

PRESS RELEASE**G8 meeting: don't forget SMEs, Chambers urge!**

Ahead of the G8 meeting in St. Petersburg (Russia) on 15-16 July, EUROCHAMBRES outlines its expectations for the summit, urging G8 members to bare interests of SMEs in mind under all chapters of negotiations.

Pierre Simon, President of EUROCHAMBRES, said: *"G8 countries represent the giants of world economy...but G8 leaders should not forget that the major driving force in each of their countries are SMEs! We urge them to keep this in mind under all chapters of negotiations. If SMEs can benefit from G8 decisions, the global economy will benefit from them too."*

EUROCHAMBRES particularly attracts G8 members' attention on the following issues:

Energy – "Quid pro quo" is key

Energy will be at the heart of G8 discussions. EUROCHAMBRES calls for an approach based on reciprocity: the outflows of energy from Russia should be matched by inflows of EU capital and technology. A necessary prerequisite for this is the reinforcement of rule of law and administrative procedures in Russia. Further, the business communities ought to sit at the negotiation table, in order to create a favourable and competitive environment for companies.

Climate change – Europe cannot stand alone

When it comes to climate protection, Europe alone is not able to reverse the trend. Unless other global emitters like the United States and Russia follow, all European efforts will be in vain. EUROCHAMBRES asks those members of the G8 to reconsider their position on the Kyoto protocol and join EU efforts to reduce green house gas emissions. Additionally, Chambers stress that all measures to combat climate change must encompass energy efficiency and renewables.

WTO negotiations – St. Petersburg can save Geneva!

G8 members should use the G8 summit as an occasion for unlocking the current WTO stalemate. Progress which has been made on the issue of Trade Facilitation should be secured, in the interest of SMEs around the globe.

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EUROCHAMBRES has member organisations in 44 countries representing a network of 2,000 regional and local Chambers with over 18 million member companies.

Africa – Trade and development go hand in hand

EUROCHAMBRES welcomes the efforts to include the African continent in the global economy. Sustainable economic development must be based on good governance, fair market access and capacity building for all layers of civil society. In particular, building up a critical mass of entrepreneurs can be the foundation for a stable society.

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