

Mr Xavier BETTEL
President of the Council of the European Union
4, rue de la Congrégation
L-1352 Luxembourg
Luxembourg

Mr Donald Tusk
President of the European Council
European Council
Rue de la Loi, 175
B-1048 Brussels

Copy to:

Mr Mark Rutte, Prime Minister, the Netherlands
Mr Robert Fico, Prime Minister, Slovakia
Mr Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission

Brussels, 12 October 2015
CEEP/2015-130

Dear President Bettel, dear President Tusk,

You will soon chair a Council meeting taking place at a timely moment for Europe. The so-called “refugee crisis” is indeed questioning Member States and even more European citizens as a whole about: what kind of Europe do we want and how far are we ready to commit to it. This question can be formulated also concerning the other important items on the agenda, notably the future of the EMU.

Public services employers and providers are ready to contribute as much as they can, within their remit of actions, to creating the right recipes for a strong Europe in both of the abovementioned issues. Namely:

A collective strong response to the refugee crisis

The refugee crisis threatens every day to reveal to all EU citizens the cracks which have appeared in the European solidarity. We call the European Council of 15 and 16 October to demonstrate their capacity to show a shared will to address this challenge and reaffirm as such the fundamental values of Europe.

While all answers cannot be provided at EU-level, a European response is indispensable in order to allow a smooth management of refugee flows at national and local level. As important actor of the economy, employers and providers of public services are aware of their responsibility in tackling this

CEEP is one of the three general cross-sectoral European Social Partners. It gathers public and private providers of services of general interest from across Europe. CEEP members contribute to more than 26% of EU GDP and employ 30% of the EU workforce.

challenge. Public services infrastructures such as efficient and effective public administration, housing, healthcare and education infrastructures are much needed assets to welcome and ease the integration process of refugees. At the same time public services have also been challenged by the gaps in the refugee crisis management at EU level.

While the arrival of hundred thousands of refugees will challenge the organization of European societies, including the provision of public services, we should remain conscious of the potential added value of supporting their integration, for instance as a key means to curbing the EU demographic trends and ensure better funding of pensions.

A reinforced coordination of the EU economic governance

We welcome the endorsement of the five president's report by all heads of the EU institutions. For CEEP, it is a forward looking political signal and strong indication that a political will exists to deepen cooperation on crucial challenges calling for a European solution. At a time when the political will for further integration seems limited, it is the right step forward to focus reform efforts where they are needed the most namely to make fiscal policy strongly counter-cyclical. This is a prerequisite to build the reinforced political legitimacy we need within the European economic governance, to make it the tool we need to avoid stagnation and head towards convergence.

Important achievements have been reached on the European semester process. We now need to build on the momentum created by the publication of the five president's report to also achieve a political consensus around it's the four pillars.

In particular, in order to induce a real sense of ownership of the European Economic Governance, CEEP calls for a comprehensive definition of competitiveness, encompassing factors such as: macroeconomic fundamentals, labour market policies, innovation and investment in R&D, business environment including infrastructure, skills, education and training, labour cost and high quality public services. We also call for the Member States to fully include or take stock of the expertise and role of the social partners when designing the mandates of competitiveness authorities, notably as key actors assessing employment and social performances.

To conclude, public services employers and providers represented in CEEP are fully committed to supporting you in facing the key challenges Europe is confronted with today.

Yours Sincerely



Hans-Joachim Reck
President



Valeria Ronzitti
General Secretary