

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE:
COMPETITIVENESS STRATEGIES FOR THE SMALL STATES OF THE EU
Luxembourg: 19-20 April 2018**

**Organized by the Observatoire de la Compétitivité of the Ministry of the Economy of Luxembourg,
in collaboration with the Islands and Small States Institute of the University of Malta, Malta
and the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies of Luxembourg (STATEC).**

FINAL STATEMENT

The participants attending the First International Conference on Competitiveness Strategies for the Small States of the EU:

Note that, in a globalised free trade context, competitiveness is the means for firms as well as for countries to survive and thrive.

Note also that competitiveness is especially important for small states because of their very high dependence on international trade which results from their small domestic markets (leading to high dependence on exports) and limited availability of natural resources (leading to high dependence on imports).

Agree therefore that competitiveness strategies should feature prominently amongst the priorities of the small states of Europe and that these strategies should be embedded in their national development policies.

Agree also that private enterprise, which is often the main engine of income generation, is at the front-line in successful participation in international markets. However, the public sector also plays a crucial role in this regard due to its influence on the efficiency of resource allocation, the availability of expertise, and the knowledge and innovative practices necessary to sustain the competitiveness of enterprises.

Are aware that competitiveness has industrial relations, social and environmental dimensions, and that therefore the social partners and civil society should be consulted in the drawing up of a national competitiveness strategy.

Consider it useful to study and critically examine the manner in which small size is treated in global competitiveness indices.

Recommend that a Small States Network be established to cooperate in promoting a culture of competitiveness in the small states of Europe and for Europe as a whole. For this purpose, the Network should endeavour to produce comparative and benchmarking research and to organise conferences on the competitiveness situation in Europe, and particularly its small states.

Express their gratitude to the Government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg in taking the initiative to organise and fund this conference and the University of Malta for its contribution to the organisational and academic aspects of this conference.

Undertake to disseminate this final statement to interested entities and individuals in their respective countries.

Approved by the participants of the 1st International Conference on Competitiveness Strategies for the EU Small States today, April 20th 2018, at Kirchberg, Luxembourg.