

PRESS RELEASE

EUROCHAMBRES urges President Barroso to relaunch Lisbon

In a meeting with José Manuel Barroso today, Christoph Leitl, President of EUROCHAMBRES, assured the EC President of the full support of European business for pursuing the goal of economic reform and employment.

“European business pays the highest tribute and respect to the decision of Mr Barroso to make the economy the heart of his tenure. A rebalanced and truly sustainable approach of the Lisbon strategy has not only been EUROCHAMBRES’ top priority for a long time. It is also a clear necessity to secure Europe’s position as a business location and the only way to boost employment”, Mr Leitl said. The Chamber President outlined to Mr Barroso that 10 million new jobs should be created by 2010.

Mr Leitl continued: *“We welcome Mr Barroso’s modification of the Commission’s working methods – especially the more systematic use of impact assessments with wide-ranging consultations before taking major legislative initiatives. Business is ready to play an active role, but urges the Commission to not only consult the traditional social partners – unions and employers’ associations, but to include all relevant economic actors.”*

Mr Leitl offered the EC President the full support of Chambers for the implementation of a European communication strategy. He said: *“The Lisbon strategy is not well known nor well understood by the European citizens. The European Chamber network with its regional and local footing and 18 million member companies - can introduce a good understanding to the Strategy and a sense of urgency among the population.”*

Currently, European Chambers are actively rallying support for the European Constitution. They are running an information campaign aimed at entrepreneurs in view of upcoming referenda and ratification processes.

Mr Leitl concluded: *“Conducting a thorough and positive mid term review and prioritizing the targets - bearing in mind the need for stability and growth - would result in a chance for Europe to be able to compete on a global scale and not only to survive. The promising start of the Barroso Commission and the meeting with the President today fuels my optimism for a positive result.”*

On Thursday 27 January, European Chambers will present the business agenda 2005 to members of the European Parliament during a lunch time event.

FURTHER INFORMATION: Mr. Arnaldo Abruzzini, tel.: +32 2-282 08 52, abruzzo@eurochambres.be

PRESS CONTACT: Ms. Tosca Purr, tel.: +32 2-282 08 53, purr@eurochambres.be

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