

Chambers question research focus of Innovation Union

EUROCHAMBRES today expressed concern about the disproportionate emphasis on research in the European Commission's "Innovation Union". Despite an apparent recognition of the many shapes, forms and sources of innovation by the new Commission in recent months, Chambers interpret this communication as a return to a research-driven strategy.

Arnaldo Abruzzini, Secretary General of EUROCHAMBRES, said: *"Research undeniably remains a vital element of innovation, but it is only one of many important ingredients. Strengthening Europe's entrepreneurial eco-system and empowering more people to see themselves as innovators is equally important. Innovation is not just about scientific breakthroughs."*

Chambers welcome certain elements of the communication, notably efforts to enhance access to finance for innovative companies, the focus on business-academic collaboration to develop new curricula, the further development of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology and the strong message regarding the EU patent.

The proposed European Innovation Partnerships rightly reflects the need to foster collaboration between a wide variety of stakeholders in the innovation chain. However, the description suggests a top-down approach, which focuses on predefined societal challenges like climate change, scarce energy or health. Chambers fear that this approach will inevitably favour big industry to the detriment of smaller enterprises.

Mr Abruzzini explained: *"Entrepreneurs repeatedly tell us that they need to be able to pursue their innovative ideas freely and have quick and simple access to research institutes if and when required. A demand-driven approach to research would serve them better than a top-down, 'challenge-driven' process."*

Further information: Ms Margarete Rudzki, Tel. +32 2 282 08 81, rudzki@eurochambres.eu
Press contact: Ms Guendalina Cominotti, Tel. +32 2 282 08 66, cominotti@eurochambres.eu
All our press releases can be downloaded from www.eurochambres.eu/content/default.asp?PageID=153