

**PRESS RELEASE**

## **EU-China Summit: European SMEs need Gateway to China, Chambers say**

Ahead of the EU-China Business Summit in Beijing on 5 September, EUROCHAMBRES urged decision-makers at European level to launch “EU Gateway to China”, a programme which should help European SMEs to enter the Chinese market.

Christoph Leitl, EUROCHAMBRES' President, said: *“The Chinese market should also be considered an opportunity, not only a challenge. We need more positive action from the European side! The launch of an “EU Gateway to China” programme would be an effective way to support European exports and to encourage SMEs to benefit from the opportunities China offers!”*

With steady economic growth rates beyond 9%, the purchasing power in China continues to increase and investment opportunities are widespread. International trade is of key importance for European business – especially in times of stagnant economies.

A successful example for trade promotion is “EU Gateway to Japan” – an export-support programme for SMEs launched by the Commission in 1994 and coordinated in Europe by EUROCHAMBRES. In 10 years of activities, 68 trade missions to Japan have been organised for nearly 1,750 small and medium sized European companies. The participants estimate more than €500 million of increased business as a result.

### **Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) laws should be enforced**

Regarding the protection of IPR – a sensitive issue in EU-China relations - EUROCHAMBRES pointed out that, although China has made significant progress, it still has not enforced its basic laws on IPR issues.

The WTO TRIPS agreement (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) provides a foundation for IPR protection, but enforcement is lacking in many parts of the world. EUROCHAMBRES urged the WTO Member States to focus on this issue and to cooperate with the business community in finding solutions to this serious problem.

Since joining the World Trade Organization in 2001, China has amended its IPR laws to comply with the WTO “TRIPS” agreement. However, China continues to be a haven for counterfeiters and pirates.

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