

EU budget 2009: EUROCHAMBRES urges even more resources for 'competitiveness'

Yesterday the European Commission adopted the Preliminary Draft Budget for 2009. EUROCHAMBRES is pleased to see that, this year again, the bulk of the overall budget (44.7%) is devoted to the 'sustainable growth' heading.

However, within this heading, which amounts to EUR 60.1bn, still only EUR 11.7bn (less than 9% of the whole budget) go to competitiveness, innovation, research and education objectives, while over EUR 48.4bn go to cohesion policies. EUROCHAMBRES believes that more money should be spent for research, innovation and truly growth-oriented policies.

Arnaldo Abruzzini, Secretary General of EUROCHAMBRES, said: *"In a context of economic slowdown, enhancing competitiveness is the single most pressing need facing European businesses. The EU budget has to play a key role in this respect and in particular it should contribute to enhancing the EU's levels of investment in R&D and of productivity. Ensuring 'sustainable growth' for Europe means first and foremost giving it the means to bridge its knowledge and innovation gap with other major world players."*

A 5-year instead of a 7-year framework

EUROCHAMBRES believes that the EU budget responsiveness to changing needs could be greatly enhanced. In this respect, the future adoption of a financial framework of 5 years – coinciding with the terms in office of the European Parliament and the European Commission – instead of a 7-years one, would ensure more financial responsibility, as well as a higher degree of stability, effectiveness and flexibility.

In this way, the budget could better reflect the Union's current priorities and future challenges, providing value-added to European citizens and businesses.

Further information: Mr Giovanni Campi, Tel. +32 2 282 08 83, campi@eurochambres.eu
Press contact: Ms Guendalina Cominotti, Tel. +32 2 282 08 66, cominotti@eurochambres.eu
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