

## EU and Central Asian Chambers discuss common priorities

Today the 117<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly of EUROCHAMBRES and the first EU-Central Asia Business Forum were held in Jūrmala, gathering leaders of Chambers of Commerce and Industry from more than 40 states – including Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – to discuss topical business issues as well as establish cooperation between regions.

The President of EUROCHAMBRES Richard Weber pointed out three priority areas for action: reducing youth unemployment, making capital more easily available to small and medium-sized enterprises, and breaking down barriers to EU-Central Asia trade. *“For the moment our greatest concern is the new generation,”* he said. *“We are therefore looking forward to meeting educated young people from Central Asian countries, who are welcome to study in Europe, as well as work here.”*

The President of the Kyrgyz Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Marat Sharshekeev, said that this Business Forum was crucial for Central Asia, due to the difficulty of accessing the EU market with their goods. *“In business fora such as these we can deal with the issues that arise when obtaining the necessary certificates and permits, and improve general cooperation,”* said M. Sharshekeev. A share of experience and knowledge was therefore an equally important reason to be in Latvia.

The president of the Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Aigars Rostovskis, declared that Latvia’s current problem lies with the number of young students who decide to emigrate. *“We need investors who are willing to carry out projects, build businesses and base their activities in Latvia in order to give these young people a reason to return and live in their own country.”*

All those present expressed the hope that similar business fora could recur each year, in order to allow representatives of European and Central Asian Chambers to regularly discuss common problems and agree on future solutions.

More information of the first EU-Central Asia Forum is available on <http://bit.ly/1JQ3SMp>

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**EUROCHAMBRES** – The Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry represents over 20 million businesses in Europe – 98% of which are SMEs – through members in 43 countries and a network of 1700 regional and local Chambers.

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**The Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI)** is a politically neutral business association uniting micro, small, medium and large enterprises from all Latvian regions and economic sectors. It brings together more than 1300 individual members and more than 50 business unions. LCCI is a Member of EUROCHAMBRES since 1993.

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