

## BUSINESS NEEDS EUROPE-EUROPE NEEDS BUSINESS

### DRAFT PROGRAMME

10.00-11.30 Welcome coffee & Registrations

11.30-11.50 **OPENING**

- Martin Schulz, President, European Parliament
- Jean-Claude Juncker, President, European Commission
- Richard Weber, Chairman, EUROCHAMBRES

Master of Ceremony: Arnaldo Abruzzini, CEO, EUROCHAMBRES

11.50-12:40 **FIRST SESSION – TRADE**

The EU negotiates collective trade and investment agreements on behalf of its member states with third countries, CETA (Canada) and the TTIP (USA) being notable current examples. Representing the interests of the world's largest single market affords the EU negotiators a strong bargaining position at the trade negotiation table with other major global economies. This is crucial to our competitiveness given that 90% of world growth will be created outside the EU in the next 10-15 years, with 30 million jobs already dependent on EU exports. To maximize Europe's economic potential, especially that of its 20 million plus SMEs, coherent EU policies and measures on international trade are needed. These should complement initiatives at member state level and within the private sector through a comprehensive and coordinated strategy of European Economic Diplomacy.

Debate with MEPs

Voting session

12.40-14.40 **Networking lunch**

14:40-15:30 **SECOND SESSION – SINGLE MARKET**

The single market is in some ways the most sophisticated trade agreement on earth. As such, it is one of the EU's greatest achievements, even if the significant changes that it has delivered to EU citizens' everyday lives are sometimes overlooked. Nonetheless, it is far from complete or 'single'; feedback from SMEs suggests that the benefits aren't as perceptible as they should be. Moreover, digital technologies, by nature borderless, present new opportunities for business and new challenges for lawmakers. Various

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single market policy packages and strategies over the last decade have had little impact on the real economy. What needs to be done to convert the rules and political agreements on free movement of goods, services, people and capital into tangible improvements in the market place? How can we ensure that slogans like 'digital by default, open by default and cross-border by default' become a reality for entrepreneurs?

Debate with MEPEs

Voting session

**15:30-16:20**     **THIRD SESSION – CIRCULAR ECONOMY**

European businesses are increasingly impacted by the growing scarcity of raw materials and natural resources which are the basis for doing business. That is why it is crucial to achieve a fully functioning circular economy in which waste is promoted as a valuable key resource. However, turning our current linear consumption and production behaviours into circular ones will require profound behavioural changes. Consumers need to make well-informed purchasing decisions and producers require better access to secondary raw materials. The EU plays a pivotal role in driving these changes which present opportunities for increasing the competitiveness of European businesses, but also carry with them the risk of more administrative and financial burdens.

Debate with MEPEs

Voting session

**16:20-17:10**     **FOURTH SESSION – SKILLS**

It is widely accepted that Europe cannot compete with emerging economies on cost and that its advantages lie in quality and innovation. This makes access to a skilled, creative workforce a critical component in the European business model. It is thus worrying that the skills mismatch paradox persists, with levels of unemployment stubbornly refusing to fall in several member states, while many businesses struggle to recruit staff with the required competences. The refugee crisis and migration are additional factors in this complex situation. The role of the EU in this hugely significant socio-economic challenge is ambiguous. Education and training policy is largely in the hands of member states, yet several elements in the equation are by nature European, even international.

Debate with MEPEs

Voting session

**17:10-17:30**     **CLOSING**

- Donald Tusk, President, European Council (tbc)
- Representative of the Slovak Presidency of the European Union (tbc)

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