

PRESS RELEASE

European Council: A new Treaty for 2009 a must, Chambers say

With a few days to go before the European Council of 21-22 June, Chambers of Commerce and Industry urge Heads of State and Government to go beyond their national interests and to consider the higher interests of the European Union when discussing about the future shape of the European Constitutional Treaty. Given the number of divergent positions on this issue, there is a real danger that the outcome of the Summit will be an agreement based on the lowest common denominator.

Pierre Simon, President of EUROCHAMBRES, said: *"The improvement of the competitiveness of European companies and the improvement of the living conditions of 489 millions citizens means 'more Europe'. Whatever form the next treaty will take, it is essential that it should be in force in 2009. It is also essential that it provides a global view of the policies that the EU will pursue to face the economic, demographic and environmental challenges."*

In Chambers' view, the new Treaty should ensure that:

- The EU institutions are efficient, operational with an increased decision capacity. To this end, Chambers support the extension of the **qualified majority voting**, and the reduction of the length of the legislative process.
- The EU is given the tools to **speak with one voice** with a mandate of two-and-a half years for the European Presidency and the appointment of a responsible for foreign affairs.
- The role of the national parliaments is safeguarded in the control of the application of the **subsidiarity and proportionality** principles in all EU actions to combat any excessive regulation (Early Warning principle).
- The **new areas of actions** of the EU in the field of energy, climate change, education and training and the reinforced provisions regarding research and development are preserved.

Heads of State and Government must nourish more ambition for Europe. Can we afford a slowdown of European integration when the growth rate of the EU lags behind the other developed countries?

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