

PRESS RELEASE

European Summit **Time for “good intentions” has gone by,** **Chambers say**

EUROCHAMBRES, the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry, urged European leaders who will meet in Brussels on 16-17 June to agree on the financial perspectives and to clarify how to proceed after the “Constitutional crisis”.

Christoph Leitl, President of EUROCHAMBRES called on the heads of state to “*show real leadership for Europe and deliver a strong message to the citizens*”. He said: “*We need clear decisions and not repetitive declarations of intent. We cannot afford to continue the climate of uncertainty. We need a big step forward!*”

No cuts of funds for EU competitiveness

Chambers oppose any reduction of funds for R&D, education and competitiveness in the future EU budget (2007-2013) as recently proposed both by the Luxembourg Presidency and by the EP in accepting the report of MEP Reimer Böge.

“*In adverse winds you have to paddle harder*”, Mr Leitl said. “*To cut funds for competitiveness by 40% is like depriving a sick man of medicine he urgently needs. If we want to secure Europe’s economic and political weight in the world we must also provide the relevant budget. Instead of cutting investment in areas in which the EU can achieve a competitive edge we should raise it.*”

“*European business is already suffering heavily from the weak economic climate and international competition from emerging economies like China - accompanied by the stuttering chances for growth and jobs - and international competition will only increase. We must face this situation and act. Europe has arrived at a dangerous crossroads!*”

Re-connection with the EU citizens: Launch of a communication campaign

EUROCHAMBRES urged the heads of state to finally abandon the widespread use of “two-faced communication” – adopting a European stance in Brussels and complaining about Europe in national debates.

The Summit should give the green light for the launch and the funding of a European communication campaign to reconnect with the EU citizens, their concerns and their doubts, Chambers say.

Mr Leiti pointed out: *“To yield to the temptation of current euro scepticism and waves of nationalism is a cheap and dangerous populism. No European country can solve the problems of unemployment and increased competition alone. We need political leaders who have the guts to confront the citizens with this reality. “*

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