

PRESS RELEASE

EUROCHAMBRES discusses European Growth Strategy with Dutch Presidency

EUROCHAMBRES President Christoph Leitl today met with Dutch Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Gerrit Zalm in Den Haag, and discussed a European growth strategy and possibilities to decrease the burden for entrepreneurs.

EUROCHAMBRES agreed with the Dutch presidency on the importance of cutting red tape and bureaucracy on the European level. By doing so, the European Commission would be able to reduce costs for regulation and legislation by 10 – 15 % within the next 5 years. Mr Zalm and Mr Leitl agreed that savings from cutting red tape should be invested in training, research and development as well as infrastructure in order to promote economic growth in Europe. They discussed the possibility to establish a committee on European level which will assess the effects of planned legislation for enterprises.

For EUROCHAMBRES the utmost priority of the forthcoming Dutch presidency is to get economic reforms back on track. Mr Leitl said: *“Under the Dutch Presidency the mid-term Lisbon review by the Wim Kok Group will be published and measures against the deadlocked reform process in Member States will have to enter into force. We urge the incoming Presidency to do the utmost to convince the other 24 Member States that there is urgent need for radical reform. Tinkering at the fringes will not deliver the reform needed. If Member States are reluctant to embark on painful structural reforms that will get Europe growing again, the Lisbon vision will die.”*

EUROCHAMBRES called on the Dutch Presidency to help ensure that Competitiveness is the overarching principle in the new Commission’s work programme.

Priority areas for the next EU Presidency in business’ view are:

- Exert greater pressure on the European Council to deliver on the promises of Lisbon. The ineffective ‘Open Method of Co-ordination’ must be strengthened.
- Vet all proposals for legislation by posing a simple question: Will this legislation make European business more or less competitive vis a vis our competitors abroad? Turn back bad proposals.
- Promote labour market flexibility and better regulation and insist on the completion of the single market - this will result in more business, more enterprises and more jobs.

page 1 of 2

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



- Exert maximum pressure on Member States to respect and uphold the Stability and Growth Pact.
- Encourage all national tax administrations to accept the Home State Taxation project proposed by the Commission – the potential beneficial impact on SMEs is significant.

Business community can play positive role in the consultation process

EUROCHAMBRES believes that the Dutch Presidency can also be a positive influence towards ensuring that Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and other recognized business representative bodies, are offered the opportunity to play a constructive role in consultations on economic issues.

The organisation representing 17 million enterprises - 80 of which % are SMEs - called on the Dutch Presidency to involve all significant economic actors in its own organisation of key events and to urge the European institutions to accept that the role of 'social partners' should include consultations with a wider, more representative group of social and economic partners

Meetings with Commissioners Kyprianou, Hübner and Figel

Mr Leitl will discuss the needs of European business with Markos Kyprianou, Commissioner for Budget, Danuta Hübner, Commissioner for Trade, and Ján Figel, Commissioner for Enterprise and the Information Society, tomorrow.

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