



Your voice.
Your interests.
Your future.

Mr Donald Tusk

President of the Council
Rue de la Loi 175
B-1000 Bruxelles

Copy to:

Mr Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission

CEEP.16/021
Brussels, 23 June 2016

Dear President Tusk,

The upcoming Council meeting will be of capital importance for the future of the European Union. Together with the leaders of the Member States, you will initiate the discussions following the outcome of the UK referendum.

The Council will also address pending challenges, namely the refugee crisis and the discussions on the future of the European economic governance.

In this letter, we would like to present to you the recommendations of our members, employers and providers of public services, who have a direct role to play with regard to many of the issues at stake.

Migration and Integration of Refugees

The issue of migration and integration of refugees has already been addressed in a joint statement of the European economic and social partners (CEEP, ETUC, BUSINESSEUROPE/UEAPME, EuroChambres) addressed to the EU leaders in March 2016, at the occasion of the Tripartite Social Summit and Spring Council.

It is particularly evident as regards migration and integration how important strong public services are: Our members, providers of public services mainly operating at regional and local level, are on the front line. They provide health, housing, education and water provision services, as well as a wide range of services of general interest. They do so in their capacity as providers of Services of General Interest.

Also, as employers of public services, our members are part of the solution concerning the integration of migrants and refugees into labour markets. The workforce of public services is quickly ageing. This situation will call for the recruitment of many high- and low-qualified employees in core sectors such as waste management, transport, energy and health services. Assessing, testing and screening skills and competences is a cornerstone for the inclusion into EU labour markets, and must go hand-in-hand with the organisation of integration courses, housing, language classes and other education and training measures in the Member States.

Some of our members are also active in third-country activities, exporting their know-how to third countries, thus helping to rebuild the necessary infrastructure of essential public services and to combat the reasons people leave their countries.

Therefore, we call upon the EU leaders to sign up for the Migration compact and to integrate public services' providers into their considerations.

In terms of financing we believe that one way to do so is to use the flexibility built in the Stability and Growth Pact to deal with the fiscal consequences of the refugee crisis.

Jobs, Growth and Investment

CEEP very much welcomes the call from the European Commission to expand the lifetime of the European Fund for Strategic Investment beyond its original 3-year span. The shift of paradigm from blind austerity to sustainable investments brought about by the Jean-Claude Juncker and his team of Commissioners should support the economic recovery we have been witnessing for about 12-18 months.

We encourage the Council to endorse the positive assessment proposed by the European Commission regarding the first outcomes of the Investment Plan. However, we believe that more should be done to directly support public services' infrastructures. Contributing to 26% of EU GDP and more than 30% of EU employment, public services and services of general interest are key actors in the EU economy, enabling private businesses' competitiveness and the European prosperity.

The EIPP and the Investment Plan as a whole must now exploit the full potential of investments in public services, including in social infrastructures and human capital. Those are fields where private sectors alone will not naturally see an immediate return in investment and hence the specific need to create a favourable climate for investment in those fields.

UK Referendum

CEEP takes note of the outcome of the UK referendum with quite some regret, although respecting of course the statement of the majority of voters. The Council Conclusions need to be decisive and firm in leading the way forward to a strong and united Europe. EU leaders can count on the contribution and full support of public services' employers and providers in that direction.

CEEP is and will always remain an open platform for exchange and cooperation and this will represent an important benchmark to establish a new type of relationship with UK and, when it comes to our organisation and community, with CEEPUK. Furthermore, CEEP's members are important intermediaries between the EU institutions and Europe's citizens. Future debates about European politics will have to be handled in an honest and differentiated manner, when discussing the responsibilities for political outcomes. Members States also have a huge responsibility in communicating about EU policies which they urgently need to take. CEEP will support an in-depth and differentiated debate not only at European level but equally at national level, with the help of its members.

Having members all over Europe, CEEP can play an important role in supporting you in those challenges. We encourage you to make use of that role and of the intrinsic capacity and obligation of public services' providers to respond to citizens' needs: this is an invaluable asset at a time when the European project is clearly under strong pressure.

Yours sincerely,



Katherina Reiche
President



Valeria Ronzitti
General Secretary