



Mr Timo Harakka
Minister of Employment
Aleksanterinkatu 4
PO Box 32, FI - 00023 Government
Finland

24 September 2019

Dear Minister,

Message to the Competitiveness Council meeting on 26-27 September 2019

The next Competitiveness Council meeting will discuss how to develop Europe's economic base as part of a long-term strategy on sustainable growth. Having such a debate is essential at the start of a new European institutional cycle marked by increasing global trade tensions, the likelihood of a hard Brexit and rising downward risks for the European economic growth overall.

If the EU is to defend our European way of life and set an example to the rest of the world, we must maintain the competitiveness and economic sustainability of our European Union. The EU has to strive for economic sustainability, which is about the capacity of economies to generate economic growth over the long-term, as a precondition to generate the foundations for investment needed for social development and environmental protection. What we want to spend, we first need to earn. European companies are at the forefront of delivering sustainable solutions that can ensure prosperity, while taking care of people and the planet.

We cannot take Europe's achievements for granted. For BusinessEurope, the strengthening of the European economy requires to mobilise 4 main drivers of our prosperity:

- pursuing policies favourable to innovation and investment in Europe,
- defending the achievements of our Single Market and putting its further integration back at the centre of the EU agenda,
- continuing our efforts to further strengthen the Economic and Monetary Union in order to foster confidence in the Euro and provide a stable environment to investors,
- continuing with an ambitious and clear international trade policy to effectively fight the rising protectionism which threatens world growth and European exports.



This is why we expect the Competitiveness Council to take the leadership and concrete economic decisions on the key remaining factors of fragmentation of the Single Market (failures of services markets, balance between innovation and societal protection in digital economy, deficiencies of minimum harmonisation rules on consumer protection), to bring about the more strategic industrial policy requested by the European Council and prioritise R&D and skills investment both at EU level and in Member States.

BusinessEurope stands ready to provide all the necessary support to the Competitiveness Council in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

Markus J. Beyrer