

SOTEU 2021: a strong economy is crucial to meeting Europe's challenges

EUROCHAMBRES President, Christoph Leitl, welcomed the ambitious and committed tone of today's State of the European Union speech, but called for a strong and continued focus on delivering the economic recovery.

EUROCHAMBRES was encouraged to hear references to digital skills development, to enhancing opportunities for young Europeans and to strengthening certain aspects of the single market in President von der Leyen's speech. President Leitl however called for more precision and a stronger focus on the still nascent economic recovery: *"Europe certainly needs big ideas and ambition to respond effectively to social, environmental and geopolitical challenges. That response will only be possible though if underpinned by a strong economy. The recovery plan is at the heart of this, as is a strong single market and an assertive, ambitious EU trade agenda. I would like to have heard more about these aspects from President von der Leyen today."*

President Leitl also cautioned against anti-business rhetoric: *"President von der Leyen called for businesses to make their fair contribution. Chambers support the fight against tax fraud and evasion, but let us not overlook that the vast majority of Europe's businesses already make their fair contribution: they pay their taxes and comply with rules and standards, while also creating jobs, growth and opportunities. Our entrepreneurs have shown incredible resilience during the pandemic and will be essential to the recovery. Europe's business community should be acknowledged as part of the solution, not part of the problem."*

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