

Mandelson sets out EU trade agenda for 2008 - Ljubljana, 12 December 2007

EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson has set out a policy platform for EU trade policy in 2008. Speaking at University of Ljubljana in Slovenia, Mandelson argued that 2008 confronted the EU with a year of global economic uncertainty and political transition in China, Russia and the United States. He said the "need to build stability and continuity through these changes will be one of the EU's core diplomatic challenges in 2008".

Two days before European Heads of State meet in Brussels to agree a new European institutional treaty and debate Europe's response to globalisation, Mandelson set out the following priorities for the EU's foreign economic policy in 2008:

- **Underwrite the benefits of open trade for Europe and the developing world by keeping the European economy open.** He said: "Europe cannot argue for global poverty reduction and urge closed European markets at the same time. Nor can we argue for greater access to global markets and fair treatment from behind barriers of our own".
- **Secure a WTO Doha trade agreement as a boost to global trade and as a guard against future protectionism.** He said: "To argue that the world doesn't need a Doha world trade deal because global trade is flowing fine is to make the hugely questionable assumption that the global economy has no reverse gear. No one can have reached the end of 2007 taking that for granted."
- **Engage the US in the same defence of equitable globalisation,** working with a new President and strengthening the Transatlantic Economic Council
- **Continue to take a proactive and hard-headed approach to market access problems for EU businesses,** through multilateral and bilateral trade agreements and by building on the early successes of the EU's renewed Market Access Strategy. Mandelson argued that although the EU was well positioned to capitalise on growing consumer spending in the emerging economies, a strong euro and the persistent problems EU companies have with counterfeiting and barriers to trade mean that "Europe cannot afford to just sit back and hope these trends play out in our favour".
- **Continue to work to extend the benefits of globalization to the world's poorest, especially in Africa.** Mandelson said the EU's Economic Partnership Agreements with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries would be an important break from a trade relationship based exclusively on trade preferences that had largely failed for the last thirty years.
- **Move to an increasingly normal and frank trade partnership with China,** welcoming its growing role in the global economy and expecting it to meet its WTO obligations.
- **Deepen economic integration with Russia and Ukraine.** Mandelson said: "2008 should be the year that sees both Russia and the Ukraine accede to the WTO and begin to look towards deeper economic integration agreements with the EU".

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