

EU Trade Commissioner Mandelson in Algeria 4 February 2008 - Algiers, 4 February 2008

The European Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson will today meet Algerian Président Abdelaziz Bouteflika, Algerian Minister of Foreign Affairs Medelci and Algerian Minister of Trade Djaaboub in Algiers. The meetings will focus on Algerian progress towards WTO accession, its role in the Euromed economic integration process and the need to improve the investment climate for European companies, including in the energy sector.

Commissioner Mandelson said: "I am pleased to have the opportunity to meet my Algerian counterparts at this important stage in our trade relationship. I welcome the recent progress on Algeria's most important commercial priority, which is membership of the WTO. The EU strongly supports Algerian accession to the WTO. There remains a lot of work to do and now is the moment to redouble our efforts to achieve this goal. I would also like to see a more predictable and legally secure investment climate in Algeria, especially in the energy sector."

Three priorities

- The European Commission strongly supports the integration of Algeria into the global trading system and the global economy. The Commission welcomes the recent renewal of bilateral WTO accession discussions and Commissioner Mandelson will signal his complete support for this goal. He will call on Algeria to engage ambitiously in both the bilateral and multilateral negotiations in Geneva that are part of this process. WTO Membership is a fundamental part of an economy's integration into the global economy, and provides stable and open access for trade and investment both to the markets of others, and in the market of the acceding country.
- Peter Mandelson will welcome the recent constructive work undertaken by Algeria as part of the Euromed partnership. He will note in particular the acceptance of the Pan-Euromed protocol on cumulation of origin, which helps Mediterranean countries produce goods in regional supply chains and still benefit from preferential access to the EU market. He will also note the decision, taken at the Lisbon Euromed Ministerial conference in 2007, to participate in regional negotiations on liberalising services trade. The Euromed process is dedicated to closer economic integration between the countries of the South Mediterranean basin and between this region and the EU. Integration in this process will help create huge new markets for Algeria, as well as big new sources of investment and trade.
- Peter Mandelson will also raise the important question of providing a more stable and legally predictable environment in Algeria for European investment, especially in the energy sector.