

Conclusions

by the Heads of Delegations of the Committees on Economics of the Parliaments of the Visegrad Countries

We, the Committee on Economics of the Parliaments of the Visegrad Countries, having met in Budapest on 7-8 February, 2018 under the Hungarian V4 Presidency stress the active participation of the V4 countries in the debates on the future of the EU. This region, which is the engine for Europe's economic growth, also contributes significantly to the competitiveness of the EU. We consider it important to respect the guarantees stipulated in the Treaties of the Union, to safeguard the integrity of the internal market and the four fundamental freedoms.

Amending the Posting of Workers Directive

We are convinced that sustainable economic growth in the Union's single market is primarily created through efficient, innovative and competitive businesses.

We believe that fair competition is not threatened by posting, which is the existing regulation of the special legal institution embodying the freedom to provide services, but by undeclared employment, and therefore we believe that EU action should also have been aimed at curbing this.

We agree that the situation of the road transport sector demands particular attention and special treatment, given that drivers are not posted but are considered to be mobile workers. Owing to the nature of their activity they often cross Member State borders.

We consider it necessary to develop EU rules for the transport sector that reflect the interests of the industry, which do not restrict the competitiveness of Member State enterprises, which are not an obstacle to the supply chain, furthermore do not lead to a price increase detrimental to consumers and to the disappearance of European jobs.

The next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)

Recalling that the fundamental aim of the EU is to create a secure environment for its citizens and to provide an appropriate future vision for coming generations and bearing in mind that in recent years the European Union has faced several crises that have undermined these very fundamental objectives, we emphasize that security, defence and migration are new challenges that require firm action at the EU level. However, in addition to these tasks, we should not overlook challenges related to industrial transformation and digitization, which nowadays receive less mention due to the favourable macroeconomic environment.

We believe that the debate on the future of the EU, which will determine common long-term goals, will be defining in the process of designing the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). The post-2020 MFF should reflect the jointly defined political priorities. When designing the MFF, we have to first define common policy objectives with EU added value and only then determine and provide the necessary resources. We are of the opinion that greater attention should be paid to the current challenges, to defence, to the control of the external borders and to the root causes of migration when defining priorities. However, this cannot weaken traditional policies adopted with a view to achieving long-term strategic goals. Accordingly, financing for new policy areas should be secured from new resources and not by reappropriating existing ones. It will also be necessary to provide for the replacement of resources that will disappear due to the UK leaving the EU. The additional burden resulting from this increase should be borne by each Member State in proportion to their economic performance.

We are convinced that the traditional policies - cohesion policy and common agricultural policy - laid down in the Treaties have demonstrated their European added value. The common agricultural policy provides safe and high-quality food supplies, while cohesion policy accelerates the convergence process, improving the functioning of the internal market and ultimately the competitiveness of the EU. In the past few years Visegrad countries have achieved economic growth that is significantly higher than the EU average. Reducing the role of traditional policies and increasing national co-financing rates within cohesion policy and its introduction in direct agricultural subsidies would undermine the very objectives of these policies set out in the Treaty. We believe that the possibility of suspending these resources because they are linked to policies that are different from the original goals, would also jeopardize the success of the programs.

We welcome that the Bulgarian Presidency of the EU Council treats as priority that the Cohesion Policy and the Common Agricultural Policy should preserve their key role in the EU. We are looking forward to the exchange of views regarding the future of these policies.

We underline that the period of MFF must ensure the time frame necessary for implementing long-term programs. With this in mind, we support the idea of continuing with the seven-year period.

We agree that Brexit offers a unique opportunity to reform the revenue side as well. In this process, transparency and simplification have to be a priority.

Signed in Budapest, on 8 February 2018

On behalf of:



*Committee on National Economy, Agriculture and Transport
Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic*



*Committee on Economic Affairs
Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic*



*Committee on Economics
Hungarian National Assembly*



*Economy and Development Committee
Sejm of the Parliament of the Republic of Poland*



*Committee on National Economy and Innovativeness
Senate of the Parliament of the Republic of Poland*



*Economic Affairs Committee
National Council of the Slovak Republic*