

**PRESS RELEASE**

## **Charter for Small Enterprises: Some good progress, but not uniform or consistent**

Addressing the Conference on the European Charter for Small Enterprises today in Berlin, Arnaldo Abruzzini, Secretary General of EUROCHAMBRES, reiterated the Chambers' strong support for the Charter, whose format has to date proved a successful one in creating a supportive business environment for small enterprises. But he also underlined that the integration of the Charter reporting process into the annual Lisbon reports must not lead to a loss of the genuine focus on small companies.

*"Despite the progress made by some States in implementing the Charter, big differences remain in the depth and speed of the reforms. Progress in the area of entrepreneurship is patchy. A number of financial obstacles still hamper the development of small enterprises, particularly their access to lending. And setting-up an enterprise is still a long, complex and costly process. The current pace of change is too slow,"* said Mr Abruzzini.

EUROCHAMBRES puts forward a series of recommendations that national governments and EU Institutions should address in order to give a serious impetus to "free" companies, especially the small ones, in Europe. Among the suggestions made:

- Concrete annual Charter commitments should be defined for Member States each year. A space within the annual Lisbon reports for Charter monitoring should be created to give a stronger form of political peer pressure and induce stronger political commitment by the Member States in this area.
- Establish annual Charter conferences in each Member State to promote the exchange of successful policies and to engage national actors more fully.
- Involve the regions more intensively in the Charter process as success in many fields (e.g. entrepreneurship education, support services to small enterprises, improvement of online access) depends highly on the actions undertaken at regional level.
- Launch an Award for Excellence in Enterprise Education to encourage schools in enhancing the extent and quality of enterprise education.

**EUROCHAMBRES' Position on the Charter can be downloaded from:**  
[http://www.eurochambres.eu/PDF/pdf\\_position\\_2007/070604-PP\\_SECharter.pdf](http://www.eurochambres.eu/PDF/pdf_position_2007/070604-PP_SECharter.pdf)

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