

PRESS RELEASE

Global Chamber Platform calls for agreement on Trade Facilitation in the WTO

Simplification and more transparency are priorities

In view of the first formal session of the WTO negotiating group on Trade Facilitation (15 November, Geneva) the Global Chamber Platform (GCP), which links Chamber networks around the world, urged the WTO to achieve an agreement on trade facilitation in the run up to the 2005 Hong Kong Ministerial Conference.

Christoph Leitl, President of EUROCHAMBRES said: *“Companies in both developing and developed countries are still facing too many barriers to trade. The decision to launch negotiations on Trade Facilitation in Geneva in July represents a window of opportunity to come to grips with this issue and to establish strong multilateral rules. The global business community, as represented in the GCP, urges WTO members to deliver!”*

Many of the existing provision for Trade Facilitation in the WTO are partly out-of date and non-binding. Based on the work already done in the WTO, but also in other organizations such as the World Customs Organization and the UN, the WTO now needs to deliver on:

Transparency: more transparent and predictable trade and customs procedures are needed by business world-wide. Transparency reforms are not resource demanding and should be a WTO priority.

Simplification: border procedures are unnecessarily burdensome in most countries. Simplifying these holds significant benefits for both traders and governments.

Using best practice: the WTO does not need to reinvent the wheel as a great number of well-functioning solutions to facilitate trade already exist. Standardization, electronic customs procedures, risk-management techniques etc. are just some examples of measures to be introduced globally.

The Global Chamber Platform

The key objective of the Global Chamber Platform is to facilitate trade and market access internationally and to develop a coherent answer to the challenges of globalisation, using fully the potential of chambers around the world.

The GCP members currently include :

- ACP Chambers of Commerce and Industry
- Asociación Industrial Latino-Americana (AILA)
- Association of Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASCAME)
- Caribbean Association of Industry and Commerce (CAIC)
- China Chamber of International Commerce (CCOIC) – China Council for Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT)
- Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI)
- EUROCHAMBRES
- Federation of GCC Chambers (FGCCC)
- Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)
- Ibero-American Association of Chambers of Commerce (AICO)
- Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Mines
- Junior Chamber International (JCI)
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation
- SAARC Chambers of Commerce and Industry

The US Chamber of Commerce is an observer in the GCP and endorsed the position on Trade Facilitation

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The GCP position paper "Trade Facilitation" is available at: http://www.eurochambres.be/PDF/pdf_trade/GCP%20PP%20TF.pdf