

CEE-FEDERATIONS INITIATIVE MEETING
10 October 2014, Karlovy Vary, Czech Republic

13 October 2014

The list of participants is at annex.

1. Welcoming speeches by Mr. Stanislav Kázecký, SP Vice-President, and by Mr. Petr Kulhánek, Mayor of Karlovy Vary:

- Next year the CEE Initiative will celebrate the 10th anniversary.

2. Economic and political situation in the CEE countries:

- Participants exchanged information on the current economic and political situation in their countries, as well as the main challenges their federations are facing right now. Discussions covered in particular problems linked to the need of more structural reforms, high taxation on labour, latest political development following recent elections in some CEE countries, or description of the functioning of the social dialogue in some CEE countries.
- **Conclusion:** Key priority for the EU is to find solutions to support growth and investment, speed up reforms, decrease unemployment and bring new work opportunities particularly for the young people.

3. Changes in the European institutions:

- Participants exchanged information on the latest developments in the EU and its institutions. They shared the assessment of the situation, as well as the expectations from the new European Parliament and the currently being established European Commission, possible communication and lobbying channels.
- **Conclusion:** Participants agreed to coordinate cooperation with the members of the European Parliament. With the aim to address the “new” EU institutions it was agreed to organise a high-level CEE event in Brussels in spring 2015 where the CEE entrepreneurs and federations could communicate their priorities and recommendations to the EU leaders and decision makers for the new EU political cycle.

4. Ukrainian crisis/sanctions against Russia:

- Participants exchanged information on their assessments of the situation in Ukraine and regarding the EU sanctions against Russia. They outlined the ways how they communicate on this sensitive issue not only with national authorities but with the media and other partners as well. They shared their assessments on the economic impacts of the EU sanctions against Russia and the Russian counter-measure on their member companies.
- **Conclusion:** CEE member federations observe the impacts of the economic sanctions. If the sanctions continue for longer time, some enterprises could have serious problems linked to the loss of markets, deterioration of the investment climate etc. Therefore the European Union should help member states to reorient and diversify their export strategies, make new markets accessible and reinforce the European positions in those new markets. It should be also translated to more ambitious and responsible approach by the European Commission while negotiating new FTAs and CETAs.

Next meeting: It will be organised by the Croatian Employers Association (HUP) in Split on 28 May 2015.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS:

SP – Czech Republic:

- Mr. Stanislav Kázecký, Vice-President for Forreing Relations and European Union.
- Mrs. Vladimíra Drbalová, Deputy Director for international organisations and EU
- Mr. Tomas PirkI, Permanent Delegate to BUSINESSEUROPE

IV – Austria:

- Mr. Christoph Neumayer, Director General
- Mr. Gernot Haas, Permanent Delegate to BUSINESSEUROPE
- Mr. Michael Löwy, Head of International Relations

HUP – Croatia:

- Mr. Bernard Jakelić, Deputy Director General

RÚZ – Slovakia:

- Mr. Peter Molnár, Director General
- Mr. Martin Hošták, Permanent Delegate to BUSINESSEUROPE
- Mr. Jan Oravec, President of the Entrepreneurs Association of Slovakia

MGYOST – Hungary:

- Mr. István Wimmer, Secretary General
- Ms. Katalin Klajko, Project Manager

ZDS – Slovenia:

- Mr. Joze Smole, Secretary General