

NEWS RELEASE

President Barroso urges “smart regulation” to boost growth, in speech at Brewers gala

BRUSSELS, 23 November 2011: Europe needs fiscal belt-tightening coupled with growth-enhancing measures to pull itself out of crisis, including “smart regulation” that doesn’t shackle businesses like the brewing sector, European Commission President Jose-Manuel Barroso said, speaking at The Brewers of Europe’s EU headquarters on Tuesday night.

“These fiscal consolidation measures, they are unavoidable,” Barroso said shortly after meeting with Italy’s new Prime Minister Mario Monti. “As leaders of the business community I’m sure you understand that. It would be unthinkable for your companies to do what some governments have been doing.”

But Barroso, speaking to some 300 top beer executives, policymakers and the media, also said the EU had “systemic problems” and must promote growth by making the single market more flexible, and “to ensure that regulation doesn’t overburden business.”

“I would like to commend the efforts of your sector to introduce self-regulation to promote responsible beer advertising across Europe” Barroso said. “Initiatives like this and pro-active involvement of industry representations are an excellent example of industry working with regulators to make legislation truly smart.”

Europe’s brewers support some 2 million jobs and contribute €50 billion in taxes but face tough challenges as the economy risks another recession.

Danuta Hübner, a leading Polish MEP and former European Commissioner for Regional Policy, said that Europe’s brewers “are active in Europe’s regions in all 27 Member States, for decades supporting programs promoting responsible drinking as well as backing thousands of local events that are part of Europe’s social fabric and regional identities.”

Alberto Da Ponte, The Brewers of Europe President said, “The brewing sector is emerging from a difficult period but we have embraced the Europe 2020 strategy. With the right support from policymakers, our sector can play a key role in Europe’s economic recovery and future growth.”

A panel session invited brewers and policymakers to discuss the challenges the sector faces. SABMiller’s Europe CEO Alan Clark said, “The brewing sector has weathered the storm so far, but policymakers must be aware of the impact that further economic downturn combined with dramatically increasing taxes on beer may have.”

According to an independent report published in May this year, across Europe the 3,500 brewers, large and small, spend €1 billion annually supporting over 8,000 community and regional events and activities, including in the areas of the arts, culture, innovation and science, as well as sport.

The gala included a presentation of the ‘Faces of Brewing’ photo contest winner and a networking gourmet dinner prepared by Eurotoques, representing 4,000 chefs across Europe. The reception also featured beers from Poland in honour of the country’s rotating EU presidency.

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References

Further event details, including video clips, photos and biographies:

www.beerserveeurope.eu

More information on 'Faces of Brewing': <http://www.facesofbrewing.eu>

Relevant studies: <http://www.brewersofeurope.org/asp/publications/index.asp>

Intervention videos

Full speeches by Barroso and Da Ponte: <http://www.youtube.com/brewersofeurope>

EC highlights: <http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/videoplayer.cfm?ref=81310>

About The Brewers of Europe

Founded in 1958 and based in Brussels, The Brewers of Europe is the voice of the European brewing sector to the European institutions and international organisations. Current members are the national brewers' associations from EU Member States, plus Norway, Switzerland and Turkey.

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