Eurochambres President Vladimír Dlouhýs intervention at the 18 March 2026 Tripartite Social Summit

Tripartite Social Summit for Growth and Employment: "Investment for a vibrant European economy and quality jobs"

During their informal retreat, Europe's leaders committed to delivering real results for Europe's economy. The formal March European Council must now ensure that those commitments are not hollow and convert into action.

Because the cost of a non-competitive Europe is rising day by day.

Our shared goal is a strong Europe with a vibrant economy that fosters investment, innovation and growth. To achieve this goal in a global economy that is increasingly unpredictable and unstable, we need to focus on **getting our own house and our own market in order**.

For chambers of commerce and industry, there are three critical paths that need to be pursued in parallel.

First, we must build on the promising first steps of this Commission's **simplification** agenda. We now need to deliver on the principles of review, reduction and restraint. Every layer of unnecessary or overlapping regulation that stifles our businesses must go – at EU and national level alike. The Commission's ambitions must be matched by equally robust commitments from member states to reduce nationally imposed burdens. This is a joint responsibility for all 27 member states. We cannot preach simplification in Council and then gold-plate directives at home.

And we must combine this deep clean of existing legislation with restraint in proposing new legislation, otherwise we will see no net improvement. This means that we must systematically consider the economic feasibility of proposals. Currently, that is not always the case. The proposed Cybersecurity Act revision, for instance, could effectively prohibit ICT procurement and imports from non-EU suppliers, disrupting supply chains, raising costs and ultimately weakening Europe's competitiveness, rather than strengthening sovereignty.

Second, we must improve **Single Market integration** by dismantling the barriers that still block cross-border trade, services and investment. We don't need another strategy, we need to identify and tackle persistent obstacles one-by-one. Because our businesses cannot afford fragmentation within our own market! This applies notably to today's overarching topic: investment for a vibrant economy and quality jobs. We must allow capital to flow across the EU to scale up innovation, strengthen our economy and drive job creation.

Third, we must **create stable conditions for our businesses.**

Last week, the European Commission set a target of raising the manufacturing sector's share of EU GDP to 20% by 2035 in the Industrial Accelerator Act. The Commission set a similar target about 15 years ago and no progress has been made. And no progress will be made this time either unless we ensure that businesses have accessible and affordable energy, raw materials, technology, faster permitting, and effective infrastructure. These are the real drivers of Europe's reindustrialisation and will be far more effective than making already complex rules on public procurement even more complicated.

Recent developments in the Middle East are a stark reminder of our vulnerability to global energy shocks. Persistently high and volatile energy prices remain one of the biggest obstacles to investment and have a **detrimental impact on jobs**, as Eurochambres' 2025 Chief Economists report on the relationship between electricity prices and employment clearly illustrated.

Our businesses cannot afford uncertainty and rising costs.

The March European Council must therefore be a turning point: from discussion to delivery.

Eurochambres and the chamber network stand ready to help make that happen.

Because a non-competitive Europe is more than our businesses can afford.