

Innovate to Grow: EU Priorities for the New Political Term



EUROCHAMBRES

Connecting business to Europe



Photo: Parlement européen

EVERY CHALLENGE IS AN OPPORTUNITY

The immediate effects of the crisis and longer term challenges relating to competitiveness, demographic shifts and climate change loom large over the EU institutions as the new legislative term commences. Policy makers' reaction is crucial and the old adage that 'every challenge is an opportunity' has never been more pertinent.

The EU must demonstrate its ability to lead the response to these monumental challenges. In order to do so, reform is no longer optional; it is essential. Chambers look to

the EU institutions to set an important precedent by putting in place priorities, structures, procedures and resources that are fit for the purpose of pursuing a forward looking and innovative agenda for sustainable growth.



WHAT'S GOOD FOR BUSINESS IS GOOD FOR EUROPE

The economic recession has created considerable difficulties for Europe's business community. This has inevitably had a knock-on effect on society as a whole, one symptom of which has been political frustration and apathy at many levels, not least European.

This interrelation underlines that what's good for business is good for Europe and reinforces EUROCHAMBRES' commitment, as the leading European business network, to engage ever more effectively with EU decision makers to ensure that their policies reflect the needs of the business community.





Photo: Parlement européen

THE EUROPEAN CHAMBER NETWORK

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120 million employees

19 million businesses

2000 Chambers of Commerce of Industry

45 national Chamber associations

1 European association: EUROCHAMBRES

A unique intermediary between policy makers and business

Established in 1958 as a direct response to the creation of the European Economic Community, EUROCHAMBRES acts as the eyes, ears and voice of the business community at EU level. Thanks to its unique network of national, regional and local Chambers of Commerce and Industry, EUROCHAMBRES represents the views and needs of businesses of all sizes and sectors, from self-employed freelancers through to major multinationals.

EUROCHAMBRES CONNECTS BUSINESSES AND POLICY MAKERS

Bringing entrepreneurs to the heart of the EU: the inaugural **European Parliament of Enterprises** took place in October 2008 as part of the official agenda of the French Presidency of the EU. For one day, the Brussels hemicycle was filled with over 700 entrepreneurs from across the Chamber network, to debate and vote on key issues in the presence of leading policy makers including Parliament President, Hans-Gert Pötering, Commission President, José Manuel Barroso and Commission Vice-President, Günter Verheugen. The second edition of this important event will take place in 2010.

Offering EU officials direct business experience: EUROCHAMBRES is the primary source of host companies for the **Enterprise Experience Programme** and has facilitated placements for many Commission officials in SMEs across Europe over recent years.

Legitimacy, expertise and accessibility: policy makers' single point of contact on business issues

As a consequence of their day to day contact with a vast range of businesses, Chambers can provide politicians and officials with an invaluable insight into the views of the business community.

This unique perspective is harnessed at EU level through EUROCHAMBRES' consultation procedures, engaging Chambers and their members at national, regional and local level in defining priorities and contributing to EU policies.

EUROCHAMBRES thus represents an incomparable source of expertise, input and feedback on business related issues for EU policy makers. This is ensured by a dynamic, experienced and highly qualified team of Brussels policy experts, complemented by a huge network of advisers in 45 European countries. EUROCHAMBRES' increasing presence and activities in North and South America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia assure a global perspective.

EU policy makers can access this expertise via:
policy@eurochambres.eu



KEY ELEMENTS OF EUROPE'S GROWTH AGENDA

Innovation is not the exclusive preserve of businesses; constant economic, demographic and climatic change necessitates an innovative approach by all stakeholders, not least policy makers. EUROCHAMBRES urges the EU institutions to demonstrate a capacity to innovate in addressing the many challenges ahead and to pay particular attention to the following elements that will contribute significantly to European growth.

CHAMBERS MAKING GLOBALISATION A REALITY FOR BUSINESSES

• Each year, European Chambers support almost 1 million businesses in their internationalisation process, offering a wide range of services such as export coaching, market surveys and specialised trade missions. These services are provided by a pool of nearly 7,500 international trade experts in Europe and via 500 offices abroad.

• EUROCHAMBRES complements these services by implementing a range of programmes at European level, including the European Business and Technology Centre in India, Understanding China, AL Invest and Invest in Med.

Markets for Growth

The ability to identify and capitalise on market opportunities is of course fundamental to business growth. Progress towards more open and accessible markets – both within and beyond the EU - therefore remains one of the EU's primary objectives. The economic crisis should galvanise policy makers in this pursuit, rather than distracting them.

EUROCHAMBRES calls for:

- A concerted effort by policy makers at all levels to put in place a legislative and operational framework that enables businesses large and small to provide services freely across the EU
- The rapid establishment of a regime that allows affordable protection and commercialisation of intellectual property throughout the EU
- Substantial and swift progress on all bilateral, regional free trade and association agreement negotiations, while simultaneously avoiding unilaterally imposed trade restrictions
- A redoubling of efforts to reduce the scourge of counterfeiting
- A stronger European presence on the global market place, organised through a solid public-private partnership that builds on established structures in the target markets

Framework Conditions for Growth

Europe can no longer afford either to disregard the huge socio-economic contribution of entrepreneurs or to hinder business growth unnecessarily. In particular, the EU must provide SMEs with favourable framework conditions that reflect their role as the principal source of employment, innovation and growth.

EUROCHAMBRES calls for:

- Further progress in simplifying business start-up and transfer procedures
- Practical measures to address the increasingly acute difficulties encountered by SMEs, especially start-ups, in accessing credit and other forms of finance
- A renewed commitment to the better regulation agenda at EU level and significant net reductions in regulatory compliance and administrative costs on businesses from existing and new legislation
- Initiatives to facilitate and stimulate the take-up by SMEs of productivity-boosting innovations, for example ICT tools
- A closer correlation between EU policy priorities and the EU Budget, with a far greater allocation of resources to 'competitiveness'





Photo : BananasStock

Skills for Growth

21 million people in the EU are unemployed. Paradoxically, meanwhile, employers are unable to fill 4 million vacancies and Europeans remain reluctant to become entrepreneurs. These alarming figures highlight the continued skills mismatch often cited by Chambers, as well as policy makers' persistent inclination to secure jobs, rather than create employment.

EUROCHAMBRES calls for:

- The stimulation of entrepreneurship in schools and throughout working life
- Better skills forecasting - taking into account especially the needs of SMEs - as a basis for the provision of demand-driven vocational training
- Improved access to lifelong learning and re-skilling support to ensure that the workforce is able to adapt to change
- Employment regulations and social security systems that encourage businesses to create new opportunities and allow individuals to remain active in a constantly evolving labour market
- Effective and pragmatic measures to improve youth and workforce mobility across the EU

Sustainability for Growth

As the main source of Europe's productivity and economic activity, the business community is inherently a key stakeholder in the response to climate change. Chambers recognise this responsibility and are strongly engaged in meeting the 20:20:20 targets. It is essential that businesses are in turn recognised by policy makers as part of the climate change solution.

EUROCHAMBRES calls for:

- An International Climate Change Agreement that sets out effective global measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, engaging the world's major emissions producers, while not impairing European competitiveness
- Innovative, non-regulatory approaches to convince in particular SMEs of the business case for energy efficiency and renewable energies
- Coordinated and concerted EU and national actions to deliver 'smart green growth', building on existing European expertise in renewables, energy efficiency, environmental technology and eco-innovation
- Policy mechanisms for sustainable development that do not impose disproportionate financial or administrative burdens on businesses

CHAMBERS DELIVERING TRAINING AND LIFELONG LEARNING

2.7 million people are trained via Chambers each year, including 1.9 million young people taking part in initial training and nearly 800.000 adults involved in lifelong learning.

1.2 million apprenticeships are organised by Chambers annually in over 1.000 Chamber-managed training centres and schools.

CHAMBERS – SMEs' FIRST PORT OF CALL FOR INTELLIGENT ENERGY SUPPORT

The CHANGE project, co-financed by the European Union in the framework of the Intelligent Energy Europe programme and coordinated by EUROCHAMBRES, helps SMEs optimise their energy use by developing a European network of intelligent energy advisors in 60 Chambers across Europe.



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EUROCHAMBRES Full and Affiliated Members

FULL MEMBERS

AUSTRIA - The Austrian Federal Economic Chamber
BELGIUM - Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Belgium
BULGARIA - Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
CYPRUS - Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry
CZECH REPUBLIC - The Economic Chamber of the Czech Republic
DENMARK - Danish Chamber of Commerce
ESTONIA - Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
FINLAND - The Central Chamber of Commerce of Finland
FRANCE - The Assembly of French Chambers of Commerce and Industry
GERMANY - Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce
GREECE - Union of Hellenic Chambers of Commerce and Industry
HUNGARY - Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
IRELAND - Chambers Ireland
ITALY - Association of Italian Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Craft and Agriculture
LATVIA - Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
LITHUANIA - Association of Lithuanian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Craft
LUXEMBOURG - Chamber of Commerce of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg
MALTA - The Malta Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise
NETHERLANDS - The Netherlands Chamber of Commerce
POLAND - Polish Chamber of Commerce
PORTUGAL - Portuguese Chamber of Commerce and Industry
ROMANIA - Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania
SLOVAKIA - Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry
SLOVENIA - Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia
SPAIN - High Council of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Navigation of Spain
SWEDEN - The Association of Swedish Chambers of Commerce and Industry
UNITED KINGDOM - The British Chambers of Commerce

AFFILIATED AND CORRESPONDENT MEMBERS

ALBANIA - Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Albania
ARMENIA - Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Armenia
AZERBAIJAN - Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Azerbaijan Republic
BELARUS - Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA - Foreign Trade Chamber of Bosnia and Herzegovina
CROATIA - Croatian Chamber of Economy
GEORGIA - Georgian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
ICELAND - Iceland Chamber of Commerce
ISRAEL - Federation of Israeli Chambers of Commerce
FYR OF MACEDONIA - Economic Chamber of FYR of Macedonia
MOLDOVA - Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Moldova
MONTENEGRO - Chamber of Economy of Montenegro
NORWAY - The Association of Norwegian Chambers of Commerce
RUSSIAN FEDERATION - Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
SERBIA - Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Serbia
SWITZERLAND - Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Switzerland
TURKEY - The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey
UKRAINE - Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
INSULEUR - Network of Insular Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the EU



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