

PRESS RELEASE**“Business Trade Forum EU-Southern Africa” is born**
A voice for the private sector in EPA negotiations

A new instrument was formed to help European and SADC businesses make their voice heard: the Business Trade Forum EU-Southern Africa (BTFES). The BTFES is an independent private sector body, created to encourage the business involvement in the development of future trade relations between the EU and SADC regions.

The Forum will seek to develop an effective working relationship with negotiators from both the EU and SADC in order to expedite the speedy conclusion of the negotiations.

The successful completion of EPA negotiations is crucial for both African and European enterprises. It is therefore important that the input and expertise of the private sector are taken into account when addressing the challenges of these negotiations. The BTFES will give companies the chance to make their voice heard.

Priority areas for the Forum are: Agricultural Market Access, Industrial Market Access, Trade Facilitation, Services and Sustainable Economic Development and Implementation and Monitoring of the EPA.

The BTFES met in Gaborone (Botswana) on 8-9 March, in parallel to the EU-SADC Senior Officials Meeting on EPA Negotiations.

Contact list**European Union Private Sector**

- European Business Council for Africa and Mediterranean – Fernand Matos Rosa, ebcam@skynet.be
- BUSINESSEUROPE/MEDEF – Phillipe Gautier, pgautier@medef.fr
- European Services Forum – Pascal Kerneis, P.Kerneis@esf.be
- Private Investors in Africa – Richard Sterneberg, R.Sterneberg@cs-brussels.com
- EUROCHAMBRES, Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry – Dirk Vantghem, vantghem@eurochambres.eu

Southern Africa Private Sector

- Associated SADC Chambers of Commerce and Industry – George Djolov, georged@ascci.org.za
- SADC Employers Group /Business Unity South Africa – Jerry Vilakazi, Jerry.Vilakazi@busa.org.za
- Southern Africa Confederation of Agriculture Unions – Ajay Vashee, Ajay.Vashee@sacau.org

EUROCHAMBRES – The Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry represents 46 members, a European network of 2000 regional and local Chambers with over 19 million member enterprises in Europe.