



ЕВРОПЕЙСКИ ПАРЛАМЕНТ PARLAMENTO EUROPEO EVROPSKÝ PARLAMENT EUROPA-PARLAMENTET
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Brussels, 7th February, 2012

Dear Colleague,

With the cooperation of the European Federation of Employee Share Ownership (EFES), I am delighted to invite you to a public hearing in the European Parliament, about:

"A European policy for employee ownership and participation"

The hearing will take place on March 22, 2012 from 9:00 to 12:00 in Brussels.

It is a continuation of the Own-initiative Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) which recently called for a new European initiative on this topic.

It will bring together representatives of the Parliament, the Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee, social partners, enterprises and experts.

Please find enclosed a short presentation and the draft programme.

For the practical organization, would you please confirm your participation, before March 8 through the EFES' secretariat (efes@efesonline.org).

Pervenche Berès



Public hearing in the European Parliament

A European policy for employee ownership and participation

Brussels, 22 March 2012

The financial crisis brings new political awareness about employee ownership which increasingly appears the best option with its contribution to healthier corporate governance, long term vision and stability.

Furthermore, employee buyouts are multiplying for business transmission or rescue plans.

It is a fact that employee share ownership developed strongly among European companies during the last decade. 83% of all large companies have employee share plans now, compared to only 40% ten years ago.

In most cases, such plans are now designed for all employees rather than just for a small number.

This way, employee ownership is now in a strategic, determining or controlling position in more than 27% of all largest European companies.

However, the brakes and obstacles are still strong and they are sources of discrimination and poor governance in companies.

Some countries remain reluctant, lacking of information and of appropriate legislation. This is particularly true in the South of Europe and in Central and Eastern European countries.

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) recently launched a call for a new European initiative and it set a number of practical proposals in its Own-initiative Opinion Soc 371 on employee financial participation in Europe.

With regard to the European Parliament, the EESC has asked for a designated budget line to support the promotion of employee ownership and participation in the EU.

Such a budget should help to set up and finance a European Center for Employee Ownership in each European country, to deliver information, training and advice to employees, enterprises and the public at large.

This should also facilitate the promotion and implementation of appropriate legislation for better development of employee ownership and participation in each country of the European Union.

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Public hearing in the European Parliament
A European policy for employee ownership and participation
Brussels, 22 March 2012

- 9.00 – 9.30** **Welcome and registration**
- 9.30 – 9.45** **Opening and welcome speech**
The Parliament and employee ownership organizations
- Pervenche Berès, Chair of the Committee for Employment and Social Affairs
 - Guido Antolini, President, European Federation of Employee Share Ownership, Italy
- 9.45 – 10.15** **Companies**
What companies expect from a European policy.
- Max Stelzer, Voestalpine Arbeitnehmer Privatstiftung, Austria
 - Dominique Welcomme, Vivendi, France
- 10.15 – 10.30** **Questions and debate**
- 10.30 – 10.45** **Social Partners**
What social partners expect from a European policy – the initiative of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC).
- Alexander Graf von Schwerin, EESC Rapporteur, Germany
- 10.45 – 11.15** **Promotion of employee ownership and participation in Europe**
Several countries already set up promotion centers.
- Marc Mathieu, European Federation of Employee Share Ownership, Belgium
 - Heinrich Beyer, Arbeitsgemeinschaft Partnerschaft in der Wirtschaft, Germany
 - Javier San José, Confederación Empresarial de Sociedades Laborales de España
 - Graeme Nuttall*, Government Adviser for Employee Ownership, UK
- 11.15 – 11.30** **Questions and debate**
- 11.30 – 12.00** **A European policy and a dedicated budget line**
- Pervenche Berès, Chair of the Committee for Employment and Social Affairs
 - László Andor*, European Commissioner – Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
 - Michel Barnier, European Commissioner – Internal Market & Services
 - Malcolm Harbour*, Chair of the Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection
- 12.00 – 14.00** **Lunch**

* to be confirmed

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EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP AND FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION

March 6, 2012

BUDGET PROPOSAL

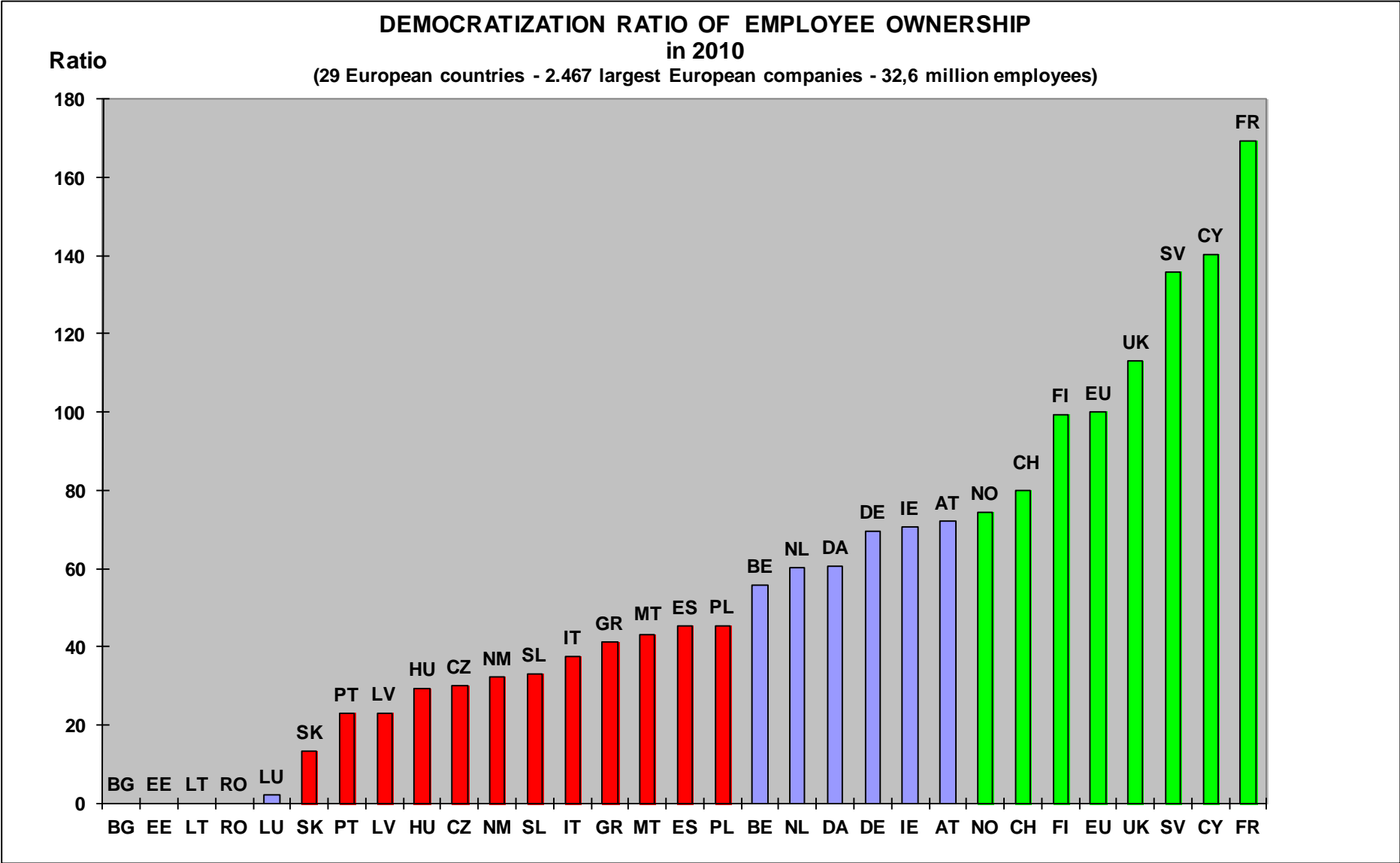
A new budget heading 04.03.03.04 should be introduced in the EU budget, with 2.5 million Euro going annually for setting up and funding an Employee Ownership Centre and Program in each member state, delivering information, education and promoting employee ownership practices. This is our proposal as the European Federation of Employee Share Ownership (EFES).

WHY?

- 1. Information and education are clearly the key points in this matter.**
It is a fact that employee share ownership developed strongly among European companies during the last decade. 83% of all large companies have employee share plans now, compared to only 40% ten years ago. In most cases, such plans are now designed for all employees rather than just for a small number. This way, employee ownership is now in a strategic, determining or controlling position in more than 27% of all largest European companies. However, the brakes and obstacles are still strong and they are sources of discrimination and poor governance in companies. Some countries remain reluctant, lacking of information and of appropriate legislation. This is particularly true in the South of Europe and in Central and Eastern European countries. As a consequence, the democratization ratio of employee ownership appears to be more and more divergent between European countries (see graph in appendix).
- 2. The European Economic and Social Committee had a deep discussion** about employee financial participation, leading to its Own-Initiative Opinion SOC 371 on Employee Financial Participation in Europe, on October 21, 2010. In its opinion, the EESC calls on the European institutions and governments for a renewed initiative in this matter **"supported by the EU budget through a dedicated budget heading"**.
- 3. A first decision was already taken in this sense in 1999.**
At this time, the Parliament decided to add a third sub-program for employee financial participation (EFP), beside the sub-programs dedicated to Social Dialogue and to Industrial Relations within budget line B3-4000. During the discussions within the Parliament, it was said that some 2 million Euro should go to this new sub-program annually. In addition, a fourth sub-program appeared in 2000, for Corporate Social Responsibility. The sub-program for EFP was later moved from heading B3-4000 to headings 04.04.01.03 and later again to 04.03.03.01.
The fact is that sub-program EFP was continuously discriminated compared to other ones and the 2 million Euro were never duly allocated (see table in appendix).
- 4. A well dedicated budget heading in place of just a sub-program** will express the will to pay higher attention and transparency to employee ownership and financial participation.

Marc Mathieu
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The EFES' objective is to act as the umbrella organization of employee owners, companies and all persons, trade unions, experts, researchers, institutions looking to promote employee ownership and participation in Europe.



Public hearing at the European Parliament
A European policy for employee ownership and participation
Brussels, 22 March 2012

Please fill in block capital letters and return to:
EFES, Avenue Voltaire 135 - B-1030 Brussels, Fax : +32 (0)2 242 64 30 E-mail : efes@efesonline.org

REQUEST FOR INVITATION

Participant

Name, Surname

Position

Organization/Company

Address

Zip code City Country

E-mail

Phone

Participation to the hearing

Access to the hearing will be on invitation only.

Requests for invitation have to be received by the EFES secretariat before March 8, 2012.

Date:

Signature: