

Why does the EU industrial strategy fail to mention the importance of the creative and cultural sectors?

Mardi 6 Février 2018

Article paru dans la rubrique "Opinion" du Parliament Magazine

The Commission's proposals to stimulate EU growth and competitiveness miss the target on a number of significant issues, says Pervenche Berès.

Industry, growth and employment are key priorities for the Juncker Commission - at least that's what President Jean-Claude Juncker reiterated in his most recent 'State of the Union' speech. According to this, all the Commission's policies should complement, rather than contradict, each other - as has too often been the case in the past.

They should allow industry to create jobs and stimulate competitiveness and growth in Europe, promoting investment and innovation in clean and digital technologies while standing up for those regions and workers most affected by industrial transformations.

This commitment must take into account the fierce level of global competition, as well as the fact that the benefits of globalisation and technological progress are unequally distributed across our societies. Study after study shows that the gap between the winners and losers of globalisation is widening.

The EU has failed to protect and defend its industries and its jobs, particularly in the face of more and more large companies - especially in China - receiving huge public subsidies. As emerging economies become key actors in the world economy and technology development, they are changing the foundations of global supply chains. These profound transformations in the balance between economic powers are accelerating.

Job creation and growth through innovation and investment are at the heart of the Commission's key initiatives.

The Juncker plan; EU instruments supporting innovation and assisting industry, particularly SMEs, to put their strengths to best use are all good for this. Also the digital single market strategy, as long as we remember to fight the 'battle of content'.

The Commission's new industrial policy strategy, published last year, identifies and expands on the challenges facing European industry, and looks at its future potential. It refers to specific sectors, such as energy, steel, space, defence and manufacturing, and advocates a horizontal approach.

For a long time, we have known how European competitiveness is impacted by single market rules and by policies on competition, trade, environment, cohesion, innovation and research as well as state aid rules and those pertaining to specific sectors such as energy.

The energy sector is crucial for Europe's industrial competitiveness; therefore we must complete the single energy market as quickly as possible, ensuring security of supply and promoting new energy sources in both financially and environmentally sustainable ways.

The next financial framework must reflect this commitment to strengthening the EU economy, by focusing efforts on promoting innovation, training and industrial competitiveness for sustainable growth and job creation.

The industrial strategy has been criticised for a lack of ambition. It also fails to mention the importance of the cultural and creative sectors to Europe's economy. These industries employ

2.5 times more people than the car manufacturing sector and five times more people than the chemical sector. They provide around 4.4 per cent of the EU's GDP (more than €550bn) and around 12 million full-time jobs in three million companies, or 3.8 per cent of Europe's manpower. It is the fastest growing sector in the EU economy.

To address these ignored strengths, Parliament's culture and industry committees drafted a joint report on a coherent EU policy for cultural and creative industries, which MEPs voted on in December 2016.

The report demanded increased support for Europe's cultural and creative industries, and a coherent policy to promote growth and jobs for this sector which covers architecture, artisanal art, cinema, television, video games, fashion, music, books and much more.

These industries face and must overcome serious challenges such as access to education and training, the preservation of European expertise and know-how, access to finance, the fight against contraband and protecting intellectual property rights.

They must - like many other industries - be able to evolve in an environment that supports their growth, unlocks their innovation potential and provides a legal framework that balances the needs and rights of creators, their business partners and consumers.

At stake is wealth creation and redistribution. We must get Europe back on the path to fair growth. This requires true budgetary, fiscal and social integration.

The Juncker plan was a first step which we sought and supported. However, it must go hand in hand with significant improvements in economic governance. This means revising the stability pact and reviewing those places where it fails to support investment. This entails paying particular attention to education and training policies.

About the author

Pervenche Berès (S&D, FR) is a member of Parliament's economic and monetary affairs committee

<https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/opinion/why-does-eu-industrial-strategy-fail-mention-importance-creative-and-cultural>