

Concept note

Extraordinary Employers' Group event
16 May 2025 - Warsaw (Poland)

Time to unlock a security-driven competitiveness

In recent years, our businesses have operated in less stable, less predictable and less safe global environment. Yet, at the same time, global economic integration has never been deeper. This paradox is particularly evident in the complex interplay between the EU, US, and China.

The EU finds itself navigating between its long-standing ally, the US, which under Trump has adopted a drastic protectionist stance, challenging traditional alliances and global trade norms. At the same time China has been expanding its global economic influence through initiatives like the Belt and Road. The EU, meanwhile, seeks to maintain open trade relations while also protecting its strategic interests and fundamental values. This has led to a delicate balancing act, with the EU working to reform the WTO, negotiate bilateral trade agreements, and develop tools to fight unfair trade practices and foreign subsidies.

In this context, **economic flows and security have become increasingly intertwined**. This is why the EU is eyeing a number of measures to protect its markets and economies and recently launched the **Competitiveness Compass, based on three business imperatives—innovation, decarbonisation and security**.

For the EESC Employers' Group, comprehensive security encompasses several dimensions: defence capacity, civil and societal preparedness, external border security, health and environmental security. But also safeguarding food security and the role of producers. Furthermore, economic security is a crucial aspect of overall security, addressing risks related to trade and investment, energy, raw materials and infrastructure, technology—from AI to space, clean tech to biotech -and intellectual property rights, as well as business freedom.

Since the beginning of the year, the Commission has proposed a number of initiatives, not least a simplification of the regulatory framework to free people and businesses from unnecessary burdens and overly complex rules to unleash opportunities, innovation and growth for a secure, prosperous EU.

The goal of the Extraordinary Employers' Group meeting in Warsaw (Poland), co-organized with Polish employers' organisations (BCC, Lewiatan, Pracodawcy RP, ZRP, ZPP) and the Polish Ministry of Development et Technologies, will discuss some of these foreseen initiatives and measures. The event will seek to align the vision with tangible actions, with the aim to improve competitiveness and resilience, strengthening the EU open strategic autonomy.

DRAFT PROGRAMME

8:45 – 9:00	Registration
9:00 – 9:25	<u>Official opening</u> - Words of welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stefano MALLIA, President of the EESC Employers' Group
9:25 – 9:40	<u>Keynote speech</u> – The Polish presidency of the EU <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michał Jaros, Secretary of state
9:40 – 11:00	<u>Thematic session: Strengthening EU open strategic autonomy</u> <p>To reduce excessive dependencies and increase security, the EU seeks to diversify its sources of critical raw materials and reduce reliance on third countries. The Competitiveness Compass calls for the creation of strategic trade alliances, with a focus on new partnerships in clean trade and investment, which will secure the global supply of raw materials, clean energy, sustainable fuels for transport, and clean technologies. Within the internal market, public procurement rules will be reviewed, enabling the introduction of European preferences in public contracts for critical sectors and technologies, ensuring that European companies are the main beneficiaries of key projects.</p> <p>Moderated by Dominika Csosic (European correspondent, Euronews)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Katarzyna Smyk, European Commission, Head of the Representation in Warsaw (TBC) Academic representative/Expert Dr. hab. Grzegorz Brona, CEO of Creotech Instruments S.A. Aleksander Siemaszko, Polish Presidency – Ministry of the Economic Development and Technologies, Department of Trade and International Cooperation (TBC) <p><i>Q&A with the audience</i></p>
11:00 – 11:20	Coffee break
11:20 – 12:40	<u>Thematic session: Dismantling barriers to unlock competitiveness</u> <p>To reduce excessive dependencies and increase security, the EU seeks to diversify its sources of critical raw materials and reduce reliance on third countries. The Competitiveness Compass calls for the creation of strategic trade alliances, with a focus on new partnerships in clean trade and investment, which will secure the global supply of raw materials, clean energy, sustainable fuels for transport, and clean technologies. Within the internal market, public procurement rules will be reviewed, enabling the introduction of European preferences in public contracts for critical sectors and technologies, ensuring that European companies are the main beneficiaries of key projects.</p> <p>Moderated by Dominika Csosic (European correspondent, Euronews)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Borys Budka, European Parliament, Chair of Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (TBC) Academic representative/Expert Henryk Orfinger, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of DR IRENA ERIS S. Bartolomiej Banaszak, Polish Presidency – Ministry of the Economic Development and Technologies, Director of the Department of European Affairs <p><i>Q&A with the audience</i></p>
12:40-13:00	<u>Closing session</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wrap-up by Tomasz Wróblewski, Member of the Employers' Group Closing by Sandra Parthie, President of the EESC INT section
13:00– 14:00	Walking lunch buffet