



## CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

Contributions of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ) to the further development of the European Union:

WKÖ calls for measures for a competitive & resilient, sustainable, digital & innovative business location Europe.

## A COMPETITIVE AND RESILIENT EUROPE

### Deepening the Single Market, making it more resilient and larger

- Ensure **free circulation of goods, workers and services** even in times of crisis
- EU-wide **electronic notification system for the provision of services** – reduce notification obligations and create query options for authorities
- Introduce a **strategy for securing skilled workers** by promoting mobility within Europe and focusing on education and training, position the EU as destination for international talents
- Establish and finance **efficient Trans-European Transport Networks**; simplify EU social legislation relating to road transport
- Advocate a **credible enlargement strategy** and communicate the EU's role more strongly

### Actively shaping trade policy

- Create and implement better market access and modern trade rules through the **WTO** and **further EU trade agreements** with key trading partners
- **Secure supplies of key raw materials and intermediate products**; agree on trade facilitation for **new technologies** (for ex. environmental technologies)
- Promote information on the **importance of international trade** for prosperity and jobs; provide **explanations** of international trade rules **tailored to SMEs**; simplify **rules of origin**
- Implement **reporting and auditing obligations** as well as liabilities along the value chain with a **sense of proportion** and on a voluntary basis

### Guaranteeing Europe's open strategic autonomy, crisis resilience and security of supply

- Further develop the principles of **open and fair trade** and avoid protectionist tendencies
- Improve the **safeguarding, diversification and resilience** of international value chains; **reduce the EU's dependencies** and strengthen Europe as production site in important areas

### Creating a European Health Union involving businesses

- Use EU funding programmes for supporting the development and **commercialisation of research results** by companies in the **health sector**
- Secure **patent protection** as an important pillar of any research activity

### Strengthening the rule of law by including the economic dimension

- Create a new, **legally binding** and easily accessible **system of protection for investors** from EU Member States

### Cutting red tape for businesses

- **Reduce existing burdens**; respect the **"Think Small First" principle** in all legislative proposals; use technically simple possibilities for necessary data collection

### Securing sustainable public finances

- **Balanced public finances, transparency and simplification** as the main goals of the reform of the EU's fiscal rules; further steps of the euro area towards a debt union not reasonable; maintain the existing **EU own resources system**

### Advancing work on the capital markets union

- Further strengthen **risk capital** as an important factor for innovation and for securing competitiveness; accelerate **investment** in retirement schemes via the **capital markets**
- **Secure credit financing** as the main external form of financing for SMEs and preserve the diverse banking structure in Europe

## A SUSTAINABLE EUROPE

### Consistently advocating climate neutrality on a global level

- Extend the Paris climate agreement by introducing **a global CO2 price** and prepare the ground for this with a climate alliance of leading industrial nations
- Strengthen industry protection against carbon leakage with sufficient **free certificates in the emissions trading system** until a level playing field has been achieved
- **Establish energy partnerships** with economic areas
- In revising the **Energy Taxation Directive**, support companies for the transformation towards a low-carbon economy in the best possible way

### Supporting the decarbonisation of transport

- Provide more **EU funding for alternative fuels and transition technologies** and for associated infrastructure, further develop rail transport
- Shift **transport from third countries** at EU external borders to low-carbon or carbon-neutral modes of transport; cut red tape in rail transport; address transit in an economically compatible way also at EU level

### Securing energy supply and making licensing procedures fit for climate-friendly projects

- Ensure sufficient **generation capacities** and a **massive expansion of electricity grids, simplify** and accelerate **licensing procedures**

## A DIGITAL AND INNOVATIVE EUROPE

### Pushing forward the development of key enabling technologies in Europe

- Step up **research and innovation activities** in key enabling technologies such as AI or nanotechnology
- Promote the **commercialisation of results generated by research and innovation activities** inside the European Research Area

### Strengthening framework conditions for innovative companies and the innovative power of SMEs

- Support the use of **regulatory sandboxes** under the supervision of a regulator
- Design **intellectual property management** in an optimal way for promoting innovation
- Enable participation in funding applications with **little administrative burden** and **access to publicly funded research infrastructures**; extend **financing opportunities for SMEs, start-ups and spin-offs** with high-risk innovation projects

### Considering data as a strategic resource and enhancing their accessibility

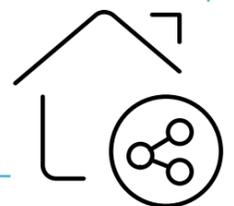
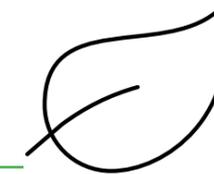
- Make **public sector datasets** accessible for innovation activities; support companies in the development of innovative data-based business models
- Accelerate the **deployment of high-performance broadband infrastructure**

### Strengthening the European Cybersecurity Economy

- Make the **development and preservation of European know-how** a matter of priority for European funding programmes
- **Adapt EU procurement rules** or interpret them in such a way that European suppliers are given a winning edge

### Promoting Digital Education

- Promote digital education **on all levels of education** and implement the **EU Skills Agenda** with regard to digital skills



## INSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS

- Focus more strongly on the **uniform application, implementation and enforcement** of existing legislation
- Maintain **unanimity in areas sensitive to Member States**, for ex. taxation including energy taxes, social security and social protection, management of water resources, choice of energy sources
- Pay greater attention to the **principles of subsidiarity, proportionality and the rule of law**
- Use **delegated acts** and implementing acts **more restrictively**



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