

## **ECHA PRESS EVENT 1.6.2007**

### **Lord Mayor Jussi Pajunen: Helsinki Welcomes ECHA**

(Check against delivery)

Mr Prime Minister

Mr Vice President of the European Commission

Mr Executive Director

Ladies and gentlemen

I am very pleased that this day has finally arrived! I wish the entire staff of the European Chemicals Agency an excellent first working day in Helsinki!

Even though the first official workday takes place today, preparations have been in full motion for a long time. I am pleased to say that I have already met many of the members of the staff during an information day hosted by the City of Helsinki in March.

The successful establishment of the European Chemicals Agency in Helsinki is a key priority for us. The entire City organisation is deeply committed to make sure that everyone feels at home right from the very beginning.

The tasks of the new Agency are demanding, as we all know. A starting point for our work has been to ensure that the staff can fully concentrate on their challenging and groundbreaking work. Extensive preparations in advance should minimize the distractions related to settling down in a new home town.

Tailor-made information and advice services are part of these measures. A relocation adviser serves as the local contact person towards all relevant authorities both at the municipal and the government level – without forgetting the private sector. In short, our prime goal is to guarantee a smooth landing.

On a larger scale, we want to make Helsinki a model city for welcoming and hosting EU agencies and other international institutions. The European Chemicals Agency has been an excellent pilot project. The gained experiences can be put to use when developing special services aimed at international experts, who come to work in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area.

For families coming to Helsinki, one of the most important concerns is the education of their children. To this ends, a European School or Associated European School is proposed to be established and to open its doors in the autumn of 2008.

All in all, I find that the preparations for the arrival of the Chemicals Agency have been an extremely successful partnership between the European Commission, the Finnish Government and the City of Helsinki - a mutual challenge.

At this stage, I would like to express my warmest thanks to my counterparts in the other organisations for this very pleasant co-operation. I truly hope that it will continue in the same fashion in the future, as well.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour for Helsinki to serve as the Host City for the European Chemicals Agency. We are convinced that we are an optimal location for the new agency, with view to both services and infrastructure.

For my part, on behalf of the City of Helsinki and all our citizens, I wish the new agency and its staff warmly welcome. I wish you an interesting first working day. Once more, I would like to remind you that my door is always open and please don't hesitate to contact us at City Hall.

Welcome to Helsinki!