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Belgium

Charles Michel, Prime Minister of Belgium
Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of the Netherlands
Xavier Bettel, Prime Minister of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

Date: April 9th, 2019

Excellencies,

It is with great interest and satisfaction that I have read the April 2nd declaration after the Benelux Summit in Luxembourg.

The declaration is a strong encouragement for public and private entities to strengthen their efforts to accelerate collaboration within the Benelux based on a clear common interest and armed with the unique tools of the Benelux Treaty.

We believe that in areas such as Energy, Infrastructure, Digitization and Labour Mobility, significant steps should and can be taken.

I would like to underscore two projects with huge potential:

1. A common Benelux text for the Regional Collaboration paragraph in the NECP's with ambitious goals on CO2 reduction and Energy efficiency to be submitted to the EC by the end of 2019
2. Submission of "big game changing project(s)" which will be called for in 2020 by the EC in the framework of the ETS Innovation Fund.
These projects are necessarily cross-sector and ideally cross-border. Given that all EU members have equal rights to the Fund it is in the Benelux region's interest to focus its submission on the cross-border Benelux projects with the highest impact for the region as a whole rather than a broader range of competing "national" projects.

The BBR is working towards that goal.

I gladly reiterate BBR's great satisfaction with your ambitious and inspiring declaration which we fully support.

It would be very helpful to the Benelux case, which is so well described in it, if your declaration as well as the recommendations of the Benelux Parliament drew greater public attention. The BBR will gladly contribute to its further distribution through our actions and our public communication.

Eric ter Hark,
Executive chairman, Benelux Business Roundtable