

**Points of Mrs. Loes van Emden Andres
Chair, BIAC ELSA Committee**

**OECD High Level Conference on Boosting Jobs and Incomes:
Lessons From OECD Country Experiences**

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- 1) The launch of the restated Jobs Strategy today is the end of a two year process of intensive work. I would like to congratulate the OECD and all governments that participated in this process on the results of the reassessment, and underline what the new Secretary-General of the OECD, Mr. Angel Gurría, writes in his Foreword that: 'the restated Jobs Strategy will contribute to strengthen the capacities of our societies to adapt and change, and to meet the challenges posed by globalisation and population ageing'.
- 2) From our perspective a great value of the revised Jobs Strategy is that it also takes into account the lessons learnt from successes and failures of reforms that took place in OECD countries during the past decade.
- 3) It also adds substantial value is the insight gained regarding interactions and synergies between different policy areas and the role of macroeconomic policy.
- 4) Furthermore, the reassessment of the 1994 Jobs Strategy has shown that there is no "one size fits all" policy package for good labour market performance. Two different, both successful policy approaches are highlighted in the analysis for the revised Jobs Strategy. Common features in both approaches are macroeconomic stability and strong product market competition. This is an important lesson for those countries where labour market performance is in need of significant improvement.
- 5) In the past year, BIAC was consulted by the OECD several times on provisional texts for the reassessment of the jobs strategy. While we remained critical throughout the revision process, we congratulate the OECD on the outcome, and the opportunity that we now can be very positive and forward looking in these discussions. In BIAC's view the restated Jobs Strategy is a constructive and balanced approach to boost job creation and importantly the economic growth necessary to stimulate investment and create jobs. We would highly recommend governments and all other stakeholders, to seriously consider the recommendations made and to come to an integrated, sustainable approach for reforms that meets the challenges of the years to come.
- 6) In this context I would also recommend to take into account the policy recommendations of the OECD Growth Study that are complementary to those made in the document we are discussing today. In particular this OECD Study emphasizes the contributions of entrepreneurship and innovation, which are significant factors in the ability for companies to create jobs.

- 7) Given the time available for my speech I would like to highlight four key messages that are of utmost importance in BIAC's view and they are the following:
 - a) Sound macroeconomic policies aiming at price stability and sustainable public finances that are able to stabilise the economy and absorb adverse shocks are a precondition for further economic growth and job creation.
 - b) Set the right conditions for business to compete, to grow, to innovate, to make necessary changes and to start new companies that are the source of job creation.
 - c) Social and labour market policies should be targeted at activation. Too much emphasis on protection has too often resulted in discouraging people to accept a job.
 - d) The best protection against loss of work and income is investment in employability and lifelong learning.
- 8) Implementation of tailor made reform packages that suit national preferences is where we all have to focus on now. In this respect I would like to point at an important result of the analysis made by the OECD and that is that reforms in the past have often been partial and sometimes even counterproductive. In some OECD countries reforms were in particular targeted at so-called outsiders; reforms that affect the legal status of those best represented - the insiders – require more courage and effort of all parties concerned. I want to make an appeal to all politicians and trade union representatives here present today to seriously design and implement balanced policy packages that meet the challenges of globalisation and population ageing, without giving preferential treatment to those who are best able to defend their current secure position. We all know that on the long run work and income security predominantly depends on the employability of workers and their adaptability and not on the protection given by out-dated social regulations or restriction of competition.
- 9) Activation of all who are able to work is our motto. Make way for the creation of new businesses, welcome competition and set the right conditions for companies to innovate. And, last but not least, sound and sustainable budgetary policies are a precondition for economic growth, the conservation of existing jobs and the creation of new jobs.
- 10) If you allow me chair, I would now like to give the floor to Nancy Hughes Anthony who is the President and CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, representing Canadian business in BIAC. She will, in particular, go into the relevance of the restated Jobs Strategy for the Canadian business community.