

PRESS RELEASE

Financial Perspectives **Chambers criticise proposed cuts in “growth and jobs”**

European Chambers strongly criticise proposals to cut funds for EU competitiveness in the EU's future financial perspective.

Commenting on the vote on MEP Reimer Böge' report in the EP yesterday and the proposal by the Luxembourg Presidency, Christoph Leidl, President of EUROCHAMBRES, said: *“It is very disappointing that the Presidency proposes to cut most in funds for competitiveness, a staggering 40%. It is difficult to understand that at a time when fears about job losses and our economy dominate European citizens, alarming signals - once more - are not picked up. Competitiveness must be our priority – at the same time Europe must intensify the dialogue with its citizens.*

“The problems of unemployment and loss of competitiveness will not disappear by themselves. Reducing our efforts and investing less is counter productive and undermines Europe's future. We are in the process of cutting the roots of the tree, which has already lost too many of its branches!”

Chambers demand that Europe's priority lies in the revival and competitiveness of the European economy and that this be reflected in the financial perspectives. Instead of cutting funds for R&D, education and competitiveness, they should be raised or at least be kept at the level initially proposed by the European Commission, implying a 'ring-fence' around Chapter one (Sustainable Growth) of the Financial Perspectives.

Mr. Leidl continued: *“The Financial Perspectives are a moment of truth for Europe and for the Member States. If we don't provide the funds to improve Europe's competitiveness, we will fail to create growth and jobs. I remember well the high sounding declarations by the Member States at the Spring Council asking for urgent action, to refocus on growth and employment and to provide funds to the policies that contribute to the Lisbon priorities. The Member States must now live up to these grand words. ”*

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