



HEADLINES

ESBA and UMIS SMEA Present Small Business Report to Croatian Government

On 1 October, the European Small Business Alliance, in collaboration with its Croatian member UMIS-SMEA, has presented a Small Business report to the Croatian Government.

The report, investigating the working environment for SMEs in Croatia, examines the problems and barriers as experienced and perceived by the Croatian business community, and offers tangible solutions and recommendations. The intention of the report is to contribute with constructive criticism to a better business environment and a prosperous and growing economy.

Enterprise Policy and Education and Training have presented themselves as dominant issues in the report. By primarily focusing on these issues, ESBA believes many opportunities will open up for the small business sector in Croatia. Bureaucracy and lack of transparency are mentioned as further important obstacles to the development of small business in the country. Furthermore, there seems to be a severe lack of consultation procedures in Croatia.

Recommendations made by ESBA and UMIS-SMEA include: a systematic consultation of the small business sector; the introduction of a 'Decade of the Entrepreneur' based on a Finnish model; encouragement of the exchange of best practices between schools and universities to instill the values of entrepreneurship in the minds of young people; and a thorough application of the *Think Small First* principle to all new and revised regulations.

To read the full report, please visit: www.esba-europe.org or click [here](#)

EU/Entrepreneurship: Commission to encourage female businesses

On 6 October, 130 successful female entrepreneurs, who have been appointed by Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Vladimir Špidla to act as Entrepreneurship Ambassadors, launched a campaign encouraging women to become entrepreneurs. Acting as role models, their campaign is expected to boost confidence and inspire more women to start their own companies, while at the same time focusing on the role women can play in creating jobs and promoting competitiveness. Stemming from the Small Business Act, adopted in June 2008, the campaign followed a call for proposals for an *EU Network of female entrepreneurship ambassadors* earlier this year. The Commission's main aim is to increase the number of female entrepreneurs, momentarily representing a mere 30% of all European businesses, and to strengthen women's position in European society.

ESBA OPINION

Despite increasing efforts by supranational institutions to reduce the gender gap at national and EU level, female entrepreneurs are still facing a number of obstacles in setting up and running their business. In general, women continue to earn on average 17.4% less than men for every hour worked. Moreover, the division of family responsibilities is still very unequal between women and men. Despite an increasing employment rate, women still face a higher risk of poverty compared to their male counterparts. Future EU regulatory initiatives must tackle the remaining inequalities

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between genders as a step in achieving Europe's strategy for growth and jobs. A full integration of females in the labour-force is a key element in coping with demographic ageing and an inevitable necessity to guarantee a prospering European economy in the future.

To learn more about this initiative, please click [here](#) or [here](#)

IN BRIEF

EU/Administrative Burdens: HLG presents its Intermediate Report to Commission

On 17 September, the High Level Group of Independent Stakeholders on Administrative Burdens (HLG) presented its intermediate report to the European Commission and its president José Manuel Barroso, following two years of solid work. In its report the Group, installed to advise the European Commission on how best to achieve its aim of reducing administrative burdens by 25% by 2012, emphasizes the need to foster e-invoicing and to exempt micro-enterprises from European accounting rules.

To read the full report, please click [here](#)

EU/ICT: More women to work in the European ICT industry

On 8 October, the European Commission applauded a rising number of European companies that have committed themselves to bring more women into the information and communication technologies sector. The Code of Best Practices for Women in ICT, launched in March 2009, has so far received 28 signatories from large companies as well as small and medium sized enterprises, NGOs, consultancies, academic institutions, and telecoms watchdogs. It aims to motivate more women to study and work in the technology, telecoms and internet industries, herewith dealing with the problem of staff scarcity the sector is facing. To aid the process, a new online instrument, the European Directory for Women in ICT, has been launched.

To learn more about women in ICT, please click [here](#)

To access the full Code of Best Practices for Women in ICT, please click [here](#)

EU/Entrepreneurship: many Europeans to participate in the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs Programme

On 5 October, only 6 months after its launch in February 2009, the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme, designed to give new entrepreneurs an opportunity to learn how to run small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), had accepted more than 1200 applications from young entrepreneurs while more than 140 projects are already under way or in preparatory stages. By placing them with an experienced entrepreneur in another European Union country, the young entrepreneurs learn the trade from first hand. Apart from offering professional experience, the programme also focuses on enabling access to new markets and on boosting networking and commercial relations among European businesspeople and SMEs.

To learn more about the programme, please click [here](#)

PUBLICATIONS

European Commission: "Study on the Competitiveness of the EU tourism industry"

The study which was ordered by the European Commission and executed by Ecorys focuses on the accommodation and tour operator & travel agent industries. It lays out 6 major trends and challenges for the EU tourism industry and recommends a set of actions that need to be taken to

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retain the EU's strong position in world tourism. The EU is the most popular tourist destination in the world attracting more than 40% of international arrivals.

To read more about the Commission study, please click [here](#)

OECD: "Taxation of SMEs: Key Issues and Policy Considerations"

The OECD report on taxation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) analyses a wide array of issues concerning SME taxation, such as probable outcomes of taxation on the creation and growth of SMEs and related high compliance burdens. The report presents a diverse range of arguments in favor of- and against the use of tax incentives for SMEs and provides insightful country examples to show how tax incentives and compliance cost reduction measures can be employed.

To read more about the OECD report, please click [here](#)

CONSULTATIONS

ONGOING:

Public consultation on Community innovation policy

Closes on 16 November 2009

The European Commission has launched an online consultation to explore new ways to address challenges for a better European innovation policy. The consultation seeks to follow-up the findings of the Commission Communication "Reviewing Community innovation policy in a changing world" and two previous consultations, one on the effectiveness of innovation support in Europe and one on design as driver of user-centered innovation.

To read more about the consultation and to access the questionnaire to be filled in by stakeholders, please click [here](#)

Online consultation on Administrative Burdens Reduction

Ongoing

The European Commission has launched an online consultation on the reduction of administrative burdens. Inspired by examples of Best Practice in Belgium and the Netherlands, the consultation invites entrepreneurs to identify unnecessary red tape in order to help the EU improve the quality of its legislation. The consultation is part of the Action Programme to reduce admin burdens on businesses in the EU by 25% in 2012.

To access the online consultation, please click [here](#)

COMING UP

12 - 14 October: The World Trade Group is organizing the 5th Annual European Manufacturing Strategies Summit (EMS 2009) to address the main challenges facing manufacturing at the moment and highlight latest developments.

To learn more about the event, please click:

<http://www.ems-summit.com/>

13 – 14 October: The Knowledge4Innovation (K4I) / Lisbon Forum is organising the 1st European Innovation Summit (EIS). As part of this event, exhibitions, conferences and networking events will take place to enable a showcase of European achievements in innovations.

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To read more about the event, please click:

<http://www.knowledge4innovation.eu/k4i/default.aspx>

14 October: DG Enterprise and Industry will organize the 'World Standards Day Conference 2009'. The event is a joint effort by the international standardization organizations, IEC, ISO, and ITU. The focus on this year's conference will be on the draft report on the Expert Panel for the Review of the European Standardization System ('EXPRESS').

To read more about the event, please click:

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/itemshortdetail.cfm?item_id=3546&lang=en&tpa_id=136

15 - 16 October: The European Commission is organising the '6th Annual Research Conference: Crisis and Reform' to evaluate which impact the current global financial crisis will have on reform implementation such as the improvement of the design of the EU's financial system.

To learn more about the event, please click:

http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/events/event13393_en.htm

15 – 16 October: The Swedish presidency, sponsored by the European Commission, is organizing a conference on gender equality to take place in Stockholm, Sweden. The aim of the conference is to emphasize the indispensability of gender equality for long-term sustainable economic growth in the EU.

To learn more about the event, please click:

http://www.se2009.eu/en/meetings_news/2009/10/15/what_does_gender_equality_mean_for_economic_growth_and_employment

19 – 23 October: The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work is organising European Week for the Healthy Workplace 2009 in Bilbao, Spain to address a wide range of pan-European occupational health and safety challenges.

To learn more about the event, please click:

<http://www.beswic.be/en/campaigns/hw2008/calendar/event.2008-04-04.europeanweek09>