

PRESS RELEASE

EU Trade Policy: EUROCHAMBRES urges WTO members to respond to EU initiative

Yesterday's initiative by EU Commissioners Pascal Lamy and Franz Fischler to advance WTO negotiation constitutes a window of opportunity to reach an agreement on framework modalities for the Doha Round by July, EUROCHAMBRES said. The business organisation representing over 17 million companies in 41 countries urged the other WTO members to make equally significant efforts and move the agenda forward on the OECD meeting in Paris on 13-14 May.

Christoph Leitl, President of EUROCHAMBRES said: *"The EU initiative can be a turning point on the multilateral trade agenda which has been deadlocked since the break-down of the Ministerial conference in Cancun last year. The EU has shown flexibility on key areas where movement is needed. However, the EU should not make concessions on its position without being matched by similar offers by other WTO members. A successful outcome of the Doha Round is essential for the European economy as well as for the global economic development."*

EUROCHAMBRES made the following specific comments on the letter sent by the EU to the WTO's 147 members:

On Agriculture: Business strongly supports the suggested cuts in export subsidies as this is paramount to move talks forward and to reduce trade distorting effects .

On the Singapore issues: EUROCHAMBRES understands that negotiations can only start on trade facilitation within the single undertaking. However, the EU should ensure that the other Singapore issues (public procurement, competition, investment) are not taken off the WTO agenda and that other ways of pursuing them are explored.

On industrial goods and services: For EUROCHAMBRES the EU is right to call for increased efforts and improved offers within these areas, as they constitute essential sources of growth in the developing and developed world alike.

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