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EUROPE – RESPONSIBLE, DYNAMIC, GREEN AND SAFE!

From January to June 2012, Denmark presides over the Council of the EU and continues the tasks of the Trio Presidency: Poland - Denmark - Cyprus. The Danish presidency identified four fundamental priorities to ensure stable economic growth and political development of the EU: a responsible Europe, a dynamic Europe, a green Europe, and a safe Europe. To achieve these objectives, Denmark will seek to ensure a responsible European economy, lead discussions on the Multiannual Financial Framework for the period 2014-2020, create revitalised growth and employment in Europe, set a proactive agenda for promoting green and sustainable growth, ensure well-functioning Common European Asylum System and stronger Schengen cooperation and last but not least to support the strengthening of the EU's external and development policies. The Danish Presidency has to fight the gloomy economic situation in eurozone and find a solution for better EU economic governance, i.e. find an agreement on the proposal for the Treaty on Stability Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union kicked off at the European Summit in December 2011. Ensuring the financial stability of the euro area and taking forward the implementation of the measures agreed in December is also a priority of BUSINESSEUROPE, EUROCHAMBRES and UEAPME. European employers and entrepreneurs hope that the Danish presidency will safeguard the euro and stabilise the economic situation, ensure an efficient implementation of the twelve levers of the Single Market Act, promote youth employment and reduce skills gaps, encourage Member States to implement flexicurity reforms, and request from the EU to maximise export related to growth opportunities and ask for reciprocity

to promote European business interests abroad. In Particular the Confederation of Industry, Czech BUSINESSEUROPE member, has serious doubts about the feasibility of energy efficiency targets, voices high expectations for the competitiveness checks and supports evidence-based liberal approach to trade negotiations and prompt implementation of reasonable proposals in the Single Market Act. The Czech Chamber of Commerce, member of EUROCHAMBRES and UEAPME, requests a systematic exchange of views between Council working groups and the Commission on impact assessments, especially in case of substantive amendments proposed by the Council, concluding



the European patent discussion and a stimulation of SME financing and implementation of the "Basel III" capital requirements rules. Furthermore, together with UEAPME, the Chamber urges the Danish Presidency to make progress on the implementation of the Small Business Act by putting in practice the "Think Small First" principle and securing that all the specific SBA measures are put in place.

Farewell by Michal Kadera



After very challenging and inspiring 5 years spent in Brussels as Director of CEBRE and permanent delegate of SPGR to BUSINESSEUROPE, life offers me yet another professional challenge. While packing to move back to my new engagement in

automotive industry (SKODA AUTO), I look back at all the work done by our CEBRE team for our founding organisations and Czech companies in general with great pride: I believe the visibility of Czech business in Brussels has significantly increased through dozens of our events, seminars and conferences. We managed to raise awareness of Czech companies and associations

about the complexity of European decision making process and contributed to their on-going capacity building in European lobbying. Last but not least, I believe we managed to contribute to the smooth run of the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2009.

In 2012, CEBRE is celebrating its 10th anniversary. I wish my successor Alena Vlačíhová and the CEBRE team lot of energy and success. Using metaphor reflecting my new automotive engagement I can say: "the car is already being driven... not a FERRARI yet but a really nice one. We need to keep fuelling it, maintaining it and driving it safely..."

Yours faithfully, Michal Kadera

CEBRE was founded in 2002 by the three most important Czech business organizations - Czech Chamber of Commerce, Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic, Confederation of Employers' and Entrepreneurs' Associations of the Czech Republic with kind support of the Ministry of Industry and Trade via its Trade promotion agency CzechTrade.



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News FLASH

>LACK OF WOMEN IN THE MANAGEMENT POSITIONS

The Czech Republic lags behind Europe in the proportion of women in the management of large firms. According to the latest statistic of Deloitte, only 7.6 percent of board members of large Czech companies are women. The Czech along with Italy, Belgium and Germany is falling far behind for the rest of Europe.

>EIB FINANCES EXTENSION OF PRAGUE'S METRO NETWORK

The European Investment Bank (EIB) is lending EUR 350 million for the extension of the Prague Metro Line A in the north-west of the Czech capital. The 6.1km extension will include the construction of four new stations far from the current end-station Dejvická towards the Motol Hospital area. It will also ease the commuting of thousands of travelling to work every day.

>CUTTING RED TAPE BY 30% BY 2013

The Czech government wants to reduce the administrative burden for companies by 30% by 2013 and create a new website www.zjednodusujeme.cz for stakeholders to point out at burdensome legislation. Priorities of the Czech government in the cutting red tape agenda were presented in January.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

In October 2011, the European Commission published a Renewed EU Strategy 2011-2014 for Corporate Social Responsibility ("CSR") to set new definition and new agenda for action on responsible business. The Commission's proposal aims to boost economic growth, create new jobs, utilize positive impact of enterprises on society, and improve overall lack of trust to business. Commission's responsible business package includes the Social Business Initiative and proposals to revise the Transparency and Accounting Directives. The Commission put forward a new definition of CSR as "the responsibility of enterprises for their impacts on society". It also outlines what an enterprise should do to meet its responsibility. CSR is mainly a voluntary concept driven by companies themselves according to their business strategies and the needs of stakeholders; however the requirements for responsible business may vary among the EU Member States but also



at global level (UN, ILO and ISO guidelines). On 30th January, CEBRE together with the Representation of the European Commission and the Information office of the European Parliament held a debate on CSR in Prague. The speakers representing entrepreneurs, public administration and NGOs agreed that the CSR



From Left: Jaroslav Prachař of Korektní podnikání, a.s.; Ivo Jupa of CSR Consult; Petr Jonák of AWT Group; Pavlína Kalousová of Byznys pro společnost; Richard Falbr, Member of European Parliament

concept must remain voluntary. Richard Falbr, MEP and Member of the EP Employment and Social Affairs Committee said: "CSR shall not only be a concept applied in good economic times but a long term sustainable approach". Number of speakers stressed out their motivation to contribute to the development of Czech national CSR strategy that shall address specific national circumstances, differences of various industrial sectors and reflect on the positive aspects of the European strategy.

EESC CORNER – THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE BELIEVES IN THE ESF

The MFF has proposed to set aside €84 billion for the ESF over the period 2014 – 2020. In the current context of tight budgets, ensuring effective use of the EESF resources is surely an important item for discussion. The EESC has voiced its new opinion about the future of the European Social Fund, which was adopted by the SOC Section on January 25 and which passed to discussion at the plenary meeting. There is a very broad consensus about the mission and the scope of the ESF. The ESF should be the preferred instrument for implementing the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy, particularly with regard to employment, education, social inclusion and combating poverty. It should support the policies pursued by Member States under the Integrated Guidelines and the National Reform Programmes including Country Specific Recommendations. The EESC welcomes a valuable contribution of the ESF to the other priorities of the Europe 2020 as well – research and innovation, accessibility and use of ICT, increasing of the SMEs competitiveness, protecting environment, shift to the low carbon economy and sustainable use of resources. The EESC supports the approach adopted in the regulation, which focuses on four thematic objectives translated into intervention categories or investment priorities

and welcomes that funding concentration should ensure a sufficient and demonstrable impact. Efficient and effective implementation of actions supported by the ESF depends on good governance and partnership among all relevant territorial and socio-economic actors. The EESC feels that the partnership principle has a key role to play here, ensuring that the EU Structural Fund measures work properly. Regulations on Structural Funds must clearly define partnership principle setting out the role of each partner at regional and local level. The current way of consulting the social partners with the Member States within the ESF committee could provide a good example of an approach to be extended to all funds. From the EESC perspective, an important element has to do with the way in which social partners are involved in the development of the Operational Programmes at the national level. This also covers the issue of an access to ESF funds for social partner initiatives at the national level.



Vladimíra Drbalová,
The Confederation of Industry
of the Czech Republic,
EESC Member

Czech Ambassador to the EU with CEBRE met the Czech EESC Members

On January 17, H.E. Milena Vicensová, Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the EU and her Deputy H.E. Jakub Dürr met Czech Members of the European Economic and Social Committee and CEBRE to discuss the EU hot topics to be dealt with in 2012. In 2012, the Czech Permanent Representation will mainly focus on the economic governance and financial stability, Internal Market issues, multiannual financial framework discussion and in this context on the future of Cohesion policy and CAP reform, cutting red tape agenda after 2012, trade policy and many other issues. In these hard times, Milena Vicensová stressed the importance of the unity and close cooperation



among the Member States. In 2012, the EESC calls on politicians and Member states to focus on job creation, growth and leadership when tackling the most urgent crisis issues requiring the most rapid decision-making processes. The EESC wants to make the voice of civil society in the EU's debates and policy to be heard. In 2012, CEBRE representing the Czech business sector will continue to be involved in the EU legislative process. The Commission is dealing with so many dossiers that the business organisations have hardly time to examine and absorb it. "The EU proposals should be of a high quality rather than quantity", said Michal Kadera, Director of CEBRE.

CEBRE CALENDAR:

- CEBRE debate on ADR (Prague) – **February 14**
- CEBRE meets Czech companies at CzechTrade meeting (Prague) – **February 14 – 15**
- CEBRE debate on the European Year (Prague) – **March 13**

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