

**PRESS RELEASE**

## **EUROCHAMBRES meets Portuguese Prime Minister and outlines priorities for next EU Presidency**

*"It is a key moment to reinforce the economy, and every effort has to be made in order to effectively exploit the current window of opportunity."* This was the main message delivered yesterday in Lisbon by Pierre Simon, President of EUROCHAMBRES, to José Sócrates, Prime Minister of Portugal, who will hold the Presidency of the European Union as of 1 July.

In the interest of millions of companies and their employees, European Chambers urge the future Presidency to put competitiveness and growth at the top of its agenda, and to make significant steps forward in a number of "hot" policy areas.

### **Revised Treaty – Let's move on**

Chambers welcome the outcome of the European Council of 21-22 June, and the end of the EU's institutional deadlock. The Portuguese Presidency should make sure Member States at the Intergovernmental Conference get a real mandate for negotiation: we can't afford their decisions to be put again in question, like it was the case in the past.

Mr Sócrates confirmed that the process should be concluded by mid October.

### **Innovation – Ahead with the EIT!**

The integration of education, research and entrepreneurship is vital for achieving innovation, growth and jobs. European Chambers urged the Presidency to move forward regarding the European Institute of Technology (EIT) to make it a success model of excellence in innovation. Also crucial is to strengthen the interaction between business and universities to help develop an education relevant to the needs the labour market, with an SME perspective in particular.

### **European Private Company Statute – Decisions without delays**

Smaller private firms call for the creation of a European Private Company Statute (EPCS), that would allow them to set up subsidiaries in a form recognised throughout the EU. EUROCHAMBRES urges the Council to follow up closely the dossier and not accept any delay in the proposition of a regulation on the EPCS.

### **Market access – Companies want "Gateway" to China and to India**

EUROCHAMBRES called on the Presidency to launch initiatives to help European SMEs enter the Chinese and Indian markets, based on the model of the successful export-support programme "EU Gateway to Japan".

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EUROCHAMBRES – The Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry represents over 19 million enterprises in Europe through 46 members and a European network of 2000 regional and local Chambers.

## **Tripartite Social Summit – Towards a more inclusive consultation process**

Concerning the EU framework social agreement, EUROCHAMBRES fully supports the view that a limited number of representative bodies should be involved on each side of the negotiating table. We fundamentally object, however, to the description of such a limited number and type of bodies as 'the social partners'. Negotiation of social agreements is not the same as consultation on general business issues. Management and labour alone do not comprise a balanced, inclusive social and economic partnership. Chambers requested the support of the Portuguese Presidency for a more inclusive consultation process.

## **Environment and energy – Global perspective required**

Following on from first positive steps at the G8 Summit in Heiligendamm, Chambers urged the Portuguese Presidency to continue working to include other important players such as the US and China into the climate protection efforts. Negotiations about the global post-Kyoto framework, starting in December 2007, should aim at joint world-wide emission reduction actions to which Europe can contribute without endangering its competitiveness. It is important that measures taken to fulfil the ambitious targets set by earlier councils are also economically feasible. This can be achieved by making use of the existing potentials where they cost least, by removing administrative obstacles for the use of renewables, and by not placing the resulting cost on the business sector.

## **Maritime policy – Keep businesses in mind!**

The integrated EU maritime policy should take greater account of the legitimate interests of business and reflect at least three essential approaches:

1. Take account of the global character of the maritime sector and promote global governance;
2. Keep a balance between ecological, social and economic objectives;
3. Create incentives and avoid additional regulation.

*“It is vital to European business that the enlarged European Union succeeds as a competitive and growing economy, responding with flexibility to the challenges of globalisation. The Portuguese Presidency can make a real contribution to this goal. EUROCHAMBRES looks forward to working with the Presidency, recognising its importance as a driver of competitiveness,” Mr Simon said.*

**All EUROCHAMBRES' recommendations to the Portuguese Presidency can be downloaded from [http://www.eurochambres.eu/PDF/pdf\\_position\\_2007/070625-PP\\_PortuguesePresidency.pdf](http://www.eurochambres.eu/PDF/pdf_position_2007/070625-PP_PortuguesePresidency.pdf)**

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