

PRESS RELEASE**EUROCHAMBRES launches programme to support economic co-operation between Turkey and the EU**

EUROCHAMBRES, the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry, is launching a new development programme which will support the internationalisation of Turkish enterprises through strengthened relations between EU and Turkish Chambers of Commerce. This was announced by Christoph Leitl, President of EUROCHAMBRES, who met with Rifat Hisarciklioglu, President of the Union of Turkish Chambers, in Vienna yesterday.

The "Turkish Chamber Development Programme", co-financed by the European Commission with a €1 million grant, will help Turkish Chambers to develop new services in the field of internationalisation and local development via partnerships with EU Chambers. The activities will last for 12 months and complement a Chamber twinning programme completed successfully by EUROCHAMBRES in 2003.

Christoph Leitl said: *"This new programme illustrates EUROCHAMBRES' ambition to strengthen EU-Turkey business relations in a very sensible, practical manner. We want to focus on economic development and co-operation for the benefit of our Turkish and EU business members. Previous experience has indicated the great potential of promoting economic co-operation, but also highlighted the need to improve communications between EU-Turkey business organisations and enterprises."*

The Union of Turkish Chambers of Commerce has been a member of EUROCHAMBRES since 1966.

Trade relations between the EU and Turkey

The European Union is Turkey's main trading partner. In 2002, 51.5% of Turkey's exports went to EU Member States and 45.5% of imports to Turkey came from the European Union. From 1990 to 2002, EU merchandise trade with Turkey tripled (EU-exports increased from €3.2 bn to €24.3 bn; while EU imports rose from €6.2 to €22.0). *

Website of the European Commission: http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade/issues/bilateral/countries/turkey/index_en.htm

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EUROCHAMBRES has member organisations in **41** countries representing a network of **2,000** regional and local Chambers with over **17 million** member companies.

