

I Press Release

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Conclusions of EUROCHAMBRES Congress: education and access to foreign markets are top priorities for ‘business without barriers’

The keys to Europe’s competitiveness lie in a skilled workforce, and in better access to foreign markets.

33% of participants of EUROCHAMBRES 16th Congress, which concluded today in Prague, voted for ‘more and better education and training’ as the main solution to tear down barriers to business in Europe. Skills are closely linked with the capacity to innovate, and a ‘Pact for Sustainable Jobs’ – as outlined by EUROCHAMBRES at the recent Employment summit in Prague – would be the best tool to address the mismatch between existing and required skills on the labour market.

One fourth of participants underlined the need to ‘secure an open global market and support European businesses in accessing third markets’. The internationalisation process implies huge opportunities for businesses to increase their profits, but enterprises need information and support in entering foreign markets.

16% of voters pledged for a reduction of regulatory and administrative burdens so as to continue the completion of the EU internal market. 13% of participants look forward to increased investment in Research and Development to foster innovation; 8% demand accessible financing instruments to alleviate SMEs’ cash-flow difficulties and 6% of them think Europe should position itself as a global leader in energy efficiency and environmental technologies.

The 400 representatives of Chambers, enterprises and institutions attending the event also overwhelmingly (90%) supported a final declaration stating that ‘the fight against the economic crisis and its consequences should not, on any account, be used as a pretext for protectionist measures’, and demanded the prompt implementation of economic recovery plans at EU and national level.

“We call on Europe’s policy makers not to overlook these strategic, long-term targets, so crucial to Europe’s future stability, prosperity and sustainability. Chambers of Commerce acknowledge their responsibility to work closely with the EU institutions in the pursuit of these recommendations,” said Pierre Simon, President of EUROCHAMBRES, in the Congress’ closing speech.

**The final declaration of EUROCHAMBRES’ Congress can be downloaded from
www.eurochambres.eu/content/default.asp?PageID=1&DocID=1816**

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EUROCHAMBRES – The Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry represents over 19 million enterprises in Europe – 96% of which are SMEs – through members in 45 countries and a European network of 2000 regional and local Chambers.