

EU-China Summit: where is the SME focus?

On the eve of the EU-China summit, EUROCHAMBRES calls upon policy makers to pay increased attention to the role of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in strengthening EU-China relations.

A recent study of the European Commission revealed that less than 15% of European SMEs are involved in international trade outside the EU. Within that group, China is primarily a source of imports, rather than a destination for European exports*. The same study confirms the direct link between internationalisation, innovation and growth.

Looking at EU-China relations, the message is therefore clear: Europe needs to increase its efforts to bring European SMEs closer to the Chinese market. The forthcoming SME Centre is an important step forward, but more needs to be done to prepare companies at home, and reduce the risk of failure once they enter the Chinese market.

EUROCHAMBRES' Secretary General Arnaldo Abruzzini commented: *"Increasing our support to SMEs does not necessarily call for more resources, but can also be realised by pooling existing resources. We have excellent national experts and support structures, why not share that expertise among all European business?"*

EUROCHAMBRES therefore encourages both the EU-China political and business summit to put special emphasis on the potential of SME development to strengthen long term relations. *"It will enhance the EU's competitiveness and stabilise our relationship with this giant of the economy,"* concluded Mr Abruzzini.

* "Internationalisation of SMEs" - European Commission DG Enterprise, 2010

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