

BUSINESSEUROPE



# A EUROPE WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

● A BUSINESS AMBITION FOR 2030

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# A EUROPE WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

## A BUSINESS AMBITION FOR 2030

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Together, Europe's countries, companies and citizens have built the European Union, an achievement we can truly be proud of. It has made the European way of life possible, brought prosperity to Europeans through a common market and allowed Europe's countries to strengthen the continent's relations with the rest of the world.

Business has empowered this European way of life by investing, creating jobs and making the economy grow whilst providing products and services responding to the needs and desires of citizens and consumers.

For the future however, Europe's achievements must not be taken for granted. The world is changing rapidly and profoundly. We need to rise to new challenges both politically and technologically. We should acknowledge that what we are witnessing today is not just another era of change, but a change of era.

Business can and wants to be part of the solution whether we talk about the development of new technologies, the best use of digitalisation and data, or paving the way for a low-carbon and resource-efficient society. It is not only about addressing societal challenges but also about taking leadership in handling them.

Our ambition for 2030 is that we achieve:

- An EU that is strong and setting the agenda in the world;
- An EU that is a global leader in innovation, digitalisation and sustainability;
- An EU that is functioning efficiently; and
- An EU that is economically cohesive amongst and within member states and socially inclusive.

In realising these goals, we must address our weaknesses. This will require joint and substantial efforts from all of us. As global alliances shift and populism rises, we must restore confidence in the European project and remain united to achieve political, economic and social progress, living up to the core values the EU stands for.

This paper presents our ambition for the European Union in 2030 and sets out what is needed to create the right framework conditions to enhance competitiveness and entrepreneurship and enable business to play its role, in the interest of society.

The future is built today and we stand ready to work on it.



**Pierre Gattaz**  
President



**Markus J. Beyrer**  
Director General

# 1. THERE IS NO WAY LIKE THE EUROPEAN WAY OF LIFE

## The EU means respect for ...

- human dignity
- freedom
- democracy
- rule of law
- human rights
- solidarity

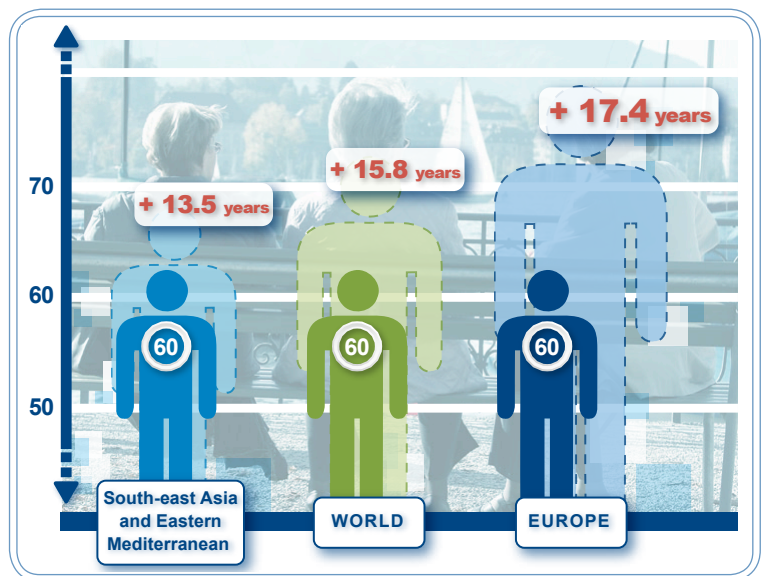
**Peace, freedom and democracy.** Today, these great achievements are basic elements of our everyday life.

We have all been enjoying peace in the EU for over seven decades, a historical record. We live in free democratic societies where we can think and speak freely. In large parts of the world, many would like to be protected by the values the EU defends. We combine global competitiveness with high standards in terms of labour, consumer protection and the environment.

The EU is one of the most **equal societies** in the world. We are the world champion of investment in social welfare. Social protection spending in the EU is 25% higher than in the United States and over five times the global average. 80% of workers in the EU are covered by unemployment insurance in comparison with 30% in the rest of the world. **We live better and longer in Europe** than in many regions in the world – we are the region with the longest healthy life expectancy.

We can travel quickly through the Schengen area; our borderless **single market** allows for worker mobility and doing business in a simpler way across the EU. Our citizens are talented. Students can study abroad through the Erasmus programme. The euro is used in most EU member states, making transactions easier, less costly and less risky. We have great assets when it comes to innovation, technology and digital.

Our history and traditions are rich, and the **cultural heritage** we have built over centuries is rooted in an unmatched diversity of cultures and languages. This is the source of our creativity and it is protected by our common European values and freedoms.



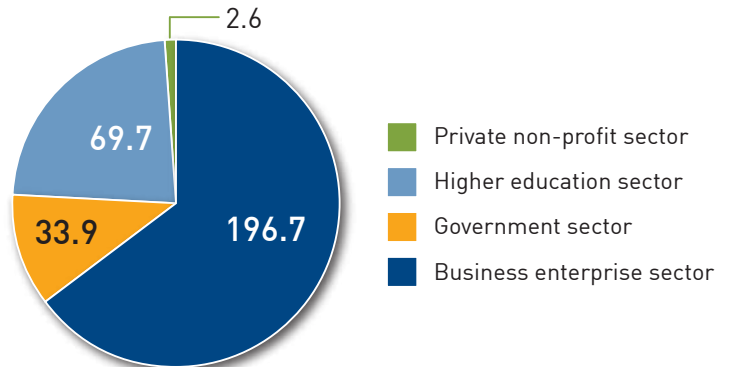
**THE EU HAS BEEN INSTRUMENTAL  
IN MAKING OUR WAY OF LIFE WHAT IT IS TODAY.**

## 2. BUSINESS IS EMPOWERING THE EUROPEAN WAY OF LIFE

**Companies are the backbone of Europe's current and future prospects.** Entrepreneurs invest, create jobs and make the economy grow whilst providing products and services responding to the needs and desires of citizens and consumers. Business and entrepreneurship play a unique and essential role in shaping the European way of life, alongside governments and other societal actors.

- The private sector accounts for 80% of all jobs in the EU.
- In 2016, companies in the EU invested almost €200 billion in research and development.
- In 2015, companies spent more than €50 billion on vocational training in the EU.
- In 2016, businesses paid over €2 trillion of taxes in the EU, making an essential contribution to providing welfare to those in need and to investing in key infrastructures like schools, hospitals and transport.

**Investment in R&D by sectors in 2016**  
(in billion euros)



Source: BusinessEurope calculations based on Eurostat



Companies are constantly innovating and developing solutions to **societal challenges** such as health, mobility, climate protection, food security and resource efficiency.

Our society is on the threshold of multiple disruptive changes. We are not entering another era of change, but a real change of era. In the future – as it has been the case in the past – business is ready to provide responsible solutions.

Companies need the right conditions if they are to continue playing their role in society. In a new world with geopolitical tensions and geo-economic competition, the EU must invest more in its own capacities and help empower its companies to face tomorrow's world and the challenges ahead.

**THIS IS WHY THE COMPETITIVENESS OF OUR COMPANIES MATTERS.**

### 3. THE EUROPEAN WAY OF LIFE IS CHALLENGED

#### Key global challenges

- New conflicts and security threats
- Shifting relations with longstanding allies
- Rise of authoritarianism and weakening of democracy
- Isolationism and populism
- Protectionism
- Climate change
- Cybersecurity risks
- Fierce strategic technological competition
- Shaping competition in a fast-changing digital world

#### Key business challenges

- Fragmentation of the single market
- High costs of doing business
- Overregulation
- Investment and innovation gap
- Skills gap
- Economic, regulatory and political uncertainty
- Risk aversity
- Digital transformation

#### Key EU challenges

- Euroscepticism and disrespect of the rule of law
- Slow decision-making and divergence of national interests
- Lack of convergence and cohesion
- Unequal distribution of the benefits from increased prosperity
- Ageing population
- Illegal migration
- Energy dependency

**WE MUST ACT IF THE EU IS TO CONTINUE DELIVERING ON CRUCIAL HUMAN NEEDS: SECURITY, EMPLOYMENT, PROSPERITY, FREEDOM, HOPE AND PRIDE.**

## 4. BUSINESS IS COMMITTED TO TRANSFORMING CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES

**Success will be defined by our ability to transform challenges into opportunities. European business is committed to playing its part and to taking leadership in handling societal challenges.** The EU has enormous resources and potential. Business, governments, the EU institutions and all other stakeholders must collaborate to unleash it. Working together, the EU social partners are well placed to address challenges faced by employers and employees and design balanced measures and pragmatic solutions to deliver economic and social progress for all.

### **BUSINESS IS COMMITTED TO CONTRIBUTING TO EUROPEAN AND GLOBAL PROGRESS:**

- Companies invest in **research, innovation and technology** to invent the products and services of the future and make the EU a standard-setter in key enabling technologies.
- Companies find technological solutions to **combat climate change**, reduce CO<sup>2</sup> emissions and deliver the United Nations sustainable development goals.
- Companies embrace **digitalisation** to develop the digital champions of the future.
- Companies bring **investment, expertise and skills** in partner countries to contribute to economic development throughout the world.
- Companies bring technological solutions to address security threats and **promote peace**.
- Companies produce the technology to **secure the external borders** of the EU, combat illegal immigration and safeguard free movement.
- Companies develop solutions to improve **energy efficiency** and develop cleaner sources of energy to contribute to protecting the environment and ensure self-sufficiency in this key strategic sector.
- Companies promote **European values** throughout the world when trading and investing and help shape globalisation in accordance with our values.

### **BUSINESS IS COMMITTED TO CONTRIBUTING TO SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT:**

- Companies generate the **wealth** that is distributed to various actors in society.
- Companies **create jobs** to integrate people in society and provide them with an income to support themselves and their families.
- Companies provide the **goods and services** to bring about fundamental societal transitions.
- Companies contribute to the **vocational training** of citizens, notably by welcoming apprentices, to prepare people for future jobs.
- Companies every year generate large **tax revenues** that are channelled into welfare programmes and invested in key public services.
- Companies help integrate **legal migrants** to ensure that those having the right to stay and work in Europe bring a positive contribution in their host country.
- Companies promote **corporate social responsibility** to encourage ethical and sustainable business and optimise their contribution to local communities.
- Companies champion the **importance of the EU**, the values it protects and the benefits it brings.

**THE EU WITH ITS SINGLE MARKET IS THE SPINE OF OUR DAILY BUSINESS OPERATIONS. THIS IS WHY WE SHOULD CHERISH, PROTECT AND NURTURE ITS ACHIEVEMENTS.**

## 5. BUSINESS CAN ONLY DELIVER IF THE RIGHT CONDITIONS ARE IN PLACE

If the European Union is to defend our European way of life and set an example to the rest of the world, we must maintain the competitiveness and economic sustainability of our project. **Companies play an active and fundamental role in society and can do even more if the enabling conditions are in place.** This means completing the single market, simplifying our regulatory framework, strengthening our economic and monetary union, developing the right skills, and living up to national reform responsibilities.

In our ambition for Europe in 2030, we aim for:

### A) An EU that is strong and setting the agenda in the world



- In 2030, the EU has the political, economic and technological capacity to be on **equal footing with other major players** in the world, which allows for good and productive relations with the rest of the world, based on respect and mutual interest.
- In 2030, Europe is in the driving seat of a global and **rules-based free-trade network**, having countered protectionist trends successfully at the global level. The benefits of trade are clearly understood, and widely shared among businesses, consumers and workers alike.
- In 2030, the EU has successfully contributed to the **reform of the World Trade Organisation** and a more effective international trading order. Europe has a strong and united voice on the global political stage and in multilateral fora; it is equipped with a credible capacity to act swiftly with a single voice.
- In 2030, Europe is an active leader in tackling **global challenges**, ensuring global agreements on major issues, such as climate change, securing a level playing field for all key players.
- In 2030, the EU and the **UK** have retained a deep economic, political and security partnership, whilst safeguarding the integrity of the EU single market.
- In 2030, the EU has developed its relations with major partners:
  - Transatlantic relations are strong, and obstacles to trade and investment have been removed. The longstanding alliance with the **USA and Canada**, striving for peace, open markets and democracy, has a new impetus.
  - The EU has modern partnerships with **neighbouring countries**, with deeper ties, depending on the country's specificities. Relations with other countries like Russia are anchored in mutual respect and respect of international rules.
  - The EU and **Africa** have a mutually beneficial economic relationship as part of a comprehensive continent-to-continent free-trade agreement. African countries are strongly integrated in regional and global supply chains. European companies invest to develop key infrastructure and support innovation in Africa.
  - The EU and **China** have a balanced partnership, ensuring that European and Chinese companies compete on an equal footing and have expanded areas of cooperation and support of multilateral rules.
- In 2030, the EU controls illegal migration inflows through an efficient **border security** system for the EU's external borders.
- In 2030, the EU is the most **cybersecure** space across the globe, due to coordination of national responses to cyber-threats and advanced measures that limit cybercrime and cyber-enabled, state-funded industrial espionage.
- In 2030, the EU has the capacity to respond swiftly to **external security threats** based on agreed frameworks and rules. A functioning and effective common security and defence policy is in place.

## B) An EU that is a global leader in innovation, digitalisation and sustainability



- In 2030, overall EU **investment** surpasses that of major competitors as a proportion of GDP. The EU has developed a balanced approach to risks and opportunities, making the EU a global technology and innovation leader, and a standard-setter in key enabling technologies.
- In 2030, the EU is at the forefront in **Artificial Intelligence** development and application (robotics, automotive, manufacturing, sanitary tools, space and defence technologies).
- In 2030, the EU competes on an equal footing with other major players in the **digital sector**, thanks to an adequate legislative environment, right skills, and the necessary investments in infrastructure in very high-speed broadband.
- In 2030, the EU has acquired a competitive edge in the field of **new technologies** by having developed solutions to incorporate European values in these technologies.
- In 2030, the EU has successfully reduced **greenhouse gas emissions**, with fair and proportionate efforts across the whole economy. A level playing field has been reached with major trading partners which converged with the EU's level of ambition, making it possible to reach global goals.
- In 2030, the EU has achieved a truly **circular economy**, with enhanced symbiosis among sectors, as a strategy to use resource more efficiently, reduce emissions and maintain security of supply.
- In 2030, the EU has a real **energy internal market**, accomplished by fostering interconnections, energy flows and management across borders, allowing for greater competition, security of supply and competitive prices. Europe is also able to secure reliable and competitively priced low-carbon energy for its companies and citizens.
- In 2030, the EU presents the best combination of first-class **industry** with services of excellence, in a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem of SMEs and large companies, placing itself as the top industrial hub in the world proving the success of the EU industrial strategy over the past decade.
- In 2030, the EU's workforce has developed the right **skills** for the labour market, with Europe nurturing the greatest talents in the world and attracting skilled talents from the entire world.

## C) An EU that is functioning efficiently



- In 2030, the EU has reached over eight decades of **peace**, with the support of the European project, which continues to offer alternative ways to resolve conflicts.
- In 2030, the EU has achieved a fully functioning **single market**, without barriers, allowing for the free movement of goods, services, capital and people, as well as for the free flow of data.
- In 2030, the EU has sustained growth and sustainable public finances and has addressed unemployment.
- In 2030, the **Economic and Monetary Union** is robust and complete; the euro is strong, stable, resilient and is the most widely used reserve currency as well as the most used as means of settling international payments.
- In 2030, the EU has strong, efficient and accountable **institutions** and effective procedures to cooperate with member states, allowing for faster and better decision-making.
- In 2030, the principle of **subsidiarity** is fully respected and action at the EU level is only taken where real value and common benefits can be delivered.



- In 2030, the EU **social dialogue** has evolved to address concrete issues for employers and workers; it respects the different national industrial relation systems and contributes to finding solutions to everyday challenges. Capacity-building projects supported by the European Commission and by appropriate frameworks at national level have led to the development of autonomous social partner organisations throughout the EU.
- In 2030, the EU has achieved a modern and future-proof **regulatory framework**, with effective enforcement and monitoring mechanisms to ensure proper transposition, implementation and compliance at national level.
- In 2030, the EU has a healthy **enterprise environment** for companies of all sizes, based on an EU competition policy which supports growth and investment, maximises consumer trust and affords European companies the best opportunities to compete globally.

## D) An EU that is economically cohesive within and amongst member states and socially inclusive

- In 2030, the EU's **youth** are empowered by prospects for the future thanks to a vibrant and dynamic labour environment, supported by modern national education and training systems, offering **apprenticeship** schemes which better meet employers' skills needs and encourage companies to invest.
- In 2030, the EU has transformed into a much more **cohesive** area, where real economic convergence has been significantly enhanced both between and within countries.
- In 2030, the EU has made very significant progress in closing **the gap** between regions. All European territories are able to compete by scaling up and exploiting their capabilities.
- In 2030, all member states have made important steps towards modern **social systems** that can withstand the challenges of demographic change and are economically sustainable for future generations, ensuring social safety nets for those most in need.
- In 2030, **cooperation and unity** among member states are fostered on a daily basis and decision-makers, stakeholders, business and citizens actively defend and promote the European project at local and national level.

TO ACHIEVE ALL THIS, COMPETITIVENESS AND INNOVATION NEED TO BE ENSHRINED AT THE CENTRE OF EU DECISION-MAKING.

IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING GLOBAL LANDSCAPE, WE MUST REMAIN UNITED TO ACHIEVE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SUCCESS AND PROTECT THE CORE VALUES THE EU STANDS FOR. WE HAVE THE CHOICE BETWEEN SUCCEEDING TOGETHER OR BECOMING INSIGNIFICANT SEPARATELY.

WE ARE EUROPEAN BUSINESS. THIS IS OUR AMBITION FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION IN 2030.

# BUSINESSEUROPE



**BusinessEurope** is the leading advocate for growth and competitiveness at the European level, standing up for companies across the continent and campaigning on the issues that most influence their performance. A recognised social partner, we speak for all-sized enterprises in 34 European countries whose national business federations are our direct members.



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