Blue Card Scheme still too cautious, EUROCHAMBRES says

Following today's vote by the European Parliament on the proposed Blue Card scheme, EUROCHAMBRES expresses its satisfaction with the fact that, for the first time, the EU is taking a common approach to the issue of legal economic migration.

This reflects the views of European entrepreneurs who clearly supported the Blue Card proposal by 76%, in the context of last month's European Parliament of Enterprises.

However, EUROCHAMBRES thinks that the text is still too cautious and cumbersome to respond to the alarming skills gap in the European labour market, especially in sectors such as engineering, information technology and transport.

Arnaldo Abruzzini, Secretary General of EUROCHAMBRES, said: "*There is clear evidence that competitiveness and innovation are mainly generated by highly-skilled workers. But recent figures say that only 5.5% of highly qualified migrants from the Maghreb states come to the EU, while about 54% opt for the United States or Canada. If we are to reverse this trend, we need a much more ambitious text than the one which we have today on the table. With this watered-down directive, we cannot expect the EU to become a magnet for workers in an unbureaucratic, flexible and efficient way.*"

EUROCHAMBRES believes that the Blue Card should not be restricted only to third countries with which the EU has already concluded bilateral cooperation and partnership agreements. Chambers are also concerned about the minimum pay level that has been set, which may be prohibitive for small and medium enterprises.

EUROCHAMBRES also thinks that the EU should put in place a common approach to managing the migration of low- and middle-skilled workers, since those are the ones on which SMEs mainly rely on.

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EUROCHAMBRES – The Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry represents over 19 million enterprises in Europe – 96% of which are SMEs – through members in 45 countries and a European network of 2000 regional and local Chambers.