



PRESS RELEASE
Embargoed until
Monday March 20th 2006

New CER pamphlet

THE LISBON SCORECARD VI Will Europe's economy rise again?

By Aurore Wanlin

The European Union's single market, and its 'Lisbon agenda' of economic reform, have received a battering over the past year. The pace of reforms has remained slow in the big eurozone countries. Fears over the EU's eastward enlargement and high levels of unemployment have fostered a new spirit of national protectionism.

Yet the latest edition of the CER's annual Lisbon review argues that many underlying trends are positive. Increased competition from the EU's new members has turned up the heat on the slow growing 'core' economies, Germany, Italy and France. The eurozone is finally showing signs of recovery, while several European economies are performing strongly. A wave of cross-border mergers suggests that the single market is making an impact. Slowly but steadily, the EU is moving forward in most of the areas covered by the Lisbon agenda.

Every year, the CER ranks EU countries according to their economic performance, and it picks out the 'heroes' and 'villains' among them. This year, Denmark tops the ranking, with Sweden and Austria not far behind. The UK, the Netherlands and Finland also score highly, while Ireland is rapidly climbing the table. Every EU country has made at least some progress in the areas covered by the Lisbon agenda. However, the EU's Mediterranean countries, Italy, Greece and Portugal, score poorly on many indicators. Poland is the most worrying among the EU's newcomers: its unemployment rate stands at 18 per cent, product market competition is fairly restricted and the tax system is overly complicated. The populist right-wing government looks unlikely to kick start reforms. Poland is therefore the 'villain' of this year's scorecard.

Notes for editors:

1. José Manuel Barroso, president of the European Commission, will launch the CER scorecard at the Hotel Silken Berlaymont, Brussels on Monday 20th March 2006. The Rt Hon Alan Johnson MP, will launch the scorecard at KPMG, 8 Salisbury Square, London on Wednesday 22nd March.
2. Aurore Wanlin is a research fellow at the CER. For further comments, please call 00 44 20 7233 1199.
3. This paper can be ordered from the CER website (www.cer.org.uk) or by contacting kate@cer.org.uk.

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