

## European Chambers and Commissioner Lewandowski discuss future EU financial framework

EUROCHAMBRES yesterday exchanged views with Janusz Lewandowski, European Commissioner for Financial Programming and Budget, on the new EU financial regulation, the EU budget 2011 and the financial perspectives 2014-2020.

Speaking at the Association's plenary assembly in Brussels, gathering senior representatives of Chambers of Commerce from 45 countries, Mr Lewandowski emphasised efforts to ease business access EU funds more easily and to shift the budget more towards competitiveness areas.

### New EU Financial Regulation

Presenting the Commission's vision for a new EU Financial Regulation, Mr Lewandowski said: *"Simplification should come for SMEs, the most flexible part of EU economy. Let's hope that the legislative procedure is not going to be lengthy."*

EUROCHAMBRES welcomed the Commissioner's proposals, which address the main concerns of the Chamber network, namely:

- A lack of cohesion of EU budget rules across the European Commission and its delegations abroad;
- The problem of re-granting;
- An excessive focus on cost-incurred reporting, rather than results-driven.

### Budget 2011

*"In the EU budget 2011 there are certainly some increases which are of interest to businesses. Overall, greater leverage of resources will be necessary by pulling European budget funds and match them with private funds,"* said Commissioner Lewandowski.

EUROCHAMBRES welcomes the Commission proposal on the draft budget 2011, which broadly goes in the direction of devoting more resources to the 'growth and competitiveness' heading. This corresponds with the expectations of European entrepreneurs, who would double the expenditure on the 'competitiveness' subheading (from about 9% to an ideal 18%), thus devoting 50% of the EU budget to the 'sustainable growth' heading\*.

### Financial perspectives

*"The Commission proposal on the financial perspectives for 2014-20 will be delivered in mid-2011,"* said Mr Lewandowski. *"Let's hope that the economic and budgetary climate will be better then. We aim at a prudent but reasonable delivery."*

EUROCHAMBRES believes that the EU budget should first and foremost contribute to bridging Europe's knowledge and innovation gap, in order to enhance competitiveness and raise productivity. It must focus more on growth and less on redistribution.

\* European entrepreneurs were polled on this issue during the first edition of the 'European Parliament of Enterprises' in October 2008.

**Picture of Commissioner Lewandowski at EUROCHAMBRES' Plenary Assembly can be downloaded from <http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/photo/photo.cfm?id=4642&sitelang=en>**

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EUROCHAMBRES – The Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry represents over 19 million enterprises in Europe – 96% of which are SMEs – through members in 45 countries and a European network of 2000 regional and local Chambers.