

# Trade Mission Unites European and Texas IT Firms

By Emily Sopensky

► Opening the first-ever EURO-TEX trade mission, Governor George Bush Jr. said, "Texas is still a basic industry state that is

on the leading edge of high technology. We want to keep it that way." And with that remark, Bush alluded to the fact that cattle and oil are still a part of the state's heritage and economy, but

technology is now the leading industry.

Bush spoke at the Infomart in Dallas last month. His keynote was followed by that of European Commission Ambassador

Hugh Paemon, who touted Dallas as being "a city well-known for its entrepreneurial spirit, economic dynamism and success." He also praised Texas as "the No. 1, most attractive state in the union for European companies investing in the United States."

The heart of the trade mission involved two fast-paced, intense days of meetings between 200 European and Texas ecommerce, multimedia, software, and other IT firms. Although no data is available on deals that were struck at the trade mission, most companies that participated were clear about what they wanted and needed. Some companies, like Softec of Bologna, Italy, came to seek strategic alliances with large companies and academic institutions having strong R&D programs. CEO Piero Martines and his eight colleagues, who in toto are the company, have developed an application specific integrated circuit (ASIC) for lossless image compression. They figure their most likely customers are the larger research institutions.

Dare Brandenburg-Rosebury, an American working for a Dutch technology transfer company, was looking for strategic partnerships and investors. A British company, Focus Business Solutions, with software specifically designed for insurance companies, was scouting out strategic partnerships. Wolfgang Stindl, CEO of a spanking new startup in Austria, e-Luminatus, was hunting for a partner to work with him on developing novel distribution of games over the Internet.



Piero Martines Emily Sopensky photo

And the list goes on. EUROTEX was conceived by the Texas Department of Economic Development (TDED) as a way of inspiring strategic business alliances and joint ventures between European and Texas firms. Plagued initially by changes in leadership, program content, and software development, EUROTEX ultimately succeeded beyond most expectations. In fact, Margo Dover, TDED's director of the Texas International Center, was already talking about next year's conference, and a possible move to Austin. EUROTEX is also a demonstration of the newest phase of US-EU relations. The New Transatlantic Agenda (NTA) adopted in December 1995 emphasizes joint action and building real people-to-people ties linking business, academic and civic communities on both sides of the Atlantic. Another stocktaking will be made at the US-EU Summit in Bonn on June 21, where EUROTEX will be featured as one of the more recognizable US-EU activities.



Ambassador Hugo Paemon, left, the head of the European Commission's delegation to the U.S., swaps stories about Texas' thriving high-tech industry with Kenneth Moorefield, right, the minister-counselor for commercial affairs for the U.S. mission to the EU. Emily Sopensky photo

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