

PRESS RELEASE**EUROCHAMBRES recalls importance of respecting enlargement criteria**

EUROCHAMBRES acknowledges today's publication by the European Commission of its "enlargement package"* which reaffirms the strict conditions that candidate and potential candidate countries, including their business communities, must fulfil to reach EU accession.

The main obstacles faced by candidate countries on the way to enlargement are not of economic nature. Since these countries have been granted a privileged statute towards the EU, trade and investment flows with the EU have increased significantly.

Moreover, linkages between EU Chambers of Commerce and their correspondents in those countries have improved thanks to programmes such as PARTNERS in the Western Balkans and the Turkish Chamber Development Programme (TCDP) in Turkey, coordinated by EUROCHAMBRES in the past years.

The obstacles mentioned by the EC reports are mainly of political nature. In this respect, Pierre Simon, President of EUROCHAMBRES, recalled the necessity for all these countries to align with the *acquis communautaire* in order for full political integration to be achieved.

"It is a matter of common sense that when you are invited at someone's, you adapt to the habits of the house. Similarly, those countries who are invited to join the EU club, should do as much as they can to comply with its standards and rules. We look forward for further progress to be made in this respect, as both the EU and acceding countries would greatly benefit from reinforced cooperation," Mr Simon said.

* The yearly Enlargement Strategy Paper and the Progress Reports on Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey. All these countries' Chambers of Commerce are members of EUROCHAMBRES.

FURTHER INFORMATION: Ms. Micol Martinelli, tel.: +32 2-282 08 63, martinelli@eurochambres.eu
PRESS CONTACT: Ms. Guendalina Cominotti, tel.: +32 2-282 08 66, cominotti@eurochambres.eu

All our press releases can be downloaded from: <http://www.eurochambres.eu/press/>

EUROCHAMBRES has member organisations in 45 countries representing a network of 2,000 regional and local Chambers with over 18 million member companies.