



Mr José Manuel Barroso
President
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
B-1049 Brussels

Brussels, 17 March 2009

Recast of the Directive 2000/35/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on combating late payment in commercial transactions

Dear President,

The European business community has learned that the Commission will postpone adoption of the recast of the "Late Payments Directive". At a time when companies and in particular SMEs face existence-threatening cash flow problems, we encourage you to adopt the proposal at the next College meeting on 25 March.

We are convinced that the recast of the directive has the potential to offer real relief. Short and binding deadlines for all public authorities and bodies – at the European, national, regional and local level – to pay suppliers' invoices should be the rule. In some member states, current average payment periods and outstanding amounts are unacceptable and pose a direct threat to business activity.

Of course, we understand that some technical aspects still need further clarification. But they should not transform into major obstacles that could derail the adoption of a widely supported and anticipated proposal.

We have sent a copy of this letter to the members of the College of Commissioners. We thank you for your efforts and look forward to the rapid adoption of this much needed proposal.

Yours sincerely,

Philippe de Buck