

MEP Entrepreneur Index Launched

Brussels, 06 March 2019.– VoteWatch Europe, the leading organisation tracking the votes and activities of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) has today, in partnership with EUROCHAMBRES, launched a new tool for tracking how MEPs vote in relation to a range of topics of importance to entrepreneurs.

The MEP Entrepreneur Index reveals how MEPs cast their votes on 25 decisions, both binding and non-binding, and covers a wide range of subjects such as access to capital, access to qualified labour (including migrants), reduction of non-tariff barriers between EU member states, access to raw materials and to external markets, or the level of administrative burdens.

Doru Frantescu, CEO & cofounder of VoteWatch Europe said: *“Different societal and economic groups make use of our database of votes to gauge the views of MEPs on topics that are important to them. However, identifying the relevant votes is not easy for the general public. Compared to other advanced democracies, such as the United States, there is still a lot of room for improvement when it comes to the application of data technologies to the European Parliament, despite our own valuable contribution. This is why we have teamed up with EUROCHAMBRES to launch this pilot project.”*

Speaking at the launch of the MEP Entrepreneur Index in Brussels, EUROCHAMBRES President **Christoph Leidl** said: *“The launch date of the new Index is not coincidental. In a little over two months, 705 MEPs will be elected to represent 446 million EU citizens. The Chamber network is working hard to encourage people to vote and this Index will help them do so in an informed manner. We often demand evidence-based policy-making and this logic extends to monitoring politicians’ voting behaviour. Enabling public access to such data strengthens transparency and accountability. This is why - with VoteWatch Europe – we will regularly update the MEP Entrepreneur Index once the new 5 year European Parliament term begins.”*

What are the first findings?

1. Four MEPs supported entrepreneurship-friendly policies each time they voted on the decisions included in this index: Verónica Lope Fontagné (Spain), Alojz Peterle (Slovenia), Stanislav Polčák (Czech Republic) and Czesław Adam Siekierski (Poland). Therefore, they were assigned a score of 100%. The top 5 is closed by György Hölvényi, a Hungarian MEP. These top five are affiliated to the EPP group in the EP.
2. From among the members of the other political groups, Czech Dita Charanzová has the highest score within ALDE (96%), British Ashley Fox tops the ranking within ECR (95.65%), while Hungarian Tibor Szanyi scored highest within S&D (74%).

3. The MEP Entrepreneur Index also provides an insight into the behavior of the national groups as a whole. MEPs from post-communist countries seem the keenest supporters of a more favorable regulatory landscape for entrepreneurs, with Bulgarian MEPs topping the ranking, followed by Slovak MEPs. From among Western European members, Luxembourgish MEPs were found to be the most supportive of friendly policies towards entrepreneurs, while Maltese top the ranking with regards to southern Europe.
4. At the other end of the scale, Greek MEPs are revealed to be the most in favour of regulating economic and social activities, followed by the Swedish. The low score for the UK MEPs might come as a surprise to many, although it can be explained by the behaviour of the UKIP delegation (the largest group among British MEPs during the 2014-19 term), which tends to oppose any sort of EU-driven framework of intervention in the economy.

The full methodology and the individual scores of each MEP can be checked on the websites of VoteWatch Europe and EUROCHAMBRES.

Additional information

- The MEP Entrepreneur Index does not aim to promote a specific policy direction, leaving the users free to gauge the voting behaviour of their elected representatives.
- MEPs who score high in this index are in favour of EU policies that aim to establish a more favourable environment for entrepreneurship, promote open global trade and decrease regulation of economic activities.
- MEPs who score low in this index are either in favour of regulated markets and societies, more restrictions on entrepreneurship and more protectionist global trade policies, or prefer national solutions to an EU approach.
- The scores provide information on how the MEPs voted on various decisions during the 2014-19 term. 155 MEPs from across the political groups got the maximum score, as they supported entrepreneurship in each of the selected issues during that period.
- Subsequent rolling annual updates of the MEP Entrepreneur Index during the 2019-24 term will add the voting patterns of new or returning MEPs during the preceding 12 months.
- VoteWatch Europe encourages other stakeholders or advocacy groups to contact us if they are interested in cooperating on similar projects on other policy areas or from different angles.

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