



## PRESS RELEASE

### **Delivering 5G and support for new technologies must be top priority for new Commission say Europe's largest businesses**

**Brussels, 17 June 2019** – The new European Commission should prioritise digitalisation and completing the delivery of 5G networks, say Europe's largest businesses.

As European leaders prepare to discuss the composition of the new Commission at this week's European Council, a survey of Europe's largest employers indicates that industrial leaders urgently call for more support for the development of new technologies.

The findings are underpinned by a European Commission-supported study which forecasts the creation of 2.3 million jobs in Europe by 2025, both directly and indirectly, because of 5G connectivity<sup>1</sup>.

The ERT Economic Confidence Survey also shows that less than half of respondents believe Europe's digital infrastructure makes it an attractive place to do business relative to other parts of the world. In contrast, Europe's transport infrastructure is rated high relative to other trading blocs.

Also high on the list of priorities are tackling climate change and ensuring global trade rules are enforced fairly.

These results come as part of the latest Economic Confidence Survey, commissioned by the European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT), which surveys its members twice a year on their views of the European economy.

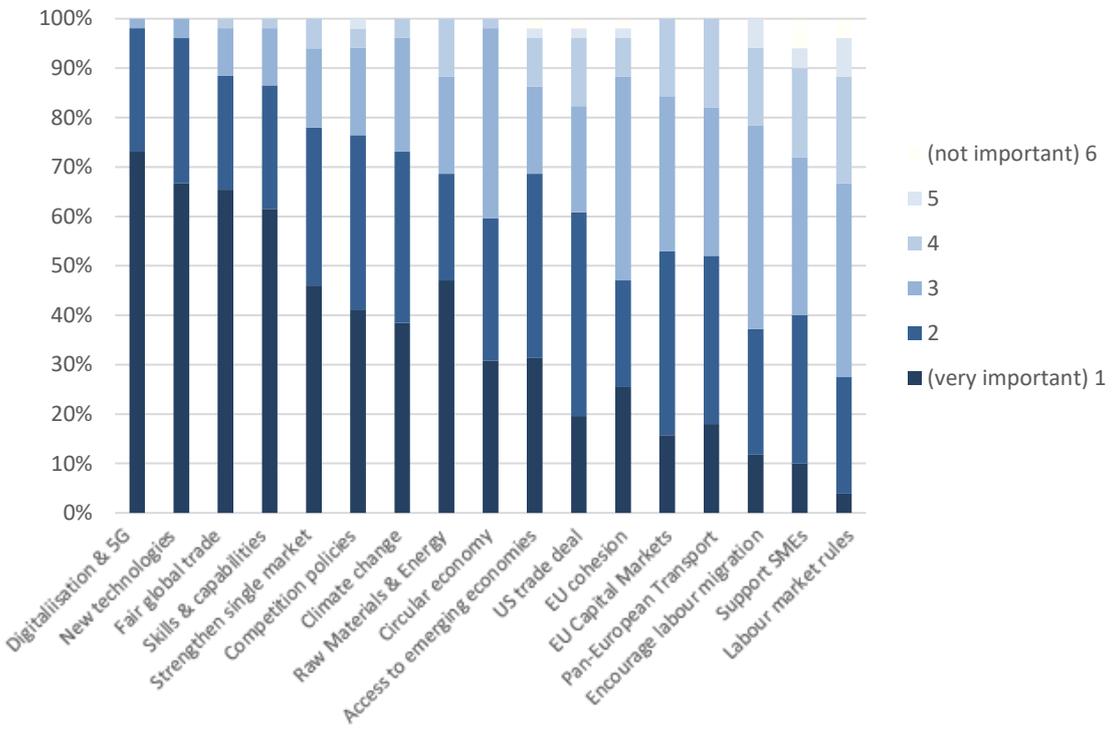
Coming ahead of the crucial European Council where heads of Government will discuss both institutional appointments and the strategic agenda of the EU over the coming years, the findings give a snapshot of what many of the EU's largest employers believe to be the most pressing issues they face.

The survey results further reinforce the EU policy priorities and pledges ERT members committed to in a landmark position paper, *Strengthening Europe's Place in the World*, published last month. ERT Member companies committed to invest even more in Europe if the regulatory and financial environment is improved with measures that support the competitiveness of industries.

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission, (30 September 2016) '5G deployment could bring millions of jobs and billions of euros benefits, study finds'. Link: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/5g-deployment-could-bring-millions-jobs-and-billions-euros-benefits-study-finds>

**What Should be the European Commission’s Top Priority? (Ranked by Importance)**



Responding to the results of the survey, Chief Executive of BASF Dr Martin Bruder Müller said:

*“These results show that Europe’s major industrial employers are generally optimistic about the economy although sentiment is clearly less optimistic than it was a year ago. We want to see the new European Commission focus urgently on the opportunities presented by new technologies, such as 5G. As we set out in our recent report ‘Strengthening Europe’s Place in the World’, we need the right policies to ensure our economies can take advantage of innovative technologies, our companies lead the world in their application and our citizens experience the benefits.”*

**ERT Industrial Confidence Index**



The survey shows that the overall business outlook has improved, following a drop in the second half of 2018. The business leaders surveyed expect moderate increases in both sales and investment, though with both growing faster outside Europe than inside.

In total 52 CEOs and Chairmen of Europe's leading industrial companies replied to the survey.

The survey was conducted by the ZEW – Leibniz Centre for European Economic Research (ZEW).

[The full results of the spring 2019 survey are available](#)

[A detailed analytical report prepared by ZEW is available](#)

[Open Letter](#) - Supporting innovation and technology should be top priority of new European Commission - By Martin Brudermüller, Chair of the ERT Competitiveness & Innovation Working Group and Chief Executive of BASF

### **Note to Editors:**

#### **About the ERT Economic Confidence Survey**

*The Economic Confidence Survey is an initiative launched by ERT in October 2017. It is done in autumn and spring each year and covers current business plans and policy issues of interest to European industry. In each survey, the same four questions are asked to ERT Members to capture their sentiments regarding the general business outlook, sales, investment, and employment plans, for both Europe and the rest of the world in the next six months. An economic research institute (ZEW) is in charge of conducting the survey and ensuring confidentiality.*

#### **About ERT**

*The European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT) is a forum bringing together 57 Chief Executives and Chairmen of major multinational companies of European parentage covering a wide range of industrial and technological sectors. Companies of ERT Members are widely situated across Europe, with combined revenues exceeding €2,250 billion, sustaining around 6.8 million jobs in the region. They invest more than €50 billion annually in R&D, largely in Europe. ERT advocates policies at both national and European levels, with the goal of improving European competitiveness, growth and employment.*

#### **About ZEW**

*The ZEW – Leibniz Centre for European Economic Research (ZEW) in Mannheim is a non-profit and independent institute with the legal form of a limited liability company (GmbH). Founded in 1990 on the basis of a public-private initiative in the Federal State of Baden-Württemberg in co-operation with the University of Mannheim, ZEW is one of Germany's leading economic research institutes, and enjoys a strong reputation throughout Europe. For more information visit: <http://www.zew.de/en/>*

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