



10 February 2009

SUBJECT : Summary of Meeting with Ashton's Cabinet on 5 February 2009

Trade Policy Instruments:

BUSINESSEUROPE met Commissioners Ashton's Head of Cabinet, Mr. King and Cabinet member Mr Haugaard to discuss the current and important topics of access to raw materials and trade defence.

Mr. King stated that it is Commissioner Ashton's intention to continue to take a forceful stance against protectionism but also to focus on positive issues (like working to conclude the Doha Round) in this sombre period. Mr. van Sloten raised the issue of the call from Vice President Verheugen for a general and comprehensive Commission look at actions for industry in lieu of rising protectionism and the need to take action to boost the flagging industrial sector that is suffering from a lack of access to finance. The Commission is concerned about national state-aid packages attempting to undo the internal market and sees the need for a coordinated EU reaction to the economic crisis. The Verheugen initiative is widely supported by the College of Commissioners and as such, all Commissioners will take part in its conceptualisation. Commissioner Ashton's role will be to focus on the rise of protectionism in a global context. President Barroso is backing this strongly.

René van Sloten, BUSINESSEUROPE chairman of the Market Access working group thanked the Commission for its excellent job on the Raw Materials Initiative which was an example of cooperation between different DGs and of good consultation of important stakeholders. He highlighted the need for action by the Commission to counter trade distorting practices outlawed by WTO rules.

Monique Jones, BUSINESSEUROPE chairwoman of the Trade Policy Instruments outlined the importance of maintaining cooperation between European business and the European Commission on trade defence matters because of the variety of interests involved (complainants, users and importers). She stressed that the European Commission should consider trade defence as part of the general European trade policy. Trade policy should deal with the causes and effects of trade distortion. As long as negative effects exist, trade policy instruments remain an important facet of trade policy for European industry.

BUSINESSEUROPE will continue to strongly call on the Commission to be aware of this development and to remain open, predictable and transparent in their work. BUSINESSEUROPE also strongly urges the Commission to stick to its rules-based approach and judge each case on its individual merits.
