

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 3rd December 2008

Czech Presidency: Strong support to business confidence?

Czech Presidency claims to focus on removing barriers on the internal market. Business sector always supports such efforts. Nonetheless, how realistic such Presidency aim is? What exactly are the remaining barriers? Incoming Czech presidency requested two studies - one to be conducted by the European Commission on the impact of the 2004 enlargement, the other one by OECD on the internal market.



Business representatives, Members of the European Parliament and Czech officials of the incoming Presidency of the Council of the EU gathered in the Czech House on the 3rd December 2008 their view about the future economic development of the Union. Upcoming six-months will be marked by numerous challenges. Firstly, many actions and proposals have been initiated - some of them even achieved, under the French Presidency. Secondly, financial crisis had threatened the business confidence in Europe and stressed the need for better business environment. Thirdly, the mandates of both, the European Parliament and European Commission come to an end in 2009.

Internal market, better regulation, energy, innovation and industrial policy will be of great interest of the Czech Presidency, informed Jan PROCHÁZKA, Director of EU Affairs at the Ministry of Industry and Trade. European Commission and OECD, will release two studies during CZ PRES which will aim at identifying persisting barriers on the internal market and assessing potential benefits of its removal, and at analyzing the impact of 2004 enlargement on EU economy. Motto of the Czech Presidency „Europe without barriers“ should express this effort. Inherited agenda from the French Presidency will not suffer of lesser attention. CZ PRES will continue to look for a compromise for the European private company statute and Community patent and help the Member States to implement newly adopted measures such as the Small Business Act, Services Directive and possibly keep on working on dossiers such climate-energy package.

„Right cohesion between the Small business act and Commission's recovery plan helping businesses affected by the crisis must be found“, said Petr DOLEJŠÍ, competitiveness attaché from the Czech Permanent Representation to the EU. „Better regulation and „healthy“ internal market should enhance European economic activity“, added Dolejší. According to Ben BUTTERS from EUROCHAMBRES,„... both (better regulation and stronger internal market) are unfortunately missing in the Commission's recovery plan“.

Czech businesses represented by Vladimíra DRBALOVÁ from Confederation of Industry CR and Ivan VOLEŠ from the Czech Chamber of Commerce evaluate the priorities in a very positive way, supporting the point of view of their government. Attention to better business environment enhancing the competitiveness of European companies without creating new barriers is more than welcome. Although, controversial measures (often hidden behind the green „hysteria“) continue to be proposed. It could be partly due to a very diverse point of view of different Council formations. Many issues are linked to business environment, only some are discussed within the Competitiveness Council. *„For better functioning of the internal market and European economic development, Europe needs more horizontal than sectoral approach“, agree both, the Czech officials as well as businesses.*

The Business Breakfast was organized by CEBRE in cooperation with the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU and Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic.

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