



Vice President Günter Verheugen  
Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry  
European Commission  
Rue de la Loi 200  
B-1049 Brussels  
Belgium

4 November 2008

Dear Vice President,

BUSINESSEUROPE and BUSINESSMED, who together represent the Euro-Mediterranean business community, write to you in support of the sixth Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Industry which is set to take place in Nice on 5 and 6 November 2008 with, as its main themes: "Competitiveness, Innovation and Sustainable Industrial Development".

BUSINESSEUROPE and BUSINESSMED strongly support these three themes and the integrated approach towards the Mediterranean region. We are convinced that business organisations play a central role in addressing the challenges of regional cooperation and global competition.

In the run-up to this conference, BUSINESSEUROPE and BUSINESSMED have been actively involved in Mediterranean economic success. We have worked together with representatives of European and Mediterranean partner countries to make changes and improvements to the Euro-Mediterranean Industrial Cooperation Work Programme for 2009-2010. We hope that this programme will give impetus to SMEs in the Mediterranean partner countries and give more room to EU investors seeking to invest in high-potential Mediterranean partner countries for mutual benefit.

When it comes to the French Presidency BUSINESSEUROPE and BUSINESSMED have expressed public support for the integrated programme now known as the *Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean*. We have taken note of the interesting suggestions made by the French Presidency regarding projects and initiatives. We are of the opinion that the renewed interest in the region will provide a boost to a region that, sadly, has not lived up to its full potential. A fact that can be gleaned from an overly ambitious Barcelona Process which will very probably not culminate in a Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area by 2010. However the work done has been impressive and it should continue with the support of the European Union. You have our full support in this.



Finally, BUSINESSEUROPE and BUSINESSMED wish to focus your attention on our joint declaration (attached as annex), launched together with the MEDEF at the Third Euro-MED Competitiveness Day in Marseille on 3-4 July 2008. This declaration seeks to launch the Marseille Agenda for the strengthening of competitiveness of the northern and southern countries of the Mediterranean region.

The goals of the Marseille Agenda are ambitious yet pragmatic. It seeks to boost trade between the EU and the Mediterranean partner countries as well as between them by 10% per year for a tripling by 2020. It seeks to triple foreign direct investment by 2020, establish macro-economic stability targets, a safe regulatory environment for investment and finally, to double the GDP of the partner countries in the Mediterranean region by 2020. These goals will be reached by focusing on a number of solid economic pillars which will require political leadership.

In closing, BUSINESSEUROPE and BUSINESSMED are aware that the current financial crisis can dampen interest in investments in a region that is potentially rewarding but difficult in times of slowing economic growth and tight credit markets. We must maintain investor confidence by improving the investment climate. Improving economic cooperation in the region will help restore growth and economic prospects.

We wish you a successful meeting on 5 and 6 November.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Seillière".

Ernest-Antoine Seillière  
President BUSINESSEUROPE

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sarraf".

Jacques Jean Sarraf  
President BUSINESSMED