



**Press Release**

Budapest, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2011

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## **Director General of BUSINESSEUROPE deliberates with Ministers of State and leaders of BusinessHungary on key tasks of the Hungarian presidency**

**During his visit to Budapest, BUSINESSEUROPE's Director General held exchanges with the Ministers of State from the Ministry for National Economy, the director of European Institute of Innovation and Technology along with the members of BusinessHungary's presidium concerning the situation of SMEs and the opportunities for stimulating European innovation as well as research and development. In the discussions, Philippe de Buck and Dr Péter Futó agreed that the European Union needs business-centred innovation policies to match the innovation results of the USA and Japan.**

Director General of Brussels-based BUSINESSEUROPE, the continent's biggest employer confederation, Philippe de Buck undertook a short visit to Budapest on 1 March. During his official visit, the head of the international organisation conferred with the representatives of BusinessHungary: with President Dr Péter Futó, Co-President Dr Péter Vadász, Vice President Dr Ákos Niklai along with István Wimmer Secretary General. Furthermore, Mr de Buck had meetings with Minister of State for National Economy Ákos Cséfalvay, Minister of State for Employment Policy Sándor Czomba, and with Dr Ronald de Bruin, Acting Director of the Budapest-based European Institute of Innovation and Technology.

The head of BUSINESSEUROPE came to Hungary to discuss the major issues of the informal Competitiveness Council which is to be held in Budapest from 11 to 13 April. Philippe de Buck also overviewed the preparations for BUSINESSEUROPE's Council of Presidents (COPRES) that is to be organised this June and which is, according to the organisation's tradition, always hosted by the member confederation of the rotating presidency country.

During the meetings the participants stated that the defence and the stimulation of SME growth can be achieved in the most effective way by executing the European Small Business Act. According to the recommendations of BUSINESSEUROPE and BusinessHungary, the EU should put emphasis on the policy plans for the European Private Company (EPC) as well as on cutting administrative costs and on making it easier for SMEs to enter international markets. *"The competitiveness of the EU depends on the competitiveness of its SMEs. The growth of SMEs should be our first priority. This means that the 'Think Small First' principle should be at the centre of decision-making"* said Philippe de Buck.

*"Endeavours by the EU to create a knowledge-based economy coupled with competitiveness can help SMEs to advance"* explained Dr Péter Futó, Vice President of BUSINESSEUROPE, President of BusinessHungary. *"Improving innovation results is a major factor in the strategy of the European Union considering that in this field both the USA and Japan are ahead of Europe. So the Hungarian presidency has now the opportunity to make a success of the innovation policy since one of its crucial parts, the EU patent system, can be finalised after ten years under our presidency"* he added.

Before BUSINESSEUROPE's Council of Presidents that is to be held in Budapest between 9-10 June, Philippe de Buck and Dr Péter Futó will have the opportunity to emphasise the need for a competitive SME sector and to evaluate the Hungarian EU presidency in an informal way at the European Business Summit which will be organised in Brussels this May.

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**BusinessHungary** (Confederation of Hungarian Employers and Industrialists), established in 1902, represents more than 60% of Hungary's private sector in terms of invested capital, revenue and employee numbers. BusinessHungary comprises 6,000 enterprises and corporations along with 15 regional and 51 professional federations. BusinessHungary has been a member of BUSINESSEUROPE since 2005.

**BUSINESSEUROPE**, established in 1958, is Europe's most influential employers' organisation. It comprises 40 confederations in 34 countries, including 20 million companies that employ a total of 106 million people, from small-scale enterprises to multinationals. BUSINESSEUROPE appointed Dr Péter Futó Vice-President from 1 July 2010.

**Dr Péter Futó**, Professor of Mathematical Sciences, graduated from Eötvös Loránd University majoring in Mathematics. In the 1990s Fundy, founded by the businessman, was one of the leading candy and sweets manufacturing companies of Hungary and the region as well. After selling Fundy in 1999 he founded Futureal Group with his son, who is also a mathematician. Futureal is an estate developer and investor company which became the tenth biggest estate developer of Europe in ten years (PropertyEU Jan/Feb 2010). Futureal's Corvin Promenade received European Commercial Property Award and it was also selected the best mixed-used development project in Europe (International Property Awards, September 2010). Péter Futó is the head of Futureal Group, President of the Confederation of Hungarian Employers and Industrialists and Vice-President of BUSINESSEUROPE.

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