

PRESS RELEASE

WTO Hong Kong Ministerial: EUROCHAMBRES disappointed by lack of progress in key areas

Following the closing of the WTO Ministerial in Hong Kong, EUROCHAMBRES expressed its disappointment with the lack of progress in negotiations and with the meagre results of the Ministerial.

Instead of achieving a clear step forward towards a significant liberalisation agreement at the end of the Doha Round in 2006, WTO Members have once again postponed taking the much-needed decisions which would benefit both developed and developing countries.

EUROCHAMBRES' President Christoph Leitl said: *"Unfortunately, misunderstandings and misinformation about the EU's negotiation proposals have led many developing countries to objecting to offers which could have been widely beneficial to them. It also kept them from considering an opening of their own markets, which might have boosted their economies and lifted people from poverty. There is a clear need for extensive capacity-building in the trade policy area for the majority of developing countries, so that they can form their own positions."*

Chambers were particularly disenchanted to see yet another WTO Conference focusing on agriculture and neglecting those areas that are of key interest and importance to businesses, not only in Europe but worldwide. It was particularly worrying to see the reduced ambitions on NAMA and services.

While recognising the good work of the European negotiators in Hong Kong, the recent internal arguments and the unfortunate overlap with the European Council in Brussels have had a detrimental impact on the EU's bargaining position in the WTO.

EUROCHAMBRES called on the European Union and its Member States to build a coherent and common position on trade policy.

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