

Cast your vote

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Opinion

With the European elections only a matter of days away, a failure to cast a vote means voting against Europe, argues Jacek Krawczyk.



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A week before the European elections, one could say that this time, European politics is anything but boring and predictable.

While shaping voters' preferences remains the domain of politicians, other stakeholders - including employers - are trying to address the major issue that the European elections have faced for years - low voter turnout.

I believe that this time, failing to cast a vote means voting against Europe. For employers and entrepreneurs, the EU means so much more than just the Single Market.

We stand for the European values of democracy, freedom, fundamental rights and the rule of law.

These values are part of employers' DNA; vital for doing successful and sustainable business.

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Employers are engaging in this campaign before the elections mainly to convince people to vote.

The benefits Europe brings are not always obvious to citizens, as they have become part of everyday life.

We have become accustomed to the positives that the EU brings, we have got used to the European way of life. However, these benefits cannot and should not be taken for granted.

Only a strong EU can succeed against a backdrop of global competition, uncertainty and disruption and provide European citizens with security and wellbeing.

Why does the EU matter, and what kind of EU would employers and entrepreneurs like to see in the next term of the European Parliament?

In its recently-adopted declaration, the Employers' Group of the European Economic and Social Committee called for an open, united and strong EU; one that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable and resilient.

The strength of the EU lies in its attractiveness. To fully benefit from this "European way of life", the EU needs to be a good place to do business.

We call for a competitive business environment that encourages enterprises to invest, innovate and trade.

This enables businesses to thrive and provide citizens with jobs, goods and services. Nevertheless, the employers' contribution to society goes far beyond that.

Through taxation, companies generate public revenues that help co-finance education, healthcare and social systems as well as internal and external security.

In this sense, economic and social progress go hand-in-hand. We firmly believe in an open economy with open markets and fair competition.

"The benefits Europe brings are not always obvious to citizens, as they have become part of everyday life"

However, an open economy must be accompanied by an open society.

That is why we are concerned by populist, authoritarian and xenophobic movements that are working against the principles of an open society built on the common core values of the EU.

Our response must be a society that relies on dialogue and good governance.

Our Committee is constantly reiterating the importance of the involvement of civil society and efficient social dialogue.

I believe that this engagement is crucial, particularly now, when certain European politicians are daring to question the rules that until recently were seen as sacrosanct.

An open society relies on freedom and responsibility, not on command and control.

We need policies that stimulate creativity, innovation, ongoing learning and entrepreneurial spirit throughout society.

Openness increases stability and security, both in the economy and society, generated by stronger interdependence and interaction.

European employers and entrepreneurs believe that an open economy and society are beneficial for all. This is the way to generate fresh confidence in the EU.

This is how the virtuous circle of an open, united and strong EU can and should continue.

Every one of us can contribute to that process - simply by voting.

About the author



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Jacek Krawczyk is President of the Employers' Group of the European Economic and Social Committee

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