

**PRESS RELEASE**

## **EUROCHAMBRES and EESC strive for closer co-operation in view of the 2010 goal**

The ambitious goal of the European Union to become the most competitive and knowledge based region of the world by 2010 can only be achieved by a bottom-up approach involving the social-partners on all levels. This is the joint message of EUROCHAMBRES and the European Economic and Social Committee after a meeting of EESC President Roger Briesch and EUROCHAMBRES' President Christoph Leitl today.

Mr. Briesch and Mr. Leitl agreed that a closer co-operation between EUROCHAMBRES and the EESC can play a vital role in reaching the Lisbon target. Efforts in this area have become more urgent following the publication of the Commission assessment reports, issued earlier this week, which highlighted a significant lack of progress made to date on the Lisbon Agenda.

With a network of 2,000 regional and local Chambers in 41 countries EUROCHAMBRES represents a broad platform of European businesses. Christoph Leitl said: *"EUROCHAMBRES member organisations represent businesses of every sector and every size. This is an invaluable asset. We want to combine this with the expert knowledge of the EESC which gathers different actors from business and the civil society and to contribute together to a common European strategy based on entrepreneurial initiative."*

As positive examples of regional initiatives which have increased employment, Mr. Leitl and Mr. Briesch mentioned the cases of Lothringen and Upper-Austria.

Now, EUROCHAMBRES and the EESC intend to develop joint measures which will strengthen the competitiveness of businesses and increase employment on a pan-European level.

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**FURTHER INFORMATION:** Mr. Abruzzini, tel.: +32 2 -282 08 52, [abruzzo@eurochambres.be](mailto:abruzzo@eurochambres.be)  
**PRESS CONTACT:** Ms. Tosca Purr, tel.: +32 2 -282 08 53, [purr@eurochambres.be](mailto:purr@eurochambres.be)

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The Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry has member organisations in 41 countries representing a network of 2,000 regional and local Chambers with over 1.7 million member companies.

NON-PROFIT INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

RUE ARCHIMEDE, 5 B-1000 BRUSSELS, BELGIUM - TEL. +32 2 282 08 50 - FAX +32 2 30 00 38 / 280 01 91 - [eurochambres@eurochambres.be](mailto:eurochambres@eurochambres.be) - [www.eurochambres.be](http://www.eurochambres.be)