



Press Release

Sophia Antipolis, 12 November 2008

5 proposals by Chambers of Commerce for a European Clusters policy

Chambers of Commerce, gathered today in Sophia Antipolis (France) for the “European conference of Chambers and Clusters¹”, adopted a common declaration aimed at decision makers which will meet tomorrow in Nice for the 4th Competitive Clusters Forum.

In particular, the ACFCI (Assembly of French Chambers of Commerce and Industry), the Nice-Côte-d’Azur Chamber and EUROCHAMBRES (Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry), presented 5 proposals for the implementation of a common European policy on clusters:

1. The success of clusters depends on that of **businesses**. Thus, business needs must be identified from the very first stage so as to create the best possible framework conditions.
2. **Small and Medium Enterprises** (SMEs) must be at the heart of clusters. Policy makers should adopt flexible mechanisms of cooperation between SMEs that will lead them to participate in clusters. Chambers can play a facilitative role in this respect.
3. It is important to enrich the cluster **management function**. To reach this objective, concrete measures should be adopted by policy makers, such as the exchange of experiences or the dissemination of best practices within clusters.
4. It is important to foster **trans-national cooperation** between clusters, so as to sustain their growth and visibility at international level.
5. Chambers demand a greater accessibility for businesses to **EU programmes** focused on clusters. Being prominently involved in the ‘Enterprise Europe Network’, Chambers can contribute to the process of informing businesses on opportunities offered by different European programmes.

“Clusters are one of the main conveyors of innovation for companies, and this is of utmost importance in the context of the Lisbon strategy which puts innovation at the heart of growth,” said Ben Butters, Director of European Affairs at EUROCHAMBRES. *“European Chambers have developed considerable experience in clusters, and are ready to support policy-makers in their efforts to strengthen clusters at European level, and support their development at international level.”*

The Chambers’ common declaration on Clusters can be downloaded from www.eurochambres.eu/content/default.asp?PageID=1&DocID=1388

Contact us!

ACFCI: Caroline HOOGENDOORN - c.hoogendoorn@acfc.cci.fr - +32 (0)2 221 04 24

CCI de Nice Côte d’Azur: Christine BRACAVAL - christine.BRACAVAL@cote-azur.cci.fr - +33 (0)4 93 13 73 97

EUROCHAMBRES: Guendalina COMINOTTI - cominotti@eurochambres.eu - +32 (0)2 282 08 66

¹ Clusters are defined as ‘geographic proximate groups of interconnected companies and associated institutions in a particular field, linked by commonalities and complementarities’ (Porter, 1998). Clusters gather partners, competitors, suppliers, customers, academic and governmental institutions, all situated in the same geographic area.