



STATEMENT

ERT gathers in Stuttgart, meets Chancellor Scholz and European Commission President von der Leyen

Stuttgart, 13 November 2023: The European Round Table for Industry (ERT) met in Stuttgart yesterday and today for its annual autumn plenary. The meeting, hosted by Ola Källenius, CEO of Mercedes-Benz Group, brought together leaders from around 50 of Europe's most significant industrial and technology companies with operations worldwide.

As significant employers, innovators and investors in European regions, these semi-annual meetings are the opportunity for ERT Members* to discuss some of the key themes of the moment. This meeting was honoured with speeches by European Commission President von der Leyen and by Chancellor Scholz.

As a cross-sectoral high-level forum, ERT's focus is on the long-term industrial outlook for Europe, most pertinently the EU's declining competitiveness against the backdrop of a shifting geopolitical landscape. Discussions at the meeting were focused on the following:

1. **Pursuing turnaround in Europe's competitiveness:** As the digital and green transitions advance, ERT is keen to see how Mario Draghi's forthcoming programme on EU competitiveness will address the bloc's contradictions. ERT has called for a much more holistic approach to its competitiveness – by bolstering investment in infrastructure and fostering regulation that enhances Europe's appeal to investors.
2. **EU Single Market:** As the 30th anniversary of the dawn of the Single Market comes to a close, ERT wants to see renewed political investment in its improvement. As a foundation of EU unity and prosperity, it is vital that the forthcoming programme by Enrico Letta spells out the steps to deepening the Single Market. At the moment, a true European Energy Union looks increasingly urgent and key to achieving EU decarbonisation targets. Furthermore, the European Capital Markets Union would deliver much-needed new avenues of funding for European innovation, in particular for tech start-ups & scale-ups.
3. **Innovation:** Innovation is the driving force for future competitiveness and prosperity - and provides solutions for many global challenges society is facing. With the increasing speed of technological advancement, innovation is becoming ever more fast-paced and complex. To remain competitive, Europe has to put the business case for innovation at the centre of policy-making. Robust IP rights and standardisation practices that set the right incentives are needed for innovation made in Europe. And it is time to ensure that public and private sector together can drive the realisation of investment-heavy innovation projects.

4. **Addressing the Skills gap:** ERT is a vocal supporter of the effort to build a culture of lifelong learning and reskilling in Europe – as evidenced by its reskilling programme, R4E^o. With the twin transitions driving an urgent need for new skillsets, EU support for reskilling needs more volume and more resources. More investment is urgently needed in education, training and reskilling along with better co-operation between the public and private sector.
5. **Trade:** Unpredictable geopolitics and the multi-faceted implications of the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East continue to deepen the complexity of international cooperation. Nevertheless, Europe must remain a longstanding defender of the multilateral rules-based system and open trade.
6. **EU Enlargement:** ERT has supported the various EU enlargements in the past. The potential expansion to the east is no exception, as long as the conditions of EU membership are met and the timeline is based on realistic expectations. However, ERT asserts that preparing any future enlargement also means addressing current inefficiencies in Europe's political apparatus.

The meeting follows the recent release of ERT's Vision Paper 2024-2029, which articulates European corporate leaders' recommendations** for the next European Commission and European Parliament due to take office next year.

Tomorrow, the **results of The Conference Board's latest independent semi-annual economic confidence survey** of ERT CEOs & Chairs will be released. The survey results include strong signals on the burden of regulation in Europe, as well as sentiment on economic confidence, investment, competitiveness and more. .

Note to Editors:

* The names of the ERT Members in attendance at the meeting in Stuttgart are on **the pages that follow**. A full list of the membership of ERT is accessible <https://ert.eu/members/>

** To view ERT's vision paper *Securing Europe's place in a new world order*, click [here](#).

^o ERT's Reskilling initiative, R4E. is already being championed by 7 companies led by Members of ERT and is active in 3 EU countries (Portugal, Spain & Sweden) with more expected soon. For more information, visit <https://r4e.eu>

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About the European Round Table for Industry (ERT)

The European Round Table for Industry (ERT) is a forum that brings together around 60 Chief Executives and Chairs of leading multinational companies of European parentage, covering a wide range of industrial and technological sectors. ERT strives for a strong, open and competitive Europe, with the EU and its Single Market as a driver for inclusive growth and sustainable prosperity. Companies of ERT Members have combined revenues exceeding €2 trillion, providing direct jobs to around 5 million people worldwide – of which half are in Europe – and sustaining millions of indirect jobs. They invest more than €60 billion annually in R&D, largely in Europe. www.ert.eu

ERT Delegation, Stuttgart, 12/13 November 2023

Jean-François van Boxmeer	Chair, ERT Chairman, Vodafone Group	
Nancy McKinstry	Vice-Chair, ERT CEO and Chairman of the Executive Board, Wolters Kluwer	
Dimitri Papalexopoulos	Vice-Chair, ERT Chairman of the Executive Committee, TITAN Cement	
José María Álvarez-Pallete	Chair, ERT Committee on Jobs, Skills & Impact Chairman and CEO, Telefónica	
Nils Andersen	Chair, ERT Committee on Competition Policy Chairman, Unilever	
Aiman Ezzat	Chair, ERT Committee on Digital Transformation CEO, Capgemini Group	
Jacob Wallenberg	Chair, ERT Committee on Trade & Market Access Chair, Investor AB	
Oliver Zipse	Chair, ERT CFO Platform Chairman of the Board of Management, BMW Group	
Hilde Merete Aasheim	President and CEO	Norsk Hydro
Jean-Paul Agon	Chairman	L'Oréal
Zoltán Áldott	Chairman of the Supervisory Board	MOL
Cláudia Azevedo	Chief Executive Officer	Sonae
Leonhard Birnbaum	CEO	E.ON
Pierre-André de Chalendar	Chairman of the Board	Saint-Gobain
Jean-Pierre Clamadieu	Chairman of the Board	ENGIE SA
Vincent Clerc	Chief Executive Officer	A.P. Møller- Mærsk
Rodolfo De Benedetti	Chairman	CIR
Michel Demaré	Chairman	AstraZeneca
Claudio Descalzi	CEO	Eni
Stefan Doboczky	CEO	Heubach Group
Henrik Ehrnrooth	President and CEO	KONE
Börje Ekholm	President and CEO	Ericsson
Aiman Ezzat	Chief Executive Officer	Capgemini
Ignacio Galán	Executive Chairman	Iberdrola
Óscar García Maceiras	Chief Executive Officer	Inditex
Christel Heydemann	Chief Executive Officer	Orange
Timotheus Höttges	Chief Executive Officer	Deutsche Telekom
Roy Jakobs	Chief Executive Officer	Royal Philips
Jan Jenisch	Chief Executive Officer	Holcim
Ilham Kadri	CEO & President, Executive Committee	Solvay
Ola Källenius	Chairman of the Board of Management	Mercedes-Benz Group
Christian Klein	Chief Executive Officer	SAP SE
Thomas Leysen	Chairman of the Board	dsm-firmenich
Helge Lund	Chairman	bp
Pekka Lundmark	President & CEO	Nokia
Martin Lundstedt	President and CEO	AB Volvo
Nancy McKinstry	CEO and Chair of the Executive Board	Wolters Kluwer
Florent Menegaux	Chief Executive Officer	Michelin
Mathias Miedreich	Chief Executive Officer	Umicore

Dimitri Papalexopoulos	Chairman	TITAN Cement
Rafael del Pino	Chairman	Ferrovial
Benoît Potier	Chairman	Air Liquide
Patrick Pouyanné	Chairman of the Board and CEO	TotalEnergies
Gianfelice Rocca Companies	Chairman	Techint Group of
Björn Rosengren	Chief Executive Officer	ABB
Güler Sabanci	Chair	Sabancı Holding
Mark Schneider	Chief Executive Officer	Nestlé
Severin Schwan	Chairman of the Board	Roche
Kurt Sievers	President & CEO	NXP Semiconductors N.V.
Jim Hagemann Snabe	Chairman	Siemens
Carl-Henric Svanberg	Chairman	AB Volvo
Jonathan Symonds	Chair	GSK
Dolf van den Brink	Chairman of the Executive Board and CEO	HEINEKEN
Jacob Wallenberg	Chair	Investor AB
Oliver Zipse	Chairman of the Board of Management	BMW Group
Frank Heemskerck	Secretary General, ERT	