



July 21, 2008

Minister Brice Hortefeux
Ministre de l'Immigration, de l'Intégration, de l'Identité nationale et du Développement Solidaire
101, rue de Grenelle
75323 Paris cedex 07

Re: EU Pact for Immigration

Dear Minister Hortefeux,

The European-American Business Council (EABC), an independent business association representing 70 European and American companies (list attached), is committed to promoting bilateral trade and investment between the United States and Europe. Our goal is to foster free and fair trade; market access and national treatment for firms; technological research, innovation, and education; and open, transparent, friction-free regulatory regimes that are based on open consultations.

As leading edge, innovative enterprises, EABC members' activities are rich in intellectual capital. Our success as enterprises, our ability to create employment and our capacity to meet customers' needs are directly linked to our employees' skills. We actively develop our employees' skills and promote closer cooperation between industry and education systems in Europe to enable students to obtain the competences necessary for productive employment. Despite these efforts, however, European societies are experiencing growing skills shortages. It is becoming increasingly urgent for Europe to complement its « homegrown » talent by attracting the best talent from around the world.

The EABC strongly supports the French presidency's efforts to engage the EU member states in the development of a coordinated European approach to attracting highly skilled third country nationals and facilitating intra-EU mobility of such personnel through initiatives such as the proposed « EU blue card » directive. We also welcome the « troika » (French, Czech and Swedish presidencies) joint work programme which calls for adoption of an instrument to facilitate intra-corporate transfers of qualified employees.

The EABC recognises the efforts which many member states have already taken to facilitate the entry of highly skilled personnel into their territories. The French « carte des compétences et talents » is a useful example in this regard. Nonetheless, member state actions are only partially helpful in that they meet national needs, but do not permit highly skilled personnel to work throughout the EU. Such intra-EU mobility is critical for EABC members to address the needs of our pan-European customer base. Without such mobility, our customers suffer from delays or, even worse, our inability to bring the most highly skilled experts to work with our customers in numerous member states. Differing national regimes, various conditions for entry into another member state's territory and administrative delays discourage intra-EU mobility despite the growing integration of the European economy.

In October, the European Council should endorse the Pact for Immigration. This occasion should provide the important political message that Europe welcomes the highly skilled personnel which will contribute to the further growth of Europe's knowledge based economy. A European approach is needed to attract and facilitate the intra-EU mobility of qualified personnel. The signature of the Pact for Immigration and adoption of the « EU blue card » directive are important first steps. We welcome your leadership in this regard.

Sincerely,



Michael C. Maibach
President & CEO
European-American Business Council



European-American
Business Council

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