

Seeking resources for the new upturn

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“Finland must be able, even in the middle of an economic crisis, to regenerate boldly and build for the future. The situation requires rapid crisis measures and unwavering responsibility for competitiveness,” stresses Sakari Tamminen, Chairman of the Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK).

According to Tamminen, after the recession people will be waking up to a different world. Every company and nation will be faced with sharper competition. In order to survive Finland will need improved expertise, flexibility and extremely strict cost discipline.

“National economies will be competing increasingly over the attractiveness of the operating environment they will be able to offer to companies that operate on global markets. We in Finland must not lose this game,” Tamminen says.

Strong signs flashing

Tamminen demands crisis awareness for the whole of society and particular responsibility for the labour market. Everything possible must be done so that companies will be able to keep their market positions and hone their striking force for the start of the upturn.

“Productivity must be improved and attention given to cost competitiveness. There is no room for pay rises now,” Tamminen says.

“As far as productivity is concerned, it is crucial for us to be able to take out the rigidities in the collective agreements, increase agreement on a company-by-company basis and promote flexible working-hours arrangements. There must be purpose and continuity behind the agreements.”

Tamminen is at pains to point out that every decision must now be assessed from the perspective of competitiveness. “Now, if ever, we need belief in the future and strong signs that it is worthwhile for companies to invest in Finland.”

“We must guarantee that all the tax and other measures aimed at companies are effective and they support corporate activity in the best way possible,” Tamminen says.

Adult training

Ways of alleviating the effects of the economic crisis are also being sought through a comprehensive reform of adult training. The AKKU working group, which is preparing the reform, is linking adult education and the development of skills at the workplace ever more closely together.



“It is extremely important for companies and employees to use the recession period to improve their training and skills,” says **Markku Kopponen**, EK’s Director of Training and Education.

“Shared purchasing of workforce training, an expansion of apprenticeship training, an increase in vocational training and part-time studying will open up many new opportunities.”

Sakari Tamminen, Chairman of the Confederation of Finnish Industries. (Photo: Ruukki)

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