Mediterranean opportunity: companies call on EU and Morocco to strengthen ties

Brussels, 21 September 2021 - BusinessEurope, the General Confederation of Moroccan Enterprises (CGEM) and EuroCham Maroc have adopted a "Modernisation Pact on Trade and Investment between the European Union (EU) and the Kingdom of Morocco". The document calls for a long overdue modernisation of the framework for EU-Morocco trade and investment relations to unleash the untapped economic potential of this partnership and foster an effective and sustainable post-pandemic recovery.

In this context, Pierre Gattaz, President of BusinessEurope, declared that: "Since *the EU-Morocco Association Agreement entered into force in 2000 the world has changed, and we must adapt our agreement to the realities of 21st century trade and to the needs of businesses in key areas such as the digital economy.*"

For his part, Chakib Alj, President of the CGEM, underlined that "*The EU is a natural and reliable trading partner of Morocco. It is important today to breathe new life into this relationship, to benefit together from the opportunities that arise, particularly in relation to supply chains – notably for agri-food - as well as our priorities on sustainability and digital*".

Finally, Edwin Sluismans, President of EuroCham Maroc, emphasised that "*the liberalisation and simplification of trade envisaged in the Modernisation Pact would provide a strong incentive for companies on both sides of the Mediterranean to develop bilateral trade*".

Thus, for the three organisations, the modernisation of the EU-Morocco Association Agreement should focus on eight pillars, namely:

- Facilitating investment and improving market access for investors in priority sectors such as renewable energies, agribusiness or digital services;
- Reduction of non-tariff barriers for industrial products and the mutual recognition of relevant regulations and standards;
- Liberalisation and facilitation of trade in services and transport;
- Creation of a framework for the mutual recognition of certain professional qualifications;
- Trade facilitation and regional and continental integration;
- Creation of administrative one stop shops for SMEs to promote their participation in EU-Morocco trade;
- Promotion and facilitation of trade in agri-food products;
- Improving the business climate.

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Contacts media:

- BusinessEurope: Peter SENNEKAMP / + 32 2 237 65 62 / p.sennekamp @businesseurope.eu / www.businesseurope.eu
- CGEM: Marwa TELLAL / 00212664037737 / marwa.tellal@cgem.ma / www.cgem.ma