

PRESS RELEASE

European Chambers urge MEPs to make Europe more competitive: Opportunity for 10 million new jobs

At the presentation of the business agenda 2005 in the European Parliament today, EUROCHAMBRES' President Christoph Leitl urged MEPs to support strong economic performance in Europe by adopting legislation which needs to be more competitiveness and business-oriented.

Commenting on the Commission's strategic objectives and its work programme 2005 presented on Wednesday, Mr Leitl said: *"Chambers fully back the priority of the Barroso Commission on growth and jobs. With an economic growth rate target of 3% for each of the next five years we have the chance to create 10 million new jobs by 2010. After enlargement and the agreement of the European Constitution last year, the time has come to concentrate efforts to kick start the economy and restore the citizens' confidence in Europe. Chambers are ready to play their part in the envisaged Partnership for European Renewal. Equally, it is time for the European Parliament and the Prime Ministers to come on board."*

At the top of the business agenda are a rebalanced Lisbon Strategy, a Financial Perspective and a reform of the Stability and Growth Pact. Making the right choices here without making any compromise on the economy will lay the basis for sustainable development, more jobs and securing social welfare. In this context, European Chambers urged MEPs to support more investments in R&D, infrastructure and training and education.

Mr Leitl offered the European Parliament the expertise of the European Chamber network representing more than 18 million enterprises. Mr. Leitl said: *"We will not always agree with the European Parliament, but we value the relationship and we commit to a constructive dialogue."*

EUROCHAMBRES' president also called on the MEPs to better communicate Europe and bring it closer to its citizens. He said: *"Europe seems to have lost touch with its citizens. In these times we need the personal commitment of each MEP to promote the European idea at home."*

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