

CITHA- European Confederation of International Trading Houses Associations  
Am Weidendamm 1A  
10117 Berlin  
Germany

Phone + 49 30 72 62 57 93  
Fax +49 30 72 62 57 94

info@citha.eu  
www.citha.eu

**Jan Krückemeyer**  
President  
info@citha.eu

**Alexander Hoeckle**  
Secretary General  
hoeckle@citha.eu

## PRESS RELEASE

### Together for International Trade

**Zagreb, 15.11.2024** - Today the Annual Conference of the Confederation of International Trading Houses Associations (CITHA) starts for the first time in Zagreb, Croatia by the invitation of the Croatian Exporters Association celebrating 20 years of Hrvatski izvoznici/Croatian Exporters. The focus lies on strengthening and promoting trade between Croatia and other European countries such as Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and United Kindom.

The rather weak global economic year of 2023 has also left a significant mark on world trade. Global trade growth was very modest due to the decline in demand, especially in the US, China and Europe. In addition, ongoing geopolitical tensions continued to weigh on growth. The number of newly erected trade barriers reached its peak last year.

In 2024, three trends in particular are emerging that are likely to shape trade. Firstly, geopolitical crises and new risks for supply chains, such as the conflict in the Red Sea or the drought in the Panama Canal. Secondly, the decline in commodity prices and inflation should strengthen global trade again. Thirdly, digital trade offers a glimmer of hope and is likely to continue to gain in importance this year and beyond.

"Against this background, cooperation in the EU is more important than ever. Together we must do everything we can to prevent further erosion of the international trade order. This is the time when we need to re-energise relations with our traditional foreign trade partners. It is therefore a great pleasure for us, as the umbrella organisation of European foreign trade associations, to meet with Croatian Business here in Zagreb these days to discuss how we too can expand trade between our countries." said Jan Krückemeyer, President of CITHA.

#### About CITHA

The organisation was founded in 1956 as a small group of international trading companies in Scandinavia with the aim of meeting once a year to exchange information on their activities and to represent common interests. In 1971, the so-called "Stockholm Club", which was soon joined by German and Dutch international companies, was given its statutes and a new name: CITHA was formally constituted as an international umbrella organisation for national trade associations. Today CITHA has member associations of Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. In 2005, by decree of the Ministry of Justice, CITHA became an NGO registered in Brussels and recognised by important international institutions such as the World Bank, IMF, UNCTAD, OECD, WTO and EU Commission.