

PRESS RELEASE

EUROCHAMBRES calls on German Presidency to look beyond 2010

In a meeting with Thomas de Maizière, Head of the German Federal Chancellery, in Berlin today, President Pierre Simon outlined EUROCHAMBRES' expectations for the upcoming German Presidency of the European Union, reiterating that competitiveness and growth should be at the top of the agenda.

Mr Simon said: *"While we hope that a number of the crucial issues for European business will already be completed under the Finnish Presidency, it is probable that many will fall to the German Presidency to resolve. Europe in particular needs vision. We urge the German Chancellery to already start planning the post-Lisbon period and to propose an ambitious multi-annual programme for the EU after 2010."*

EUROCHAMBRES also urged for progress under the following four key chapters:

1. Lisbon Strategy – Don't let go!

Despite very mixed implementation to date, the Lisbon Strategy remains the most important over-arching EU initiative. EUROCHAMBRES urges the German Presidency to encourage Member States to upgrade their aspirations and set more concrete and more ambitious targets – especially regarding employment, labour market reform and the internal market – and speed up implementation. EUROCHAMBRES also requests the Presidency to begin the discussions on what will follow the Growth and Jobs initiative after 2010.

2. Constitution – Action must replace reflection

The German Presidency should push the political debate on the Constitution to a conclusion. It should already anticipate implementation of crucial proposed elements such as extension of majority voting, participatory democracy and consultations processes. In parallel, a communication campaign on the benefits of the EU and its last enlargement should be launched at national, regional and local level, using already existing networks such as Chambers of Commerce.

3. Trade – Multilateralism should remain the rule

Following the failure of the WTO Doha negotiations, the German Presidency has a crucial task to safeguard the very existence of a multilateral framework for trade. Attempts to move into a competitive process of bilateral trade agreements would be devastating for the world economy and for the individual entrepreneur, in particular the small companies.

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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.

4. Tripartite Social Summit – Towards a more inclusive consultation process

The Presidency should intensify co-operation with Chambers as decided during the 2005 Spring Council and include EUROCHAMBRES in its organisation of events and consultations – including the Tripartite Social Summits. EUROCHAMBRES understands that a limited number of representative bodies should be involved on each side of the negotiating table; however, management and labour alone do not comprise a balanced, inclusive social and economic partnership.

EUROCHAMBRES' full message to the German Presidency can be downloaded from http://www.eurochambres.eu/PDF/pdf_position_2006/German%20Presidency%20Sept%202006.pdf

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