

Sir,

The European Union continues to face an unprecedented set of challenges, including migration, security and economic recovery, as well as the UK's forthcoming referendum on its EU membership.

Business is an essential part of the solution to many of the challenges facing the EU but companies need a strong and globally competitive European economy. We therefore want to see a more competitive EU – a key pillar of the UK's negotiations on its EU membership – which will be beneficial for citizens across the continent.

There is a strong business consensus on the ambitious reforms needed at the EU level to boost jobs and growth, supplemented by ongoing structural reforms at the domestic level. The EU must improve the functioning of the Single Market, particularly in services and digital; sign more high-quality trade deals; and take a better approach to regulation.

It's also in all our countries' interest for the Eurozone to prosper. However, we recognise that not all Member States wish to be part of a drive towards further integration so non-Eurozone countries should have their position in the wider single market safeguarded.

The EU has shown signs of progress on reform and we are calling on Europe's leaders to use the European Council on 18th and 19th February to hardwire Europe's competitiveness agenda for future prosperity.

Looking ahead to the UK's forthcoming referendum, it is for the British people to decide the outcome but European business strongly supports continued British membership of a European Union that takes the necessary reforms to be competitive, outward-looking and continue delivering growth, jobs, peace, security and prosperity for all.

Carolyn Fairbairn, Director-General, CBI (United Kingdom)
Reinhard Göhner, Director-General, BDA (Germany)
Markus Kerber, Director-General, BDI (Germany)
Marcella Panucci, Director-General, Confindustria (Italy)
Michel Guilbaud, Director-General, MEDEF (France)
Christoph Neumayer, Director-General, IV (Austria)
Pieter Timmermans, CEO, FEB (Belgium)
Dagmar Kuchtová, Director-General, SPCR (Czech Republic)
Jyri Häkämies, Director-General, EK (Finland)
Akis Skertsos, Director-General, SEV (Greece)
Danny McCoy, CEO, IBEC (Ireland)
Vitalijs Gavrilovs, President of LDDK (Latvia)
Osvaldas Čiukšys, Director-General, LPK (Lithuania)
René Winkin, Director, FEDIL (Luxembourg)
Kevin J. Borg, Director-General, Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry (Malta)
Lech Pilawski, Director-General, Polish Confederation Lewiatan, (Poland)
António Saraiva, President, CIP (Portugal)

Jan Oravec, Member of Presidium, RUZ (Slovakia)

Joze Smole, Secretary General, ZDS, (Slovenia)

Carola Lemne, Director-General, Swedish Enterprise (Sweden)

Niek Jan van Kesteren, Director-General, VNO-NCW (The Netherlands)