

20 million businesses support Swedish Presidency

Today EUROCHAMBRES' President Pierre Simon, Deputy President Peter Egardt and Secretary General Arnaldo Abruzzini met Fredrik Reinfeldt, Prime Minister of Sweden – the country which will hold the Presidency of the EU as from 1 July.

They conveyed the full support of EUROCHAMBRES' 20 million member enterprises for the priorities of the Presidency, and reminded the Prime Minister that, regardless of institutional obstacles, Europe's business community is looking to the Swedish Presidency to provide strong, stable leadership as the EU contends with the immediate effects of the crisis and longer term issues, notably competitiveness and climate change.

Actions aimed at mitigating the impact of the crisis on businesses were at the heart of the discussions. In particular, EUROCHAMBRES underlined the importance of guaranteeing free trade and competition.

"The Swedish Presidency and all stakeholders should work unremittingly towards a balanced, ambitious and comprehensive Doha Development Agenda agreement in the coming months. This will without doubt boost confidence at all levels and provide a strong sign of Europe's commitment to the recovery of trade flows and the global economy and opposition to protectionism," said Mr Simon.

EUROCHAMBRES also invited the Swedish Presidency to explore the possibility of establishing an SME guarantee fund at EU level, possibly managed by the European Investment Bank, which would act as counter-guarantee to national schemes and facilitate access to credit for smaller enterprises.

Chambers also recalled the role of the Small Business Act as a crucial tool to respond both to the short term needs of Europe's SMEs and to establish conditions that will stimulate business creation and growth in the long term.

EUROCHAMBRES then addressed with Mr Reinfeldt the issue of climate change and of December's United Nations Summit in Copenhagen, insisting on the need to bring international partners on board, so as to fight climate change effectively, while at the same time not endangering the competitiveness of European businesses.

EUROCHAMBRES' recommendations to the Swedish Presidency can be downloaded from www.eurochambres.eu/content/default.asp?PageID=1&DocID=1749

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