EUROCHAMBRES

2002 - 2005

CHRISTOPH LEITL

PRESIDENT OF EUROCHAMBRES

Report

EUROCHAMBRES
ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Report of EUROCHAMBRES activities 2002-2005 by Christoph Leitl

I would like to thank all of you who have contributed so much to our success during the last four years:

Thanks to Arnaldo Abruzzini and our EUROCHAMBRES staff.
Thanks to our Board and Plenary members.
Thanks to our Presidency members.

Christoph Leitl

Our results:

EUROCHAMBRES is strong in:

- INFLUENCE
- SERVICES
- ACCEPTANCE
- SUPPORTING VALUES
- EMOTIONS

EUROCHAMBRES: strong in INFLUENCE

Ø Tripartite Social Summit

In March 2004, EUROCHAMBRES participated for the first time ever in the Tripartite Social Summit Meeting. I have raised at several occasions during the last years the fact that UNICE has not included EUROCHAMBRES in the composition of the employers' delegation to the Tripartite Social summit meetings in autumn 2004 and spring 2005 and I have continued to ask for **EUROCHAMBRES' permanent representation in this important forum.** By including EUROCHAMBRES on a regular basis in this process, the outcome will increase and lead to a better realisation of the Lisbon goals.

Ø Global Chamber Platform

EUROCHAMBRES wishes to use its extended global Chamber network in order to enable European enterprises to enter and develop foreign markets with greater ease and to invite the European business community to act globally by demonstrating the positive aspects of globalisation. Therefore we have created a Global Chamber Platform to ensure that the wide range of services offered, and the vast resources owned and managed by Chambers around the world, are used for the benefit of our members. Future increased co-operation and exchange of experiences and opinions via the Global Chamber Platform will be vital for European enterprises doing business in a globalised world.

Ø Access to Finance – Basel II

During the last four years EUROCHAMBRES has been active in a wide range of European policy fields and has influenced legislative and political decisions on the European level by constantly monitoring and lobbying developments in these fields. Basel II is an example of EUROCHAMBRES' successful lobbying activities on the European level. I met Mr McDonough, then head of the Basel II Committee and representatives from the European Commission and the European Parliament to discuss the matter with them. On **behalf of SMEs,** EUROCHAMBRES achieved a lot of progress, especially concerning the classification of loan exposures to SMEs of up to €1 million as retail exposures. This is a big success and vital for SMEs.

EUROCHAMBRES: strong in SERVICES

Ø Projects

EUROCHAMBRES has participated in a number of projects (co-) funded by the European Union during the last four years, for example

- CAPE
- Gateway to Japan
- The Turkish Chamber Development Programme
- ATLAS and AL Invest
- Egypt-EBIS
- PARTNERS

Ø EUROCHAMBRES Annual Congress

Every year, high-ranking speakers including Commissioners, Members of the European Parliament, government representatives as well as representatives of the international business community, scientists, representatives of the European institutions and chamber and government representatives from all over the world discuss the most urgent and important European topics. There have been 13 Annual Congresses so far.

- October 2002, Antwerp: "Building Bridges between Business & Europe: Regions & Chambers"
- October 2003, Rome: "The Europe we Need"
- October 2004, Vienna: "A Competitive Europe in a Global World"
- September 2005 Stavanger: "Entrepreneurship and Jobs"

Ø Chamber House

In summer 2004, EUROCHAMBRES moved into and officially opened its new premises in the Chamber House in Brussels' Avenue des Arts. The goal of this step is to increase synergy effects with national Chamber organisations holding also offices in the same building.

EUROCHAMBRES: strong in ACCEPTANCE

Ø We are heard

EUROCHAMBRES has been asking for a so called "master plan" for more growth and employment in the EU during the last years. The European Central Bank should play an active role in this reform process. EUROCHAMBRES stands for supporting a business friendly environment that is the key to a more competitive European economy. EUROCHAMBRES has increased its weight and its role as an important player in the European and international decision making process. We have established close relations with the European institutions (European Commission, Council and European Parliament) and created new partnerships as for example a co-operation agreement with the European Economic and Social Committee.

Ø "Change Manager"

The Chamber network - by its unique nature and direct impact on the business community - is the best facilitator between the needs, wishes and the aspiration of business and the institutions involved in the legislative process at European level. I have communicated these advantages to European decision makers to **strengthen EUROCHAMBRES' role as a "Change Manager" on the European level**. The **EUROCHAMBRES Economic Survey** has helped to strengthen our Chamber network's role as the representative of the European business community.

Ø Communication

In July 2003, the e-**mail newsletter** "EUROCHAMBRES News" was introduced. It started with 2500 readers but already has more than 4.000 regular readers. **Media awareness** for EUROCHAMBRES has risen: regular appearance in Agence Europe, Financial Times, FAZ, CNBC Europe, EU-Reporter, La Tribune, Corriere della Sera etc. Overall press results tripled since 2002 up to 900 per year and there were over 45 TV/radio interviews for EUROCHAMBRES since 2003. Our creation of a EUROCHAMBRES **Press Officer Network** will strengthen the internal Chamber network communication further.

EUROCHAMBRES: strong in SUPPORTING VALUES

Ø Lisbon

A **survey launched by EUROCHAMBRES** at its pre-summit Business Forum in Brussels on the eve of the Spring Council 2005 has shown that the economic performance of the EU is about 20 years behind the one of the US. The **2005 mid term review of the Lisbon Strategy** provided an opportunity to re-launch and strengthen it. In this regard, we have invited the European Commission to promote EUROCHAMBRES' viewpoint that the three pillars of the Lisbon Strategy need to be rebalanced in favour of the economy to keep social and environmental development sustainable by stressing the necessity for the new Commission to seize the opportunity to lead Member States more compellingly. Lisbon Formula: to reach from 2005 until 2010:

5 (3/1) = 10

in 5 years: 3% growth per year è plus 1% employment è 10 Mio new jobs

Ø Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Following a Commission Communication "Corporate Social Responsibility: A Business Contribution to Sustainable Development", a Multi Stakeholder Forum on CSR was set up and launched in October 2002. EUROCHAMBRES was one of the participating stakeholders and promoted the views of businesses in political high level meetings but also in the 4 theme-based roundtables of this forum. EUROCHAMBRES went on to co-organise a series of 63 CSR awareness raising events aimed at SMEs throughout Europe.

Ø EWN – EUROCHAMBRES Women Network

Launched in 2003 the network's purpose is to support entrepreneurial activities of women as well as to promote their role in business life. EWN has been appointed by the European Commission to realize two projects: Women in Decision Making and CHASE: countering gender stereotyping at the workplace.

- **JADE**

  A co-operation agreement with JADE, the European Confederation of Junior Enterprises has been signed in Vienna in 2004 to foster the entrepreneurial spirit in training and education and to integrate young representatives of the business community into our work (motto: “Give youth a chance”).

EUROCHAMBRES: strong in EMOTIONS

Ø EU-enlargement

The last four years were marked by the biggest **enlargement of the European Union** ever. This **historical and political milestone** for Europe was also of great importance for EUROCHAMBRES. Altogether our network of European Chambers has widened from 1500 Chambers in 37 countries representing 15 million companies in the year 2002 to a number of **2000 Chambers organised in 44 national member associations representing 18 million member enterprises in the year 2005.**

Ø Commitment

During the last four years of activity we have contributed to further strengthen the position of EUROCHAMBRES as the voice of European businesses on the European and the international level. In meetings and regular contacts with a great number of high ranking representatives from different areas we have helped to achieve this increased weight of EUROCHAMBRES in its role as an important player in the European and international decision making process. In regular meetings with members of the **European institutions** and representatives of Chambers, governments and business from the EU and **third countries** that are important EU trade partners on the global level we have presented and discussed EUROCHAMBRES' priorities in political and economic questions that are essential for European businesses.

Ø European community

To strengthen the European community EUROCHAMBRES has engaged itself during the last years in:

- Drafting a Constitution for Europe and participating in the debate on the Future of Europe
- Deepening and consolidating the European community
- Contributing to more growth and competitiveness by creating an entrepreneurial spirit full of optimism and encouragement

Ø Business community

During the last four years EUROCHAMBRES has increased and strengthened its internal co-operation between EUROCHAMBRES member organisations and its external co-operation with business organisations and non EU-Chambers. Today the enlarged and strengthened EUROCHAMBRES family is fit for the future and is actively and with pleasure working together for its common goals.