



3rd EDITION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT OF ENTERPRISES

DRAFT PROGRAMME

10.00-11.30

Welcome coffee & Registrations

11.30-12:00

INSTITUTIONAL OPENING

- President of the European Parliament
- President of the European Council
- President of the European Commission
- Richard Weber, President of EUROCHAMBRES

VOTING SESSIONS OF EPE:

12.00-13:00

FIRST SESSION - INTERNATIONALISATION

Presentation of the topic (a representative of business community)

In a year from now, 90% of global economic growth will be generated outside Europe. To remain competitive, it is essential that EU business seizes the opportunities from this external growth, and Europe can help in 3 ways. First, progress needs to be made to conclude ambitious trade agreements with key partners like the US, India, Mercosur or China. Second, with only 13% of SMEs engaged in international trade (outside the EU), further internationalisation efforts are needed. And finally, Europe needs a stronger voice in representing and defending our economic interests in third markets. A genuine European Economic Diplomacy needs to be developed. The challenge is *how* to develop that strategy effectively, in a genuine public private partnership.

Vote of the entrepreneurs on 1-5 questions

13.00-14.30

Networking lunch

14:30-15:20

SECOND SESSION - SKILLS

Presentation of the topic (a representative of business community)

The EU is confronted with a skills paradox: on the one hand, there are unprecedentedly high levels of unemployment - particularly among the young - in several member states. On the other, feedback from businesses indicates that identifying staff with the right competences remains problematic. As is often the case, this dilemma is felt particularly by SMEs, with the frequent need for very specific requirements compounded by a limited human resource management capacity. Although the picture varies significantly between member states and much of the political responsibility lies at national or regional level, there is a general view that the EU can and should contribute to addressing Europe's persisting skills mismatch.





THURSDAY 16 OCTOBER 2014

Vote of the entrepreneurs on 1-5 questions

15:20-16:10

THIRD SESSION - FINANCE

Presentation of the topic (a representative of business community)

Access to finance, a perennial challenge for businesses across Europe, has become an even more acute problem since the financial crisis of 2008 and ensuing economic downturn. Banks have become more risk averse and small businesses with minimal collateral to offer as well as young businesses with a limited track record are particularly unlikely to secure a loan on viable terms. Meanwhile, equity financing remains a relatively under-exploited method for generating the money needed for business development, despite the emergence of new trends such as crowd funding. This gloomy picture is exacerbated by the late payment culture among public administrations and between businesses that persists in many member states and further debilitates cash flow around the economy.

Vote of the entrepreneurs on 1-5 questions

16:10-17:00

FOURTH SESSION - ENERGY

Presentation of the topic (a representative of business community)

A key factor in the competitiveness of European businesses is the availability of reliable and affordable energy. This is particularly the case in more energy intensive manufacturing processes but high energy prices have an adverse effect on businesses large and small across the whole economy. The EU plays a pivotal role both in Europe's response to climate change and in ensuring competitiveness in the increasingly challenging global economy. A target was also set in 2012 that EU industry should by 2020 account for 20% of total GDP (the figure in 2014 is approx. 15%). Energy efficiency is, in this context, of growing importance to European businesses, as is an appropriate policy framework that strikes the right balance between climate change and competitiveness targets.

Vote of the entrepreneurs on 1-5 questions

17:00-17:15

CLOSING REMARKS BY ITALIAN PRESIDENCY