

Working Group on "Euro-Mediterranean Industrial Co-operation"

Meeting of 2-3 October 2003

Rome, Hotel Westin Excelsior, "Sala Giardino d'Inverno"

Agenda

Objectives and topics of the meeting

The **objectives** that we have set ourselves for this meeting include:

- Agree on the main lines of work programme during the final session, in order to strengthen the Euro-Mediterranean partnership on industrial co-operation (on the basis of an analysis of progress made in recent years and of a draft prepared by the European Commission in liaison with the Italian Presidency);
- Strengthen the links between co-operation programmes and the political objective to complete the free trade area; and
- Encourage exchanges of experience and good practice, as well as benchmarking between partners.

The discussions aimed at achieving the above-mentioned objectives will cover **two main topics**:

- The harmonisation of technical regulations and of conformity assessment procedures, with a view to the free movement of industrial products, and
- The development of an administrative, regulatory and financial environment favourable to the competitiveness of enterprises and to foreign investment in the region, including in the area of access to finance for SMEs.

Parallel progress in these fields is essential for the creation of the free trade area.

On the first theme, an important decision was taken at the trade ministerial conference of Palermo on 7 July 2003. Trade Ministers approved an action plan on the approximation of technical regulations and conformity assessment procedures. They mandated the working group in charge of 'trade measures relevant to regional integration' to monitor its implementation. The Rome meeting will take note of this progress, will define the way of keeping the working group on industrial co-operation informed about developments, and will decide on the opportunity to discuss the economic impact of implementing the Community legislation on industrial products.

In the field of enterprise policy, the European Commission has prepared a draft action plan, on which the members of the Working Group should give their opinion during the meeting. This document will be the basis for drawing up a programme of work for the next years, as requested by several members of the group at the last meeting. In this context, new strategies should be identified for the strengthening of industrial co-operation between the European Union and the Mediterranean partners, taking into account the orientations of the recent Commission communications, respectively on the relations with neighbouring countries and on industrial policy.

Structure of the meeting

The meeting will begin on a series of **political declarations** (early morning of Thursday 2 October). The European Commission will stress the new prospects offered by its proposal to strengthen relations with the neighbouring countries of the enlarged Europe.

A discussion on the **free movement of industrial products** (late morning of Thursday 2 October) structured around the results of the Palermo ministerial and of the MEDA assistance will follow.

Then, the debate on **enterprise policy** will be launched with:

- The presentation of a draft action plan by the European Commission, which is based on the experience of the policy dialogue with Candidate Countries and, in particular, on elements of the European Charter for Small Enterprises process (early afternoon of Thursday 2 October),
- Experience sharing on investment promotion (late afternoon of Thursday 2 October) and statements by representatives of employers and the banking sector aimed at identifying measures to facilitate access to finance (morning of Friday 3 October).

The final round table (afternoon of 3 October) will focus on the **future activities of the Working Group** and on the new strategies to follow for strengthening industrial co-operation, and in particular on the contents of the action plan proposed by the European Commission in liaison with the Italian Presidency.

Thursday 2 October

8.30 Registration

9.00 Opening

- Welcome speech by the President of the Institute for Industrial Promotion (co-organiser of the meeting with the European Commission), *Mr Riccardo Gallo*
- Introduction by Minister *Antonio Marzano*, Ministry for Productive Activities, Italy
- Introduction by Minister *Rachid Talbi El Alami*, Ministry of Industry, Trade and Telecommunications, Morocco
- "The new political framework for relations with neighbouring countries and enterprise policy in an enlarged Europe: Which consequences for the partners of South Mediterranean? "
Address by *Mr David White*, Director for Enterprise Policy, Directorate-General for Enterprise, European Commission

10.30 Coffee break

FIRST WORK SESSION: 10.45-13.00
FREE MOVEMENT OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS

10.45 Towards the free trade area: Preparations for the free movement of industrial products

Concrete progress is necessary to achieve the aim set in Barcelona to create a free trade area by 2010. The harmonisation of the legislation concerning the safety of industrial products and the procedures necessary for their marketing is an essential element to make a reality of the free movement of goods. On the occasion of the Trade ministerial meeting of Palermo on 7 July 2003, the European Commission proposed to use, with the Mediterranean partners that wish to make progress in this field, the experience gained and the working methods tested with the Candidate Countries at the time of their preparations for accession. The Ministers approved an action plan on the approximation of the product legislation (working document No1), which will be implemented by the working group on 'trade measures relevant to regional integration'.

During this session, the European Commission will explain the strategy in this field and the consequences of the Palermo decision. The results of the ongoing regional MEDA projects will be presented and participants will be encouraged to share information on all their current initiatives (objectives and results) in this area. The final discussion will deal with the future of the working group on these issues.

- Impact of the approval in Palermo of the action plan for the free movement of industrial products, *Mr Evangelos Vardakas*, Director for the Single Market: regulatory environment, standardisation and New Approach, Directorate-General for Enterprise, European Commission
- State of progress of ongoing MEDA regional programmes:
 1. Introduction and presentation of the new 'EuroMed Quality' programme - *Ms Anna Abariotou*, Unit 'Centralised operations for the Mediterranean', Directorate-General EuropeAid Co-operation Office, European Commission
 2. Second phase of the "EuroMed Market" programme - *Mr Eduard Sanchez Monjo*, EI PA, Spain

Tour de table and conclusions

13.00 Lunch

SECOND WORK SESSION: 14.30- 18.30 **ENTERPRISE POLICY**

This session will be dedicated to the second aspect of co-operation to encourage the creation of the free trade area: the framework conditions necessary for the creation and development of competitive enterprises. Public authorities have a key role to play in this area.

Here too, the experience gathered in recent years with Candidate Countries proved enlightening. The setting up of a regular dialogue on enterprise policy, based on the exchange of good practice and benchmarking, had a direct impact on national strategies for improving competitiveness, especially of SMEs. At the previous meeting of the Working Group, the European Commission presented the European Charter for Small Enterprises. It is now proposing to adapt the Charter and its monitoring process to the needs and priorities of Mediterranean partners.

The objectives of the first part of the session will be as follows:

- *Propose a new working method for the activities of the group, based on the identification and exchange of good practices (working document nr.2);*
- *Invite a Candidate Country to explain the value added of the process CC BEST/Charter;*
- *Collect the reactions of the members of the Working Group on the European Commission's proposal, including on the possible organisation of a conference at ministerial level in 2004 to adopt the Euro-Mediterranean Charter.*

After the coffee break, the second part of the session will cover an essential aspect for competitiveness, namely investment promotion, through the improvement of the legal and administrative framework (actions No2 and 3 of the European Charter for Small Enterprises). It is an area, where much progress has already been done in the Mediterranean region, and where it is possible to exchange good practices. The corresponding MEDA regional programme is already well advanced. Each delegation will be invited to participate actively in the discussion, by emphasising their most effective measures. The European Commission will propose to reflect the conclusions of discussions in the future work programme.

14.30 Opening of the afternoon session

- *Mr David White*, Director for Enterprise Policy, Directorate-General for Enterprise, European Commission

14.45 Towards the free trade area: Identification and exchange of good practices to strengthen enterprise competitiveness

- Presentation of the draft action plan for enterprise policy, *Mr Peter Wragg*, Head of the Unit 'Enterprise aspects of relations with candidate and neighbouring countries', Directorate-General for Enterprise, European Commission
- The Candidate Countries' experience of implementing the European Charter for Small Enterprises, *Mr Christos Loizides*, Director, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, Cyprus
- The role of service networks for the promotion of SMEs, *Ms Simona Marzetti*, Head of the International and National Networks Department, Institute for Industrial Promotion, Italy
- Good Practice and Support Programmes to Strengthen Enterprise Competitiveness, *Mr Wielfried Luetkenhorst*, Director of the SME Department, UNI DO
- The OECD Bologna Process: for Entrepreneurship and SME Competitiveness in a Global Economy, *Ms Marie-Florence Estimé*, Head of the SME Department, OECD

Tour de table and conclusions

16.30 Coffee break

16.45 Which administrative and regulatory framework to foster investment?

- Introduction by *Mr Andres Bassols*, Unit 'Barcelona process and Gulf countries, Iran, Iraq and Yemen', Directorate-General for External Affairs, European Commission
- Experience of a Mediterranean country: Lebanon - *Mr Andraos Bacha*, Head of the one-stop-shop Department, Investment Development Authority of Lebanon (IDAL)
- Experience of a country of the European Union: Ireland - *Mr Conor O'Mahony*, Head of the Small Business Unit, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
- State of play of the MEDA regional programme on investment promotion:
 1. Results of the "ANIMA Network" programme - *Mr Bénédicte de Saint-Laurent*, Invest in France, France
 2. Presentation of new actions (out-of-court settlement mechanisms for commercial disputes) - *Ms Anna Abariotou*, Unit 'Centralised operations for the Mediterranean', Directorate-General EuropeAid Co-operation Office, European Commission

18.15 Discussion and conclusions

20.30 Gala Dinner hosted by the Italian Presidency of the EU at Palazzo Barberini

Friday 3 October

THIRD WORK SESSION: 9.00–13.00
ENTERPRISE POLICY

9.00 Round table: "How to improve access to finance for enterprises?"

An improved access to finance is a priority for entrepreneurs in the region, as reflected in the declaration that UNICE and UMCE adopted in Rome in March 2003. It is also the focus of action No7 of the European Charter for Small Enterprises.

The objectives of this session are as follows:

- *I identify the problems to be solved, as expressed by representatives of employers and the banking sector;*
- *Draw operational conclusions to direct the future work of the Working Group on this issue (conclusions would give indications for the next Euro-Mediterranean Forum of Industrialists that will take place in Cairo);*
- *I identify new financing measures for local SMEs and foreign investors in the Mediterranean region.*

Moderators:

- *Mr Albrecht Mulfinger, Head of the Unit 'Access to finance', Directorate-General for Enterprise, European Commission*
- *Mr Francesco Rosario Averna, Vice-President for the Mezzogiorno, Confindustria, Italy*

Participants:

- *Mr Hassan Chami, Chairman of the Union of Mediterranean Confederations of Enterprises (UMCE) and of the General Confederation of Moroccan Enterprises (CGEM)*
- *Mr Aldo L. Kaslowski, Chairman of the Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (TUSIAD)*
- *Ms Dimitra Mitroyiannopoulou, Member of the Board of the Federation of Greek Industries (FGI)*
- *Mr Loutfi Mahzar, Adviser to the Chairman of the Federation of Egyptian Industries (FEI)*
- *Mr Antonello Pugliese, Director of the Euro-Mediterranean Investment Facility (FEMIP)*
- *Mr Luiz Mira Amaral, Vice-President of the Caixa de depositos (former Portuguese Minister of Industry, responsible for the PEDIP)*
- *Mr Eric Schettini, President, Viveris Management, Caisse d'Epargne de Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur*
- *Mr Wienfried Polte, Chairman of the DEG Board of Management (EDFI)*
- *Mr Gilles Garcia, World Bank, Vice-Presidency for Europe, Enterprise Outreach Services (EOS)*

11.00 Coffee break

11.15 Discussion

12.30 Conclusions

13.00 Lunch

FOURTH WORK SESSION: 14.30-18.30
FUTURE OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE WORKING GROUP

14.30 Round table: "How to strengthen the Euro-Mediterranean industrial co-operation?"

The objectives of this session are as follows:

- Discuss the new strategies to be adopted to strengthen North-South and South-South co-operation in the Mediterranean region,
 - on the basis of results obtained through the multilateral and bilateral co-operation initiatives for the modernisation of the private sector and the support to SMEs,
 - on the basis of the experience gained with Candidate Countries,
 - on the basis of the draft action plan presented by the European Commission and through the identification of new forms of co-operation, complementary and compatible with those currently in force;
- Define the role of the Working Group for the future; and
- Approve the action plan that will serve as a basis for drawing up a detailed work programme in 2004.

Co-chairmanship of the session:

- *Mr Luigi Corbò*, Director-General, Institute for Industrial Promotion (IPI), Italy
- *Mr Diego Mellado*, Unit 'Economic and trade co-operation for the Mediterranean region', Directorate-General EuropeAid Co-operation Office, European Commission

Participants:

- *Ms Neila Gongi*, Director-General, Ministry of Industry, Tunisia
- *Mr Hany Barakat*, First Under Secretary, Ministry of Industry, Egypt
- *Ms Jeanne Seyvet*, General-Director for Industry, Information Technologies and Post, Ministry for Economic Affairs, Finance and Industry, France
- *Mr Antal Nikodémus*, Director, Ministry for Economic Affairs, Hungary
- *Mr J. Ramon F. Cienfuegos*, Director, International Relations Department, Ministry for Science and Technology, Spain
- *Mr. Jean Eric Aubert*, Counsellor, Information and Communication Technologies, World Bank

16.15 Discussion

17.30 Conclusions of the session

18.00 Conclusions of the meeting by Mr Heinz Zourek, Deputy Director-General, Directorate-General for Enterprise, European Commission

18.15 Closure of the meeting by Mr Amed Sahin, Under-secretary for Industry, Turkish Ministry of Industry and Trade and by Minister Rocco Buttiglione, Italian Ministry for Community Policies

21.00 Gala dinner offered by the Institute for Industrial Promotion at Palazzo Pecci Blunt