

PRESS RELEASE

EU companies to get closer to EU officials **EUROCHAMBRES partner of new “Enterprise Experience Programme”**

European SMEs can only benefit from EU initiatives if the EU understands SMEs' needs. This mutual understanding will be made easier thanks to the new “Enterprise Experience Programme”, launched today by EU Commissioner for Enterprise Günter Verheugen in partnership with EUROCHAMBRES and two other business organisations.

“Enterprise Experience” will allow officials of Directorate General Enterprise and Industry to spend a training week in a company, in order to be exposed to business life and to the challenges SMEs are typically confronted with. The long term objective is to provide a “reality-check” for decision makers, so as to improve overall enterprise policy. EUROCHAMBRES will propose a list of potential host companies through its European network of Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

Pierre Simon, President of EUROCHAMBRES, said: *“It has been voiced from many sides – including ours – that Europe suffers from a lack of communication with its people. This programme will not only be a communication exercise for the Commission, but also a unique opportunity for SMEs to raise awareness about their concerns among the relevant decision-makers. We believe this will greatly contribute to policy making and to overall cohesion in Europe.”*

The programme has already been tested in a pilot phase with 7 company-visits of EC officials, including 4 SMEs-members of the Chamber network.

Jerzy Wisniewski, President of Polish company PBG S.A., hosted EU official Valère Moutarlier during the pilot phase. According to him: *“Hosting Mr Moutarlier was an exciting and rewarding experience for our company. We could learn more about the current situation on the EU market and the perspectives of investment abroad. At the same time, we believe Mr Moutarlier got a better understanding of our company’s projects and aspirations. We would have hardly achieved this without the “Enterprise Experience” initiative.”*

“Enterprise Experience” will now be fully implemented with the goal of training all of the 300 administrators in DG Enterprise by the end of 2009.

Further information on the “Enterprise Experience Programme”:
<http://www.eurochambres.eu/activities/EnterpriseExperience.shtml>

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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.