However, the results of the EPE 2018 clearly show that the EU must not get complacent and invest more efforts so that the bulk of European enterprises – SMEs- can better profit from open markets. This applies to both, the substantive rules in our FTA's, such as making it easier for SMEs to comply with rules of origin (RoO), as well as for the implementation of the agreements, where a better uptake should be secured.

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%

Never before has the multilateral rules-based trading system been more under attack than today. As the world's largest trader, Europe relies more than other world regions on open markets, and the predictability that is guaranteed through multilateral trade rules and its dispute settlement mechanism. The EPE has clearly acknowledged that fact and called on the EU to unequivocally stand up for multilateralism, in times when multilateralism needs Europe. Preserving the multilateral rules based system, including its dispute settlement arm, must be a top priority.

3. Should the EU and the US re-engage in FTA negotiations?

Yes: 89.9% No: 10.1%

The EU and the US economies account together for about half of the entire world GDP and for nearly a third of world trade flows. Total US investment in the EU is three times higher than in all of Asia, while Europe accounted for 54% of global FDI inflows into the US in 2017. While TTIP remains in the "freezer", the EPE clearly signalled that it continues to make perfect sense to re-engage with the US towards a mutually beneficial agreement that can provide economic benefits to companies on both sides. The result of the vote is a clear statement EU business that they want to trade more with the US, not less.

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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%

The United Kingdom is a vital trading partner for EU businesses and there is an inherent desire by the business community to keep EU-UK trade running as smoothly as possible after Brexit. However, this vote reiterated the strong view among entrepreneurs that the unity of the EU and the integrity of the Single Market's four freedoms are non-negotiable in the ongoing discussions on the UK's withdrawal and future relations.

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%

The EPE voted very clearly that more work needs to be done by all involved actors to have the EU Trade policy better implemented at home, particularly for European SMEs. This involves the Members States, but also the European Commission or the European Parliament. According to the votes cast at the EPE, dedicated implementation action plans that accompany mayor EU trade agreements, are a suitable vehicles to boost implementation efforts at home by all involved, potentiate existing initiatives, and bring trade closer to the doorstep of those who really need it; our entrepreneurs and our SMEs. The Business community and Chambers in particular remain fully committed towards that goal.

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%

If the Single Market were fully functional, a business should be able to commercialize its goods or services in any other EU member state with little or no additional legal or administrative complexity. This result indicates that for a significant majority of entrepreneurs, this is not the case and the aims of policy in this field are not transferred to the market place: a call for action for the next 5 year EU legislative term!

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%

This almost unanimous voting result demonstrates the importance that entrepreneurs attach to research and innovation and the value of EU level support for collaborative actions. The next Horizon programme must live up to these expectations and demonstrate its

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accessibility not just to pioneering research among major institutes and multinationals but also to SMEs and to incremental innovation.

3. Should the EU focus more closely on initiatives with clear European added value?

Yes: 98.5% No: 1.5%

Entrepreneurs want better policy-making at EU level, not necessarily more. They want the current Commission's *big on big things and small on small things*' slogan to become a reality and for intervention only when there is a clear European added value. The results of other EPE questions clearly suggest which areas this approach should cover, notably trade, the Single Market and skills.

4. Is the EU still relevant to me and my company?

Yes: 95.2% No: 4.8%

The outcome of the UK's 2016 referendum may have led to an existential crisis and deep reflections on the future of Europe, but this resounding 'yes' vote confirms that the EU matters very much to entrepreneurs. Now it is the turn of candidates for the European Parliament elections in 2019 and the next European Commission must demonstrate more consistently and effectively that entrepreneurs matter to the EU!

5. Should the European Union fortify business ties with third countries, paving the way for accession?

Yes: 81.5% No: 18.5%

More than four out of five Members of the European Parliament of Enterprises voted in favour of further efforts to strengthen commercial ties with EU third countries that may in due course accede to the EU. This reflects the fact that enlargement of the EU, has proved economically beneficial for both existing and new member states. A bigger EU means a bigger Single Market that offers more business opportunities, less barriers to trade and investment and a more competitive economy in global terms.

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ANNEX 2

Audiovisual material

Pictures are available at:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/eurochambres/albums/72157696169370050> .

Available for publication.

The **full video of the event** is available at: <http://bit.ly/2pNwosZ>

(Credit of the images: European Parliament).

Video footage is here:

- EPE2018 opening: <https://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?ref=1161350>
- EPE2018 press conference:
<https://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?ref=1161555> and <http://bit.ly/2ydgY68>
→ For this particular event., audio channels provided by the EP are “Original Language” (as spoken in the press conference room), English, French, German, and Italian.
- EPE2018 full closing session:
<https://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?ref=1161666>
- EPE2018 extracts of the speech of Michel Barnier:
<https://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?ref=1161371> and <http://bit.ly/2EfARyB>
→ All these videos are in 16:9 format, with high definition quality ready to broadcast. The audio channels are in “Original Language” (as spoken in the hemicycle), English, French, German, Greek, Italian and Spanish. To download the videos you need to create a session in Europe by Satellite, by filling a short form.
→ In the same pages you can also download the audio only, with quality for radio broadcasting, in “original” floor language and in all the 6 translated languages.

Video interview to Christoph Leidl, President of **EUROCHAMBRES**, taking about the **importance** of the European Parliament of Enterprises:

- In You Tube: <https://youtu.be/eiofSmMOW30>
- In Twitter: <https://twitter.com/EUROCHAMBRES/status/1050740814379446272>
- In Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/EUROCHAMBRES/videos/2135381123152428/>
- Available for download: <https://we.tl/t-EjoFvFwdYT>

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ANNEX 3

Interventions of MEPEs in video

The EPE recreates a parliamentary session and gives the floor to European entrepreneurs. This highlights the "economic democracy" of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry through their representation and their structure.

The videos of these interventions of the Members of the European Parliament of Enterprises (MEPEs) in "Original Language" (as spoken in the hemicycle) are ready to watch and download:

- Skills
 - Germany, seat 150 (Eric Schweitzer): <https://youtu.be/z6lcqbFuSsY>
 - Greece, seat 221 (Platon Marlafekas): <https://youtu.be/VD1PhF5Jtvc>
 - Belgium, seat 10 (Kristien De Ro): <https://youtu.be/ZCAeX9avmuA>
 - Austria, seat 5 (Martha Schultz): <https://youtu.be/3051LIUIfms>
 - Luxembourg, seat 452 (Stany Wyrzykowski): <https://youtu.be/6iJa5C1980U>
 - Italy, seat 232 (Klaus Algieri): https://youtu.be/Y_M2bgl9Yng
 - Spain, seat 617 (Elena Alvarez): <https://youtu.be/jdqiwKOsYg>
 - Croatia, seat 18 (Marinko Došen): <https://youtu.be/ChOm098XTSE>
 - INSULEUR, seat 775 (Evangelos Myrsinias): <https://youtu.be/O6-e2hghxeo>
 - Malta, seat 526 (David Xuereb): <https://youtu.be/CATc3qJJOZ4>
 - France, seat 161 (Olivier Guilbaud): <https://youtu.be/bhN3GaSJ74s>
 - Portugal, seat 504 (Bernardo Aguiar): <https://youtu.be/wpdDvtvfjbo>
 - Bulgaria, seat 25 (Rosen Daskalov): <https://youtu.be/R-Gag3tsS20>
 - Germany, seat 200 (Hans Peter Wollseifer): https://youtu.be/r_xLR6mecNo
 - Poland, seat 515 (Jaroslaw Tworog): <https://youtu.be/Eojt9k334P0>
 - Cyprus, seat 2 (Manthos Mavrommatis): <https://youtu.be/hRfiGW8UfEq>
 - Czech Republic, seat 14 (Jan Hovora): <https://youtu.be/3YMI51Zcs0Q>
 - Slovakia, seat 475 (Renata Korduliakova): <https://youtu.be/Oqo2Z0fMbAY>

→ Link to download 'Skills' interventions: <http://bit.ly/2CbPCjp>

- Trade
 - Spain, seat 554 (Manuel Alabart Fernandez-Cavada):
 - Turkey, seat 693 (Hakan Ülken): <https://youtu.be/l14bmXy0Nrl>
 - Germany, seat 240 (Wolfgang Grenke): <https://youtu.be/tKHSg6g3lRc>
 - Italy, seat 280 (Mario Pozza): <https://youtu.be/lxyrNPZ13eg>
 - France, seat 207 (Yann Trichard): <https://youtu.be/hjjQG1rEBAM>
 - Sweden, seat 594 (Mats Johansson): <https://youtu.be/xWhbn3YvAgo>

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- Ukraine, seat 704 (Gennadyi Chyzhykov): <https://youtu.be/8mgyhRby4ko>
- Portugal, seat 563 (Sérgio Silva): <https://youtu.be/KVCXDi8XB90>
- Ireland, seat 446 (Paul Nolan): <https://youtu.be/Hr2KvNmnwKo>
- Luxembourg, seat 458 (Monique Bertho): <https://youtu.be/SeX2ZQSeGCg>
- Germany, seat 300 (Mark Scherhag): <https://youtu.be/J3uCMsq8zCs>
- Belgium, seat 33 (Marc Van Thillo): <https://youtu.be/aF18bLYtYKq>
- Czech Republic, seat 39 (Tomáš Pluhařík): <https://youtu.be/lZU6NV5EVWk>
- Italy, seat 337 (Ferruccio Dardanella): <https://youtu.be/rwnmc4Vmris>
- Greece, seat 273 (Pavlos Ravanis): <https://youtu.be/LVA00kP-sNc>
- Romania, seat 627 (Aurelian Gogulescu): <https://youtu.be/b2tTmCKsjJY>
- Poland, seat 570 (Malgorzata Krzyżowska): <https://youtu.be/AAwJq2Yoolq>

→ Link to download 'Trade' interventions: <http://bit.ly/2OWyRQ3>

• Future of Europe

- Italy, seat 382 (Andrea Zanlari): <https://youtu.be/JKLgURZ6JEs>
- Malta, seat 583 (Simon De Cesare): https://youtu.be/w1UWGdn21_A
- Spain, seat 673 (José Luis Bonet Ferrer): <https://youtu.be/ac8MF8nOLiA>
- Serbia, seat 765 (Zdravko Ilic): <https://youtu.be/UuA6QtEQFMI>
- Germany, seat 114 (Richard Weber): https://youtu.be/hcXT_G-6GAE
- Estonia, seat 21 (Kaur Orgusaar): <https://youtu.be/lbCsVuDzzGc>
- France, seat 256 (Pierre Goguet): <https://youtu.be/073q4fQoWVc>
- Turkey, seat 698 (Mülkiye Aytar): <https://youtu.be/YcN65cTB2fU>
- Belgium, seat 64 (Bernd Hugo): <https://youtu.be/69MbjIn98tk>
- Greece, seat 327 (Stefanos Georgiadis): https://youtu.be/1fuSk5_wViM
- Italy, seat 438 (Gloriano Lanciotti): <https://youtu.be/dLBo4HWIVbY>
- Sweden, seat 536 (Stephan Mühler): <https://youtu.be/qSD78rIF8g4>
- Poland, seat 521 (Robert Przespolewski): <https://youtu.be/F-4LSCD1QPp>
- Germany, seat 344 (Kristine Lütke): https://youtu.be/_9O0YtNZI58
- Albania, seat 771 (Ylli Braka): <https://youtu.be/oyuo2ur2y1s>
- Montenegro, seat 773 (Pavle Radovanovic): <https://youtu.be/tlgjHeC6zOM>
- France, seat 312 (Fanny Ruin): <https://youtu.be/HHkqEHbNO2I>
- Ukraine, seat 703 (Valentina Sourjikova-Giebner): <https://youtu.be/G-eN4ErWipM>
- Ireland, seat 495 (Fiona Candan): <https://youtu.be/WYqtule6vns>

→ Link to download 'Future of Europe' interventions: <http://bit.ly/2CGQ1eL>

(Credit of the images: European Parliament).

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ANNEX 4

Other documents

- Address by President Tajani to the European Parliament of Enterprises 2018: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/the-president/en/newsroom/address-by-president-tajani-to-european-parliament-of-enterprises>
- Speech by Michel Barnier at the closing session of EUROCHAMBRES' European Parliament of Enterprises 2018: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-18-6089_en.htm

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

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