



BUSINESS SOFTWARE ALLIANCE, EUROCHAMBRES, EUROPEAN PRIVATE EQUITY AND VENTURE CAPITAL ASSOCIATION & EUROPEAN SOFTWARE ASSOCIATION APPLAUD CONCLUSIONS OF THE EUROPEAN ICT COMPETITIVENESS TASK FORCE REPORT AND URGE BOTH THE COMMISSION AND INDUSTRY TO DELIVER

Brussels, November 27th, 2006 – In anticipation of the adoption of the European ICT Competitiveness Task Force Report today, the Business Software Alliance (BSA), The Association of European Chambers of Commerce (EUROCHAMBRES), European Private Equity and Venture Capital Association and the European Software Association urge the European Commission, Member States and industry to deliver on the actions identified by the Report in order to ensure that information and communication technologies (ICT) deliver on their essential contribution to European innovation, growth and job creation and the competitiveness of Europe's knowledge-based economy.

The report offers several critical recommendations on the future of the ICT industry in Europe. In particular, the organisations welcome the focus the Task Force has placed on the following:

- **The importance of intellectual property rights (IPR):** Promoting the value of IPR is essential to ensuring European innovation and competitiveness. Maintaining Europe's comprehensive intellectual property protection system while improving the legal certainty and accessibility of the patent system through the Commission's current patent reform efforts will benefit innovators large and small.
- **The contributions of European ICT SMEs:** Improving the business and regulatory environment for European SMEs including ensuring access to funding, promoting investment in ICT and equipping them with essential entrepreneurial skills is critical to leverage the contributions of this increasingly important sector to Europe's long-term competitive success.

Francisco Mingorance, Director of Public Policy Europe for the BSA said: "This report recognises that fostering innovation and encouraging both entrepreneurship and investment are vital to meeting European goals on growth and competitiveness. Through its current efforts at European patent reform, the Commission has the opportunity to improve Europe's already good patent system via ratification of the European Patent Litigation Agreement (EPLA) and London Agreement, reducing cumbersome language requirements, improving legal predictability in the marketplace and making patent protection more accessible for all innovators, large companies and SMEs alike."

Patrick Bertrand, CEO of Cegid, Member of the Board of the European Software Association and a Task Force member said: "The European SME environment needs encouragement by the European institutions, Member State governments and industry. ICT SMEs need to know how they can gain access to funds, use IPR to protect their products and develop the necessary entrepreneurial skills to ensure their future success. This report outlines many of the obstacles that ICT SMEs face including the availability of ICT services and products. The European Software Association has agreed to work on a blueprint for action to implement the recommendations on SMEs in the report to the software industry."

Arnaldo Abruzzini, Secretary General, EUROCHAMBRES said: "Entrepreneurship must be encouraged throughout the EU by ensuring that training on entrepreneurial skills is provided to students in technical or scientific fields and start-up ICT SMEs, and that financial incentives are available for the creation of SMEs. In this respect, the Commission proposal to establish the European Institute of Technology is ambitious in its goals and we support it. It will be vital to have the participation of the ICT sector in the Knowledge Innovation Communities (KICs). Finally, e-government, e-procurement and e-signature are all key enablers of ICT uptake by businesses, and must be promoted further."

Javier Echarri Secretary General EVCA commented: "Innovations in the ICT sector are most often driven by venture capital financed companies and creating the right environment to support the entry and growth of young entrepreneurial firms is vital for Europe. It is of prime importance to ensure we have adequate protection for intellectual property rights in order to ensure a future for investments in this sector. In a digital age, where there are no borders for exchange of information, Europe's IPR system must maintain its global competitiveness."

The ICT Task Force was given a broad mandate, covering issues as diverse as ICT Uptake, IPR for Competitiveness and Innovation, SMEs and Entrepreneurship and Skills and Employability. All those involved in the process spent the past six months working to find common ground and identify areas where improvement is needed, with achieving the Lisbon Agenda goals as a target.

BSA, EUROCHAMBRES, European Private Equity and Venture Capital Association and the European Software Association would like to acknowledge the efforts of the European Commission, the members of the Task Force, and all other stakeholders who contributed to this important exercise designed to solicit consensus on concrete strategies by which the information and communications technology (ICT) sector can support Europe in meeting its Lisbon Agenda goals.

Further information on the DG Enterprise Taskforce on ICT Sector competitiveness & ICT uptake:

<http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/ict/taskforce.htm>

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About Business Software Alliance:

The Business Software Alliance (www.bsa.org) is the foremost organization dedicated to promoting a safe and legal digital world. BSA is the voice of the world's commercial software industry and its hardware partners before governments and in the international marketplace. Its members represent one of the fastest growing industries in the world. BSA programs foster technology innovation through education and policy initiatives that promote copyright protection, cyber security, trade and e-commerce. BSA members include Adobe, Apple, Autodesk, Avid, Bentley Systems, Borland, Cadence Design Systems, Cisco Systems, CNC Software/Mastercam, Dell, Entrust, HP, IBM, Intel, McAfee, Microsoft, PTC, RSA Security, SAP, SolidWorks, Sybase, Symantec, Synopsys, The MathWorks and UGS.

About EUROCHAMBRES:

The Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry represents 46 members (45 national associations of Chambers of Commerce and Industry and one Transnational Chamber Organisation), a European network of 2000 regional and local Chambers with over 18 million member enterprises in Europe.

About the European Software Association:

The European Software Association was created on 19 October 2005 and represents European Independent Software Vendors. Current members include: 1C (Russia), Beta Systems Software AG (Germany), Bizitek (Turkey), Business Objects S.A. (France), Cartesis S.A. (France), CCS, S.A. (Spain), CEGID (France), CODA Group (UK), Coretech (Turkey), Dassault Systèmes (France), Fenestrae B.V. (The Netherlands), Hogia AB (Sweden), KTW (Austria), Lexware GmbH & Co. KG (Germany), LogicaCMG (The Netherlands), Logo Yazilim A.S. (Turkey), Mamut ASA (Norway), Microsoft (France), msg systems ag (Germany), Northgate Information Solutions (UK), Oracle Corporation, Sage Group plc (UK), SAP (Germany), Selligent (Belgium), S.C. Info World S.R.L. (Romania), SkyRecon Systems (France), Totalsoft (Romania), Unicom (Czech Republic), Unit 4 Agresso (The Netherlands), Update Software AG (Austria), Version One (UK), @Road (UK).

About the European Private Equity and Venture Capital Association:

EVCA (The European Private Equity and Venture Capital Association), established in 1983 and based in Brussels, promotes, facilitates and represents the needs and interests of the private equity and venture capital industry in Europe. EVCA has over 925 members in 50 countries, including the leading fund managers in the European private equity and venture capital industry. (www.evca.com)