

PRESS RELEASE

EUROCHAMBRES criticizes planned cuts for information of citizens in 2005 EC budget

EUROCHAMBRES, the European Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, has strongly criticized the intention of the European Commission to cut the budget for the information tools for the citizens.

The draft general budget for 2005 intends to cut these commitments by a quarter to €7.3 million, whilst the administrative expenditure of the press and communication policy area shows an increase of 10% to €113.30 million.

“Mr Barroso’s announced goal to attach particular importance to communicating Europe – as underlined by attributing the portfolio of a communication strategy for the European Commission to Vice-president Wallström – must be also followed by actions. Reducing the budget for getting in touch directly with the European citizens and increasing the administrative expenditures on the other hand means going into reverse gear and is certainly not the right signal to the European citizens”, Christoph Leitl, President of EUROCHAMBRES said.

Mr. Leitl continued: *“The disappointing voter turnout at the EP elections – less than half of the citizens made use of their democratic right – is sad proof that Europe is still far away from getting the European message through. Chambers call upon European leaders to increase their dialogue with the people - supported by a solid and reasonable funding – and certainly not by cutbacks. The priority for savings has to be the administrative side and not the side of the citizens!”*

The general budget 2005 has been already discussed in the EP’ budgetary committee in July. The European Parliament is due to adopt its position after the first reading in Strasbourg in October.

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