

Pan-European Business Survey exposes gaps in the Single Market: message to President von der Leyen to raise ambitions

70% of businesses say that the Single Market is not sufficiently integrated, allowing them to operate and compete freely in a market of 500 million consumers. At the start of a new legislative term, the von der Leyen Commission, the national governments and the newly elected MEPs need to know what the major issues are for businesses and what can be done about it. More than 1100 businesses from all over the EU have given their opinions on the current state of the Single Market.

The European institutions, in order to cater to the needs of its citizens and businesses, have to evaluate on an evidence-based way the business environment before making legislative proposals. This is what led EUROCHAMBRES to conduct an EU-wide survey among businesses. The findings should be used by the new European Commission for its soon to be published Working Programme.

EUROCHAMBRES President, Christoph Leidl said: “The report gives a privileged insight in the obstacles faced by companies on a daily basis, and SMEs in particular, still Europe’s engine for economic growth, innovation, job creation, and social integration in the EU. The report shows that obstacles can differ according to the type of company and it is clear that small companies demand that the regulatory framework be better adapted to their specificities. We therefore urge the Commission to come up with initiatives which cut red tape and provide better information to companies.”

According to the survey, the five most hindering barriers to trade in the EU are:

- Complex administrative procedures (79.5%)
- Different national service rules (71.6%)
- Inaccessibility to information on rules and requirements (69.1%)
- Different national product rules (67.0%)
- Different contractual/legal practices (65.6%)

The five most favoured solutions to tackle the current barriers are:

- Cutting red tape e.g. extensive reporting, information or documentation obligations (91.2%)
- Better and clearer information on a single EU online portal in different languages concerning all necessary procedures and formalities to operate in another EU country (86.5%)
- Administrative simplification for trading goods and services in other EU Member States by making available a maximum number of procedures through an online web portal (85.0%)
- Improved implementation of EU law via more cooperation between Member States and EU Commission on enforcement (83.0%)
- Take greater account of the impact of new regulations on small and mid-sized enterprises (82.5%)

The Chair of EUROCHAMBRES’ Single Market Committee, Juho Romakkaniemi, said: “We need to have more companies operating cross-borders, especially in the services sector where our productivity growth is too low. The figures in the report confirm that service providers are much more critical about the Single Market than producers. Further standstill in this area will inevitably lead to a loss of competitiveness of our businesses.”

Additional information

1. ECH Single Market Survey report - <http://bit.ly/SMSurveyReport>
2. ECH SM Survey infographic - http://bit.ly/Survey_Infographic
3. ECH SM Survey Factsheets - <http://bit.ly/SurveyFactsheet>
4. ECH SM Survey 5 most important obstacles per member state: <http://bit.ly/TopObstacles>