

Employers' Group

Newsletter October 2015

2015-2020 term: Seize the opportunity!

Dear Readers,

The Plenary Session of the European Economic and Social Committee on 6-8 October 2015 marks the beginning of its 2015-2020 term of office. The Employers' Group will begin the new term with significant changes to its membership – more than 40% of Members are newcomers who are now commencing their first mandate at the EESC. As Group President, I view this as a great opportunity. Our new Members will bring impressive professional experience and fresh points of view that they can contribute to the Group's work. Together with the colleagues who have served already longer in the EESC, they will form an outstanding team of professionals.

Throughout the previous term our activities focused on macroeconomic stability within the EMU and the EU as a whole. We argued for a competitive, integrated European Industrial Policy that provides businesses and the EU internal market the freedom to operate, along with sustainable growth and jobs. We also promoted the social dimension of the EU and – last but not least – Europe's position in the world with regard to free trade. All Members of the Group actively participated in forming our political priorities and this approach will certainly continue. I strongly support the continuation of work in areas such as EMU, better regulation,



energy policy, the digital agenda including Industry 4.0, entrepreneurship, SMEs and free trade agreements (FTAs).

The European Economic and Social Committee is the only body within the EU's complicated institutional structure that provides employers with an opportunity to express their views on EU legislation directly. We are keen to seize this opportunity by extending links with our European and national partner organisations. I would like to encourage all our partners to treat the renewal of our mandate as an opportunity to strengthen ties with the EESC Employers' Group further. We are willing to facilitate and provide employer feedback both on strategic long-term projects and specific legislative proposals.

The Members of our Group are professionals who are deeply committed to putting their own experience to good use in order to further the European project. As Group President, I would like to assure you that we will continue our efforts to make a greater impact and to improve the efficiency of our activities.

Jacek P. Krawczyk
President of the Employers' Group



Jukka Ahtela (FI)
Ahtela Consulting Oy



Octavian Cătălin Albu (RO)
Romanian National
Employers Organisation



Krister Andersson (SE)
Confederation of
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**Andrés Barceló
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Union of Steel Producers



Roger Martin Barker (UK)
Institute of Directors



**Josep Manuel
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Spanish Confederation of
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Spanish Confederation of
Employers' Organisations



**Helena De Felipe
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Spanish Confederation
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Slovak Agriculture and Food
Chamber



András Edelényi (HU)
Hungarian Chamber of
Commerce and Industry



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Irinel Eduard Floria (RO)
Employers Confederation
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**Antonio García
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Banco Santander



Ignacio García Magarzo (ES)
Spanish Association of
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Outlets and Supermarkets



**Marie-Françoise
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National Union of Liberal
Professions



Udo Hemmerling (DE)
German Farmers' Association



Michael Ikrath (AT)
Austrian Association of
Savings Banks



Evgeniy Ivanov (BG)
Confederation of Employers
and Industrialists in Bulgaria



István Komoróczy (HU)
COOP Federation



Thomas Kropp (DE)
Lufthansa Group



**Tellervo
Kylä-Harukka-Ruonala (FI)**
Confederation of Finnish
Industries



Linas Lasiauskas (LT)
Lithuanian Apparel and
Textile Industry Association

Meet the newcomers



Patrick Liebus (FR)
Professional Craft
Workers' Union



Colin Lustenhouwer (NL)
DELTA N.V



Alberto Mazzola (IT)
Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane



Peter Mihók (SK)
Slovak Chamber
of Commerce and Industry



Jarosław Mulewicz (PL)
Association of Employers
Business Centre Club



Vladimír Novotný (CZ)
Confederation of Industry
of the Czech Republic



Aikaterini Peppas (EL)
Union of Greek Shipowners



Janusz Pietkiewicz (PL)
Employers of Poland



Lech Pilawski (PL)
Confederation Lewiatan



Arnold Puech d'Alissac (FR)
Seine-Maritime farmers union



**Josep Puxeu
Rocamora (ES)**
Association of Soft Drinks
Manufacturers



Winand Quaedvlieg (NL)
VNO-NCW Netherlands



Gerhard Riemer (AT)
Federation of Austrian
Industry



Ulrich Samm (DE)
Forschungszentrum Jülich



**Karl-Peter
Schackmann-Fallis (DE)**
German Savings Bank and
Giro Association



Martina Širhalová (SK)
Federation of Employers'
Associations



Jože Smole (SI)
Association of Employers
of Slovenia



Katalin Süle (HU)
Hungarian Chamber of
Agriculture of Zala County



**Aristotelis Thomopoulos
(EL)**
Greek Tourism Confederation



Júlia Borbála Vadász (HU)
Confederation of Hungarian
Employers and Industrialists



John Walker (UK)
European Alliance
of Small Business



Tony Zahra (MT)
Malta Hotels and
Restaurants Association



Petr Zahradník (CZ)
Czech Chamber of Commerce

Sustainability as a driver for industrial development

by Tellervo Kylä-Harakka-Ruonala (Confederation of Finnish Industries)

As a new member of the European Economic and Social Committee, I am looking forward to the discussions and dialogue with colleagues on the future of Europe. Generating growth and jobs most probably lie at the centre of our common objectives.

Economic and human welfare requires prosperous companies, which again need a favourable investment and operating environment. This is why I want to work towards a supportive, encouraging and competitive European business environment. Today, it is imperative that economic growth is created in a way that minimises negative impact on the environment, climate and nature. Enterprises in all sectors are paying ever closer attention to environmental issues.

In addition, a growing number of companies practice "green business", i.e. they offer products, processes, equipment, services or business models through which the environmental impact of other companies, the public sector or consumers can be reduced. Consequently, companies provide society with solutions for a low-carbon and resource efficient circular economy – both through their own operations and by assisting their clients. In this way European companies can have a significant role in tackling global challenges, be they climate change, scarcity of energy and natural resources or increasing urbanisation.

Markets and demand are the main drivers of all business. Global sustainability challenges clearly create markets which drive business development and renewal. Political decision-makers, however, have

an important role to play, too. The decision-makers of the European Union are expected to provide companies with competitive business conditions for their operations, investments, technology development and trading.



"Doing good" is not a guaranteed roadmap to success for companies. Alongside markets and competences, factors of production must be available at competitive prices. Otherwise emissions, investments and jobs can "leak" to countries that don't have similar cost burdens. In order to ensure more equal business conditions and at the same time promote sustainable development globally, the EU has to focus efforts on achieving international agreements and rules, not least when climate change is concerned.

As a necessary production factor, energy lies at the centre of sustainable development. Moreover, energy production and consumption stimulate innovation – both technological and behavioural. Energy and material efficiency, together with efficient logistics, are essential when striving for sustainable industrial development. New added value is also being sought from "smart" solutions in the built environment.

All in all, I am enthusiastic about seeking keys to sustainable development. Traditionally we have strived for a balance between the economic, social and ecological dimensions of sustainable development. Today, I would like to be more ambitious and find solutions that bring a win on three fronts: a growing economy, better environment, and people's wellbeing.

My personal challenge for the next 5 years

by Martina Širhalová (Slovak Federation of Employers' Associations)

September 2015 brought great change into my life in the form of a challenge. Becoming a member of the European Economic and Social Committee is not something that can be taken for granted. Many people long for such an experience for years, and I am very glad to have been given this opportunity.

I have worked in the Federation of Employers' Associations of the Slovak Republic for several years, and this job is very important to me. I have been working since I was 18 years old, and I have had the opportunity to observe the work of the smallest employers as well as – in my current work – the largest.

I worked for two years in Slovakia as the Secretary General of the Slovak Economic and Social Committee. At meetings with secretary generals from all the Member States we discussed the problems, topics and opportunities that we encountered, which meant seeing one particular matter from several angles. Therefore I believe that being a member of the European Economic and Social Committee affords broader understanding, and in particular, for me, the chance to share the experience I will acquire in the Committee with colleagues at home.

In the European Economic and Social Committee, I would like to be a member of the Section for Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion, because I have studied this subject and I feel that I still have a lot to learn. It would be very interesting and above all appealing to me to become a member of the External Relations Section. Relations between the European Union and other countries are a very influential factor for employers and it is important to monitor them. The Federation of Employers' Associations of the Slovak Republic, where I work, has members for whom energy and transport are very important (as they are for every company). Regulatory policy and transport are often the subject of conferences and meetings where we deal with these topics in detail. Therefore, I hope that I can join the Section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society. I have high expectations as I start my work as a member of the European Economic and Social Committee and I will do my best to ensure a steady flow of information between Slovakia and Europe.

Newsletter of the Employers' Group

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