

# Recommendations

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## Executive Summary



As an introduction to this publication, the **Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce would like to begin by extending its best wishes** to the European institutions in their **future endeavours**. We are convinced that the **new European Commission** and the **new European Parliament** that are about to take office will continue to build on the successes of their predecessors and that they will manage to navigate the European Union (EU) through these times where Europe is faced with numerous challenges, both internally and externally. The EU of today and its institutions are the result of European integration, starting with the Treaty of Rome, then the implementation of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), the introduction of the Common Currency, and the implementation of the Common Market and its four freedoms.

## Prerequisites

The conditions for **a Europe that continues to thrive** include an EU that works on its institutional issues and on its internal political governance. It is also essential that the EU ensures sound policies regarding its macro-economic governance in order to promote the deepening of the EMU, the implementation of clear rules for the euro area, as well as efficient competition and fiscal policy rules that establish level playing fields. The European Semester should continue to provide a framework for the coordination of economic policies that allow for businesses to grow but also for Europe to develop further on a social and societal level, for example by way of the Social Scoreboard. All this will be extremely beneficial in helping the EU and its Member States to prosper continuously and to benefit further from the opportunities offered by the single market. We would like to underline the necessity of making sure that legislative measures do not represent an (additional) administrative burden for our companies.

We are in favour of a **strong EU**, which is why we would hereby like to emphasize that we advocate the principle of subsidiarity, meaning that there should be clear-cut distinctions between what should be decided on an EU-wide scale and what should be dealt with on a member state level or even by collaboration on a regional level, or an enhanced cooperation, which in our view brings dynamic development on an overall societal level and thereby helps foster economic development.

We are in favour of **a Europe that speaks with one voice** externally and that takes a stance on geopolitical topics and defends free trade and the multilateral trading system in order to ensure the best possible outcome for European companies.

Equally, Europe should be strong internally in order to be able to play an important role on the international scene. This includes providing a predictable business environment. In this respect, we call for quick closure of the BREXIT file and the advancing of consolidated EU foreign policy positions.

Hereafter, we shall present you with the **topics we hope policy makers will tackle during the period 2019-2024** so that we can all advance as a European Union, and in particular so that our **companies can benefit** and our **economy flourish**. Our suggestions below are broken down into **five thematic areas**, bringing up what we identify to be of **major concern for our companies**.

We firmly believe in the European Union and we cherish its accomplishments so far. We are, however, convinced that it is via additional *prima facie* small steps, jointly conducted by the EU, the Member States and the citizens, that we can all go further, thereby realising the full potential of the European project.

### Carlo Thelen

*Director General*

Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce

# A Europe that supports business – Entrepreneurship

# 1.

**Within the coming five years, the European Union shall provide an environment that helps companies thrive, multiply and simplify the ways in which they conduct business.**

Indeed, the welfare and high standards of living that European citizens enjoy stem from, and are highly dependent on, business activities relying on entrepreneurial spirit.

This is why institutions and legal representative bodies alike must **provide European companies with the environment they deserve and need**: a predictable, stable, and rewarding environment.

In order to achieve this, **cutting red tape and reducing bureaucracy in general and administrative and legislative demands** in particular for our European companies is a must. An **initiative such as the regulatory fitness and performance (REFIT)** programme and its platform already constitute beneficial steps in the right direction.

Looking at the **recommendations of the SME Envoy Network**, putting an emphasis on **a vigorous and forward-looking EU policy for small and medium-sized businesses** is of essence. Since roughly 99% of all companies across EU Member States are SMEs, a focus on their needs is primordial. They are indeed the backbone of the European economy and the first provider of quality jobs.

Accordingly, putting forward a **Small Business Act (SBA) 2.0** in order to place SMEs at the heart of all economic policies and initiatives to help them better face current and future challenges in an ever-changing environment like the one that presents itself today is beneficial to business. But it is also good for the European Union as a whole.

In this context, keeping in mind the **'Think small first' principle** seems essential. Especially for SMEs, numerous topics are crucial and decisive when it comes to their business success. If small and medium-sized companies find themselves obliged to comply with the same standards as bigger companies or to systematically pay for external advisor expertise given the complexity of the regulatory environment, this can mean a considerable burden on their business.

Helping to **ensure competitiveness of European companies** is also a prerequisite for a thriving European economy. **Ex-ante competitiveness and impact checks** therefore need to be implemented **in regard to every legislative act ('SME check')**.

Among other issues concerning SMEs, there is for instance the necessity of adequate **access to finance**. SMEs often find themselves equipped with less capital than desirable in order to conduct business sustainably. Favourable bank conditions could be beneficial.

The EU programme for the **competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (COSME)** already in place helps SMEs to access finance in all phases of their lifecycle – creation, expansion, or business transfer – by facilitating the provision of guarantees, loans, and equity capital. Furthermore, it might be beneficial to increase the financial means of this programme, worth EUR 2.3 billion over the period 2014-2020.

SMEs might additionally experience **difficulty in finding and retaining qualified employees**, and should consider **training** the employees they already have and thereby developing internal skills and knowledge. In the context of highly qualified labour, enabling common European integration policies will be crucial.

Another field in which SMEs have more difficulties than bigger companies can be identified. Surely, there is a certain **digital divide** between **companies according to the size of a business** meaning that many SMEs do not yet have access to all the benefits stemming from digitalisation and the progress already achieved in this area, be it for financial or other reasons, such as awareness or skills to implement digital solutions and apply them on a day-to-day basis. Initiatives should be designed so as to help companies navigate the challenges imposed *inter alia* by digitalisation and globalisation.

In order to help **further develop the European economy internally** and to **boost its ties with our partners abroad**, investments that **aim at fostering ecosystems** are crucial so as to drive innovation across the EU and meet R&D targets. These ecosystem investments are **valid for companies in general** but **even more so for SMEs and startup systems** that are still more fragile than established companies and therefore need even more support.

Finally, the European Union should be expected to **further conclude trade and investment agreements** and to set an example, thereby **making European standards global standards**, which in turn helps install a level playing field.

It will be only via a policy-mix that keeps companies' concerns at heart that the European Union will continue to thrive and SMEs will successfully implement the digital and environmental transition.



### Link ad 1)

#### Challenges for SMEs:

Qualified employees: Technopolis report:  
<http://mobilisesme.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/MobiliseSME-Final-Evaluation-Report.pdf>

# A Europe that is fully integrated – Single Market

2.

**The deepening of the integration within the EU so that citizens and companies fully benefit from the advantages of the Economic and Monetary Union as well as of the Single Market continues to be a highly relevant issue that constantly needs to be managed.**

The 'cost of non-Europe' was estimated to be at EUR 1.75 trillion per year in a 2017 study by the European parliamentary research service. It is precisely in digital matters, energy, and services that earnings foregone and the added value of Europe are most obvious.

Furthermore, it is necessary to **complete the Single Market** by **doing away with all barriers** hindering the **free flow of goods, services, capital, and people within the EU**, thereby achieving a barrier-free Single Market.

The advantages that are the **four fundamental freedoms** also need to be further developed but even more so, they need to be communicated to the public by the European Union more effectively. It may be especially true for a country like Luxembourg with comparatively less internal demand than the **Single Market within the EU that provides for access to an economic and catchment area with almost half a billion consumers**, but this goes for every European country to a greater or lesser extent.

What exactly **is expected** to happen **concerning the Single Market** within the **upcoming term of the next European Commission**?

First of all, the **free movement of goods must be completed**.

Currently, there are still **barriers such as unilateral policies** and procedures and unnecessary red tape that **hinder the free flow of goods**. The results of policies that for instance force companies to order through specific supply chains at artificially high prices limit offers for customers and finally – since it has a **detrimental effect on their business activity – reduce competitiveness** of European companies compared to their peers on an international level.

Also, **limited harmonisation of legislation** poses problems in this context. In this respect, mutual recognition might be a first step before full harmonisation.

A revision of the **rules concerning competition across the EU** and being governed by regulations such as the one on vertical agreements and restraints is recommended in





order to prevent distortions within the European market concerning full competition amidst Member States and European companies.

Secondly, the **Single Market** also needs to be **improved when it comes to the services area** – the free flow of services clearly must increase.

**The creation of new barriers to the free flow of persons** such as **unilateral demands of additional administrative forms and procedures by Member States** in the context of the posting of workers on the other hand is indeed rather detrimental. In this context, the facilitation of the **transnational provision of services in line with the posting of workers directive** will be essential.

Future design of policies should be **in line with the provisions of the services directive** whose objective is to remove legal and administrative barriers to free trade within the EU.

This will also be achieved by facilitating all the reporting duties that companies have in this context. Companies should for instance be able to register and fulfill other administrative procedures electronically concerning their services offers – this would help **reduce administrative burdens on companies** and at the same time **enable filing and electronic enquiries on a European scale** where appropriate.

**Facilitating teleworking**, especially for border workers, would further enable the free flow of persons.

Other freedoms should also continue to be developed in order to achieve a fully integrated Single Market. In terms of investment, a well-functioning protection system should be put in place.

In order to achieve the Single Market and to spread its benefits equally, **cooperation between the regions** within Europe is also important, which is why tools such as the **Interreg programme** need to be further developed and promoted and the results and achievements better communicated to the public.

Since supporting European companies is crucial in order to complete the Single Market, initiatives that actively **promote European business**, such as the **Enterprise Europe Network**, should be fostered further. Additionally, the institutions should make sure that there are no structures existing parallel to these initiatives.



## Links ad 2)

### I. General links:

- The Economist on the European Single Market: <https://www.economist.com/leaders/2019/09/12/why-europes-single-market-is-at-risk>
- European Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS): 'Mapping the cost of non-Europe, 2014-2019', [http://europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/603239/EPRS\\_STU\(2017\)603239\\_EN.pdf](http://europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/603239/EPRS_STU(2017)603239_EN.pdf)

### II. Further develop integration:

- Four freedoms: <https://www.ft.com/content/49dc02dc-c637-11e7-a1d2-6786f39ef675>

### III. Promoting the four freedoms – Doing away with barriers:

- Free movement of goods: BENELUX position: <https://www.cc.lu/actualites/detail/restrictions-territoriales-de-loffre-le-benelux-interpelle-la-commission-europeenne/>
- UEL: « Remaining barriers to the Internal Market”: [https://uel.lu/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Entraves\\_MI-Consultation-Avis\\_UEL\\_14-11-12.pptx.pdf](https://uel.lu/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Entraves_MI-Consultation-Avis_UEL_14-11-12.pptx.pdf)

# A Europe that innovates – 3.

## Digitalisation & new technologies

**The European Union should continue to further foster innovation regarding digitalisation and new technologies, thereby accompanying and facilitating companies' endeavours in improving Europe's competitiveness in the global digital economy, which in turn ensures, as well as increases, the continent's technological autonomy.**

Europe must now build upon and further improve an already well-functioning framework for companies in order to create incentives for them to innovate. In this respect, considering the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises which differ from those of bigger companies is paramount.

These goals can be achieved by **boosting investments in research and development** in order to identify future relevant policy fields but also to **expand** in areas that are already today identified as highly pertinent for our present and future development – these policy fields comprise *inter alia* **digitalisation, super-computing and Artificial Intelligence (AI)**. Concerning the latter, it is essential to install large-scale reference testing and experimentation facilities for artificial intelligence hardware, software, components, systems, and solutions.

In general, the European economy should be shaped more and more according to the imperatives of digitalisation, meaning **policies** in this area should be **in-keeping with the strategies** as laid out in the **Digital Single Market** strategy and the **Small Business Act**. The latter should be prioritised and even completed by making considerable progress within the mandate of the next Commission.

In order to be able to invest in advanced technologies, **Europe's ICT infrastructure** in general must be built even further, **broadband network construction** intensified, and no region should be left behind in this respect. **Blockchain service infrastructure** should be largely available to larger and smaller companies alike - including startups.

As in other policy areas, Europe needs to put in place the right measures in order to consolidate itself and put strong, well-functioning policies in place internally, in order to then be able to relate to international partners. In the context of digitalisation, it would be advantageous to see the European Union become a **digital innovation hub** that connects to other hubs worldwide.

Another topic crucial for Europe's development within the coming years is **open data** of which the use and sharing should become **habitual to companies and public administration** alike.

Public administration should not only **aim at sharing data openly** - also **big data** - but also **at reducing the administrative burden on companies in the field of digital services** – procedures should be standardised across Europe. This would help build identical framework conditions for companies across the EU.


**Digitalisation should be promoted on numerous levels in society** – be it within companies or amongst the general public. As foreseen by the **Commission's action plan on education**, training citizens in this respect (upskilling/reskilling) is crucial.

Furthermore, all **potential gaps** between **big companies** on the one hand and **small and medium-sized companies** on the other hand when it comes to all matters digital should be reduced. In general, a **focus on SMEs regarding digitalisation is highly recommended**. SMEs should be well integrated in networks that promote innovative development in general and digital development more specifically. SMEs need to be protected in the global market concerning digitalisation so that they do not fall behind big companies.

**E-commerce** represents something very beneficial for SMEs since it helps them further extend their network relatively easily and with comparably smaller means. Consequently, everything that helps foster e-commerce and that eliminates **barriers such as geoblocking** for instance, is extremely welcome. In this respect, an evaluation of the e-commerce directive in line with the regulatory fitness and performance (REFIT) programme would also be appreciated. In general, the **implementation of e-procurement tools** on an EU-wide scale would also be highly beneficial.

The **Digital Europe programme** as proposed by the Commission and adopted under the Multiannual Financial Framework for the period 2021-2027 with an allocated budget of EUR 9.2 billion should be widely used in order to **generate added value in the field of digitalisation**, to boost investments in the areas mentioned above, as well as to advance digital skills and ensure the use of up-to-date technologies on a society-wide scale, with a special focus on the inclusion of SMEs.

The **Horizon Europe programme** needs to be given further means to tackle global challenges, raise European competitiveness and promote the policies essential for SMEs which could benefit first and foremost from the building of European innovation ecosystems, as foreseen by 'Pillar 3 – Innovative Europe' but also from a 'widening participation and spreading excellence', as well as from 'reforming and enhancing the European R&I system', as stated in the missions of the Horizon Europe programme.

A woman and a man are looking at a glowing blue digital interface. The interface features a map of Europe with various data points and lines. The woman is on the left, and the man is on the right. The background is dark, and the interface is illuminated with blue light.

Regarding cybersecurity, the European Union should create a 'Cybersecurity Competence Centre Network' and **follow up on the legislative works concerning the Cybersecurity Act**. Additionally, procedures and policies as well as the implications stemming from this legal act should be communicated more extensively to the public.

Concerning further legislative acts, a follow-up and the implementation of measures as foreseen by **the directive on the use of digital tools and processes in company law** and further communication on the matter is recommended.

Innovation - and digitalisation more precisely - has to be embedded in a legislative framework that needs to become all the more elaborate since technological changes demand highly evolved legislation. In this respect, **GDPR** is the regulation that is at the **heart of modern data protection law**. Other legislative acts that build upon the GDPR directive, such as the e-privacy directive, require adaptations in order to meet legislative needs but also to provide the frameworks for trading without having to deal with even more barriers. An **interconnected economy** has to be able to **transfer data safely** within the Single Market but also to third-country markets. The other legislative piece ensuring online privacy – the current **e-privacy directive** – should henceforth be equally designed in order to **best fit the needs of companies**, especially of SMEs.

### **Links ad Chapter 3)**

#### **I. General links concerning digitalisation:**

- European Digital SME alliance: <https://www.digitalsme.eu/digital-single-market-smes-enablers-digitalization/>

#### **II. Open data:**

- Discussion on the new EU directive (availability of public sector information): <https://www.apitalks.com/blog/the-new-eu-directive-on-open-data/>

#### **III. SMEs – Possibilities and barriers when it comes to digitalisation:**

- Discussion of the geoblocking regulation by Elvinger Hoss Prussen: <https://www.elvingerhoss.lu/publications/regulation-eu-2018302-geo-blocking-now-applicable>



# A Europe that acts responsibly – Responsible Economy 4.

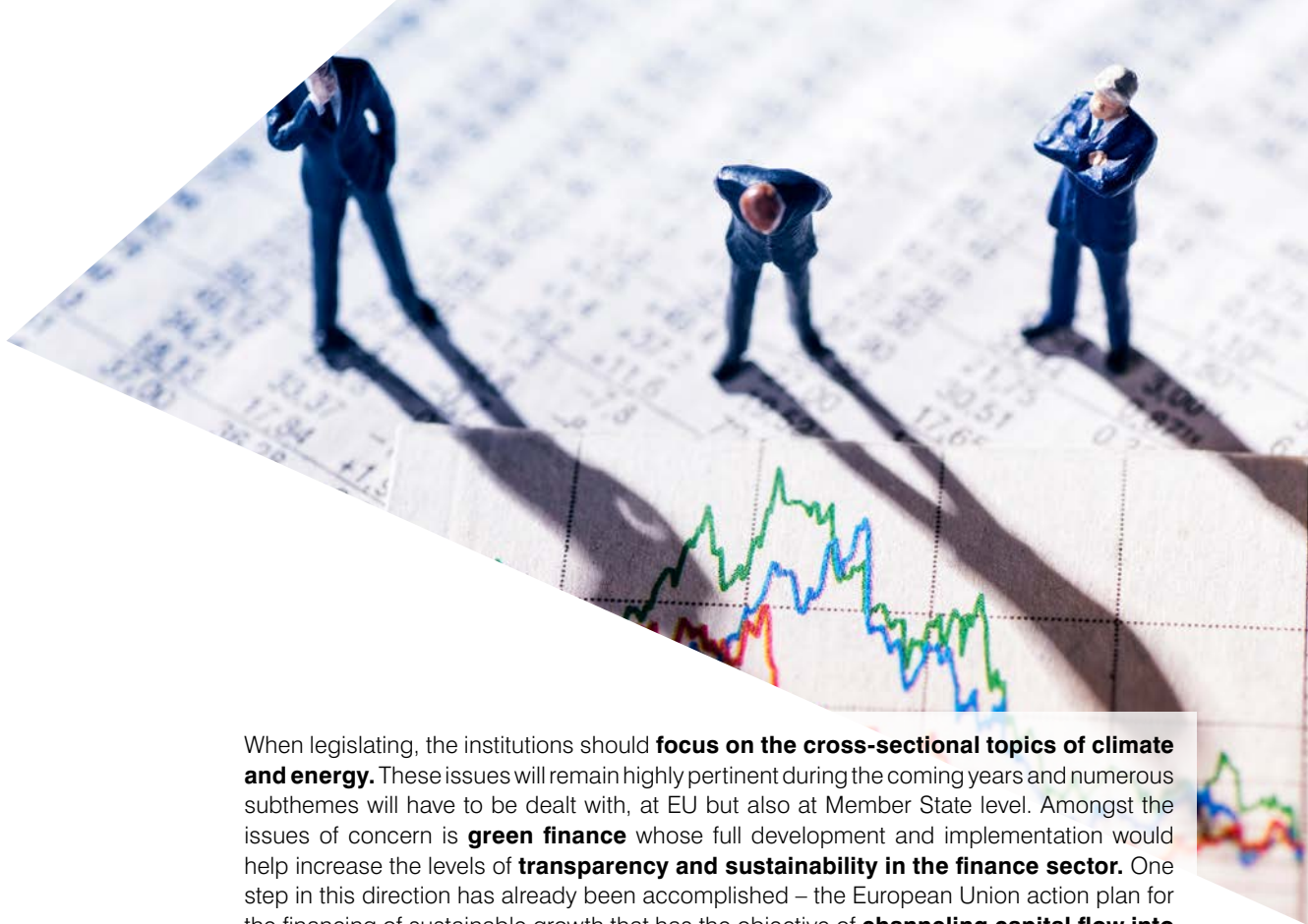
## Today more than ever economic activities must be responsible – otherwise they won't last.

The European Commission should therefore first of all ensure – across policy fields – that the **three pillars of sustainability** are kept in mind when legislating. Economic, environmental, and social aspects, which essentially represent transversal matters, should be respected even when legislating issues that do not have these matters as a core subject. Economic activity cannot be conceived without taking into consideration environmental and social matters anymore.

The institutions should help put provisions in place to support companies in their endeavours when it comes to **efficiently implementing corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies and procedures**. In terms of corporate social responsibility, procedures should put an emphasis on the topic of **enhancing labour market participation of women, youth, and migrants**. It is extremely important for the economy to foster inclusive approaches that help people to participate in economic activities, by which they in turn **help increase productivity**. The higher the activity rates, the higher the overall economic benefit and welfare.

**Complying with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights** and **keeping in mind the principles** set out by **the United Nations' Agenda 2030**, and, more precisely, the **UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, when conducting business, should become standard. The European Union has, on several occasions, made a point of respecting these guidelines, and the EU should continue to do so, as well as aiming to support companies in their respect of human rights due diligence approaches. This means that a firm should implement ongoing risk management processes in order to identify, prevent, mitigate, and account for how it addresses its adverse impacts on human rights. This could be done via information campaigns by, for instance, the European External Action Service (EEAS) offering support concerning the development of competencies within the human rights realm. Furthermore, the European Union should also ensure that **National Action Plans (NAP)** on the matter are **put in place in a coherent manner** across Member States. Complying with these principles should, however, not become burdensome for companies. Especially for SMEs, it is essential that they can be fully compliant with the *Guiding Principles* **without being burdened by additional administrative work** caused by regular evaluations and reporting forms and tools. In this respect, the use of digital tools as well as integrated reporting methods is recommended. Furthermore, it should be clear that the responsibilities that states have concerning these matters should under no circumstances be placed on companies.





When legislating, the institutions should **focus on the cross-sectional topics of climate and energy**. These issues will remain highly pertinent during the coming years and numerous subthemes will have to be dealt with, at EU but also at Member State level. Amongst the issues of concern is **green finance** whose full development and implementation would help increase the levels of **transparency and sustainability in the finance sector**. One step in this direction has already been accomplished – the European Union action plan for the financing of sustainable growth that has the objective of **channeling capital flow into sustainable investments**. Also, taxonomy of projects in this regard must be designed so as not to hamper investment but to establish and maintain a common sustainability at the EU level. Such measures will help raise European competitiveness even further.

Within the European Union, it should be **ensured that decarbonisation is promoted, carbon leakage prevented** and that the **European Union becomes the model for a low carbon economy**. The answers that will be found regarding how to deal with all issues carbon will determine an important part of the economic outlook of the European Union. Furthermore, the institutions should allocate the means to follow through on these intentions. Concerning endeavours regarding the climate, there needs to be a clear emphasis on the **importance of the emission trading system (ETS)**. It should be even further developed so as to **include more economic sectors** than it does today. Furthermore, the institutions should **aim for a set ETS price on a global level**, thereby **installing a level playing field especially for European industry**.

The **circular economy action plan** adopted in 2015 with the aim of fostering the transition of the European economy towards a more sustainable approach for economic development is still lagging behind expectations. In general, the plan includes a mix of voluntary and compulsory provisions along the lines of production, consumption, waste management, and material recycling. The circular economy is something very precious for preserving the environment and keeping living standards high. In order for this strategy to be effective though, more companies must get on board. It is especially important for SMEs to get support – financially but also logistically – to put in place necessary measures and to benefit from circular economy measures, thereby promoting them. The practical implementation of measures foreseen by the plan, such as the **EU Eco-management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)**, **EU ecolabel schemes**, and **green public procurement (GPP)**, or the implementation of legislative acts such as the Eco-design directive, is still not completed. Finally, circular business models will need **both private and public investment**. Hence, the plan should be implemented further or, more specifically, completed.

In general, greater supply reliability to secure high quality within the investment location of Europe as well as a modern legal framework concerning waste management must be developed continuously.

The institutions should create incentives to **improve mobility across Europe** and to increase the budget of *inter alia* the **Connecting Europe facility (CEF)**, which is currently at EUR 30.4 billion. The CEF is exemplary in that it is divided in three sectors but seeks to strengthen synergies. The European Union should set the example for other parts of the world by placing the CEF at the core of mobility considerations and plans and informing the public about all the ramifications of this strategy.

The same goes for the **field of logistics** where the European Union should equally strive for excellence so that European companies in the sector can benefit. This in turn will make the EU even more attractive for its partners and set an example. In order to foster the sector, **barriers hindering economic activity should be eliminated** which would benefit SMEs in particular.

Laws should be set up that ensure that the sector of **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** develops in an **ethical way**. This is the reason why closely monitoring what happens in this field at the European level will be crucial. In this respect, the fact that the Commission installed a *High-Level Expert Group on AI* that presented *Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence* on 8 April, 2019 is highly welcomed. According to these Guidelines, trustworthy AI should be lawful in that it respects all applicable laws and regulations. It should further respect ethical principles and values and be robust from a technical perspective while taking into account its social environment. AI should be trustworthy, meaning that it should be compliant with the seven key requirements of trustworthy AI presented in the *Ethics Guidelines*: human agency and oversight; technical robustness and safety; privacy and data governance; transparency; diversity, non-discrimination and fairness; societal and environmental wellbeing; and accountability. AI systems should at all times empower human beings and help to foster fundamental human rights, including not marginalising or creating any sort of bias towards different groups of society.

### Links ad 4)

#### I. General links concerning responsible development:

- The three pillars of sustainability: <https://www.thwink.org/sustain/glossary/ThreePillarsOfSustainability.htm>
- World Forum for a Responsible Economy: <https://www.responsible-economy.org/en/>
- BNP Paribas Luxembourg mission statement on being a responsible economic player: <http://www.bnpparibas.lu/en/bnp-paribas/corporate-social-responsibility/>

#### II. CSR/Business and Human rights/Agenda 2030/SDGs:

- CSR as an economic opportunity for SMEs: <https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/news/4033/corporate-social-responsibility-as-an-economic-opportunity-for-smes/>
- Policies to increase labour force participation of women: <http://www.oecd.org/social/labour/31743892.pdf>
- Enhancing the activity rate of migrants on the labour market: <https://publications.iom.int/books/migration-employment-and-labour-market-integration-policies-european-union-2010>
- Business and Human rights – UN guiding principles: <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/un-guiding-principles>
- Luxembourg National Action Plan for the implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: <https://maee.gouvernement.lu/dam-assets/directions/d1/PAN-LU-entreprises-et-DH-2018-2019-EN.pdf>
- UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development/Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

#### III. Climate &Energy:

- 'Green finance': <https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2019-green-finance/>;  
<https://www.luxembourgforfinance.com/en/financial-centre/sustainable-finance/>

# A Europe that is qualifying **5.** **Education, talent recruitment and diploma recognition**

**In order to prepare Europe for its future as a source of talent – taking into account the needs of society and companies alike – a number of measures need to be taken. The way to foster qualifications across the European Union must be three-fold.**

Overall, qualifications are essentially boosted when policies within the **three fields of education, talent recruitment, and diploma recognition** are implemented, promoted, and communicated.

In this respect, first of all, a framework must be built that aims at **increasing the number of high-quality structures**, starting with **childcare facilities**. These structures are crucial when it comes to enabling primary caregivers – be it men or women – with the possibility of participating in the labour market, and providing formal education to all children alike in early childhood, thereby installing a level playing field.

Secondly, the following measures would also help boost education across the EU, namely **better informing the public *inter alia* about vocational training and dual education options** and possibilities – Member States should learn from each other when it comes to this topic. Furthermore, there should be an emphasis on the **need for more acceptance of non-formal and informal learning (VAE)**. The recognition of professional and non-professional experience with a view to obtaining a recognized qualification is paramount for higher overall employability.

Thirdly, there are other measures that the EU can use to ensure that internally, talent is continuously identified and developed. This typically includes a modern school and university system. In line with OECD recommendations, the **percentages of the population that have a tertiary education should increase across Member States** in order to make Europe fit for the challenges of the future, albeit keeping in mind that tertiary diplomas should be acquired with a view to the needs of the labour market and society as whole.

What has already been achieved in the context of the European Commission's implementation of a **New skills agenda for Europe** can be deemed essential in achieving the promotion of qualifications and the value of education across the EU. This agenda sets the tone for European strategies and policies to come for it includes all of the essentials.




Carrying on from the above-mentioned recommendations and also in the field of **diploma recognition, barriers must be eliminated** in order to complete the internal market strategies, thereby helping companies and (potential) employees alike to benefit the most from what the European Union has to offer. Guaranteeing full mutual diploma recognition essentially means enabling citizens to benefit from free movement across the EU by choosing to work in the Member State of their choice – without being hindered by bureaucratic barriers.

To be able to face precisely these challenges also means to **invest heavily in talent – local talent but also the attraction of talent from abroad**. The European Union must guarantee external talent attraction, meaning that Europe should therefore present itself in an attractive manner concerning the availability of childcare facilities, educational offers, job possibilities, as well as general living conditions. One means of achieving this would be to further promote an already established success story – the EU 'blue card'.

Last but not least, communication and awareness raising regarding education within the EU is essential in order to achieve more in this respect. Education needs to be conceptualised along several lines, distinguishing *inter alia* education provided to children, youth, young adults, adults, as well as for senior citizens.

In this respect, the **Youth Guarantee** initiative should be **developed and promoted further** in order to provide more young talent with employment opportunities, continuing education, apprenticeships, and traineeships.

Regarding **senior citizens**, in order to **raise their activity rates** – which would be especially beneficial for countries that have a comparatively low activity rate amongst senior citizens – it could be helpful to **make sure** that this age group has the **same level of access to formal education** as other employees.



On another **level**, namely **regional, cooperation in the fields of education and life-long learning should be fostered** – one example is already in place in the greater region around Luxembourg. Cooperation on a regional level is a viable tool and at the same time a wonderful example of the principle of subsidiarity which is upheld by the European Union.

In general, since education is of great importance to the European Union, and regarding the need for a high quality of education, the European Union should continue to further **support teaching quality and effectiveness in training**, especially regarding challenges in relation to **digitalisation and inclusive education**. This is all the more important since *inter alia* the World Economic Forum (WEF) estimates that, by 2022, more than half of all employees will have to **'upskill'** or **'reskill'** – in other words, they will have to gain additional expertise relating to their job position or to learn a new set of skills altogether.

## Links ad 5)

### I. Education:

- The provision of childcare services: [https://eurogender.eige.europa.eu/system/files/the\\_provision\\_childcare\\_services.pdf](https://eurogender.eige.europa.eu/system/files/the_provision_childcare_services.pdf)
- Non-formal and informal learning: [http://www.lifelong-learning.lu/Detail/Article/Diplomes/validation-des-acquis-de-l\\_experience/en](http://www.lifelong-learning.lu/Detail/Article/Diplomes/validation-des-acquis-de-l_experience/en)

### II. Talent recruitment:

- OECD – Building an EU talent pool: <https://www.oecd.org/industry/building-an-eu-talent-pool-6ea982a0-en.htm>
- Labour mobility in EU Member States: [https://www.cbtalents.com/Labour\\_Mobility\\_EU\\_Member\\_States\\_Best\\_Practices\\_Policies\\_DigitalJobs\\_template\\_DEF.pdf](https://www.cbtalents.com/Labour_Mobility_EU_Member_States_Best_Practices_Policies_DigitalJobs_template_DEF.pdf)

### III. Specific strategy fields:

- Education for senior citizens: <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/resource-centre/content/education-and-quality-life-senior-citizens>; in the Luxembourg context: <https://today.rtl.lu/dossier/tdf/news/a/1393227.html>
- Regional cooperation example from the Greater region around Luxembourg: <http://www.granderegion.net/en>
- The future of work – upskilling and reskilling: <https://www.euronews.com/2019/05/01/are-your-skills-up-to-date>

