



To the members of Coreper 1

(by email)

10 June 2024

Dear Ambassador,

I am writing to you ahead of the Coreper discussion on 12 June 2024 on the proposal made by the Belgian Presidency to endorse the La Hulpe declaration on the occasion of the EPSCO Council meeting on 20 June 2024.

For BusinessEurope, social progress can only be built on competitiveness and growth and all European policies must be mobilised to reverse the decline in Europe's competitiveness. Ensuring that Europe's social agenda answers both companies and workers needs is essential because without growth and competitive companies, there will be less jobs and less welfare.

We are fully committed to help shaping the social dimension of the strategic agenda for the EU in 2024-2029 and, for us, a successful European social agenda supports growth and employment in our Single Market. It is an agenda that focuses on making the cake bigger by tackling the labour and skills shortages that are holding us back. It is an agenda that moves away from a predominantly regulatory approach to social policy and focusses on promoting mobility in our Single Market and addressing labour shortages and skills mismatches. It is a social agenda that respects member states competences as well as social partners competences, in line with the horizontal and vertical dimension of the subsidiarity principle defined by Jacques Delors. It is a social agenda which is part of a master plan to improve competitiveness, stop Europe's deindustrialisation and address the key factors creating investment leakage. It is a social agenda that ensures that the EU social dimension helps to build a productive and prosperous Europe.

Unfortunately, despite the intensive dialogue we had with the Belgian presidency, the La Hulpe declaration remains ambiguous on the fact that, in our EU social-market economy, social progress can only be based on economic progress. It is too detailed and still hints at a regulatory route that cannot lead to reverse the decline in productive investment in Europe and halt the erosion of our industrial base on which many quality European jobs depend. Therefore, we remain opposed to the proposed endorsement of the La Hulpe declaration by the EPSCO Council on 20 June 2024.

Yours sincerely,

Markus J. Beyrer