

& ENTERPRISE INDUSTRY *magazine*



Vice-President Antonio Tajani outlines his priorities

Galileo: a star performer for Europe

European SME Week 2010

Promoting e-Skills



European Commission
Enterprise and Industry

June 2010

7

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| ● Editorial | 2 |
| ● Smart, green and inclusive | 3 |
| ● Galileo: a star performer for Europe | 8 |
| ● A more innovative Europe | 10 |
| ● Promoting and supporting entrepreneurship | 12 |
| ● Erasmus for entrepreneurs gets off to a good start | 14 |
| ● Bolstering Europe's creative industries | 16 |
| ● Go digITal! Promoting e-Skills in Europe | 18 |
| ● THE FLOOR TO IRINI PARI Innovation through design | 20 |
| ● ENTERPRISE EUROPE NETWORK IN ACTION | 21 |
| ● News in brief & upcoming events | 22 |

EDITORIAL

European Commission Vice-President Antonio Tajani is the new Commissioner in charge of Industry and Entrepreneurship. In our interview, he outlines his priorities for his term in office, including how he intends to use his portfolio to help the European economy to be smart, green and inclusive.

Issue 7 also presents **Galileo**, the EU's global satellite navigation system, which should be operational by 2014, and represents a big opportunity for the EU's economy as its advanced technological features will make it a valuable tool for nearly all economic sectors.

But star performers are not just out in space. Back here on earth, small and medium-sized enterprises remain the backbone of the EU economy. *E&I* takes a tour of this year's **European SME Week** and finds out how this initiative is 'training business champions'.

In addition, we explore the first results of the **Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs** Programme and why e-skills are high on the EU's agenda.

The new **European Innovation Scoreboard** highlights that Europe is faring better in the innovation stakes and reveals a clear link between innovation and internationalisation, but warns of the potential negative consequences of the recession.

This issue introduces two new features. The first is 'The floor to...' which provides a podium for a prominent personality to speak on a particular topic. This time, **Irini Pari**, Vice-President of the European Economic and Social Committee, talks about design and innovation. Each issue will also contain the 'Enterprise Europe Network in Action' page highlighting the latest news from this network, which helps European SMEs do business in the single market and beyond.

If you like what you read in our magazine, why not subscribe? It costs you nothing – simply turn to the back cover for details of how to subscribe. And visit our regularly updated on-line magazine, too.

(www.ec.europa.eu/enterprise/e_i) ■

ENTERPRISE & INDUSTRY

The *Enterprise & Industry* magazine is published three times a year, in English, French and German, complementing the on-line magazine of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry.

The magazine is financed under the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme which aims to encourage the competitiveness of European enterprises.

Issue n° 7 (1-2010)

The content of this issue was finalised April 2010.

Published by
Communication and Information Unit
Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry
European Commission
B-1049 Brussels
entr-communication-information@ec.europa.eu
www.ec.europa.eu/enterprise/e_i/index_en.htm



LEGAL NOTICE

Neither the European Commission nor any person acting on its behalf may be held responsible for the use to which information contained in this publication may be put, nor for any errors which may appear despite careful preparation and checking. This publication does not necessarily reflect the view or the position of the European Commission.

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2010

ISSN 1831-1237

© European Union, 2010

Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged, save where otherwise stated.

For use/reproduction of third-party copyright material specified as such permission must be obtained from the copyright holder(s).

Front cover image: © European Union
Printed in Belgium

A portrait of Antonio Tajani, the EU's new Industry and Entrepreneurship Commissioner. He is a middle-aged man with grey hair, wearing a dark pinstripe suit, a white shirt, and a blue tie with a yellow floral pattern. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a serious expression. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a flag with yellow stars on a blue field.

SMART, GREEN AND INCLUSIVE

E&I magazine meets Antonio Tajani, the EU's new Industry and Entrepreneurship Commissioner, and finds out about his priorities for his term in office, his ambition to marry industry with the environment, and how he intends to use his portfolio to help the European economy to be smart, green and inclusive.

Congratulations on becoming the new Industry and Entrepreneurship Commissioner. What personal challenges and opportunities do you see ahead with your new portfolio? What will your priorities be?

I am a person who likes politics, so to take on the big challenge of developing EU industrial policy, with a special focus on SMEs, is appealing. In view of the global economic crisis, this is a challenge that interests me very much and I look forward to roll up my sleeves and get to work. Policy is always a challenge, but you have to try and give answers to citizens' questions.

We need to avoid that the financial and economic crisis turns into a social crisis. It is for that reason that political will is necessary to counteract the growth in unemployment. In addition, there are other challenges, namely tourism and space. The Lisbon Treaty introduces a new legal basis focusing on these areas – two areas that are very interesting and in which we can do good work.

Tourism is an incredible resource for Europe, for young people and those not so young, so I would really like to achieve positive results for the benefit of both the industry and our tourists. We have lots of potential which we are not maximising. This new framework which we would like to see in place should help us achieve that.



© European Union

How has your career shaped the person you are now and what can this varied experience bring to your current job?

I'm now in the third phase of my career. I was in the army, I was a journalist and then, for 15 years, I was an MEP, and now I'm a Commissioner. My varied experience always comes in handy because when you get involved in political life, you have to be aware of what is going on in different fields and different countries. You need to have experience to deal with this. Even now, I add new experiences daily to those that I have accrued over the years. Everything is useful to understand what is going on and, above all, my experiences with the EU are useful because I have the chance to be in touch with citizens and their needs. The best way to tackle the problems that Europeans face is on the ground, you cannot do it by keeping your door closed – it is not enough to study dossiers, you have to see what is happening to understand the issues at stake.

You plan to take part in the Enterprise Experience Programme in which Commission officials go and work in a European enterprise to gain hands-on experience of life in an SME. What motivated you to do this and what do you hope to come away with?

Do you know where you will be working?

I have said that I will do it and I am actually quite looking forward to it. I think I will be doing it in France. Soon after having been confirmed as Commissioner for Industry and Entrepreneurship, I paid a visit to Germany to try to understand the German system. I would like to use this experience to help me understand the working method and the environment that French SMEs find themselves in. It is necessary to learn about countries other than the one that I already know best.

What would you say were the major achievements of the Verheugen years and how do you intend to build upon them?

I think that Günter Verheugen, with whom I worked for a year and a half during the previous Barroso Commission, was a good

Commissioner. I think that the Small Business Act (SBA) is an important policy milestone for the European Commission and was the most significant achievement of Verheugen's mandate, because it is the Commission's response to the demands of SMEs, who are the most important players in our economy – its backbone – and I think that it is necessary to strive, every day, to implement the SBA. In fact, he did lots of things, with very good results for industry, but this one pleased me even more than the others.

About Antonio Tajani

Former EU Transport Commissioner, Antonio Tajani is Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of Industry and Entrepreneurship. He has been an active force in European politics for over 15 years. The Italian politician was first elected to the European Parliament in 1994, and was re-elected in 1999 and 2004. During his 15 years of parliamentary activity, Antonio Tajani was a member of numerous committees, including those dealing with foreign affairs, constitutional affairs, transport and tourism, fisheries, as well as security and defence. He was also a member of the Convention on the Future of Europe, which drafted the text for a proposed European Constitution.

Commissioner Tajani is a member of the *Il Popolo della Libertà* (People of Freedom) party, which has led Italy's ruling coalition since May 2008. Tajani is also vice-president of the European People's Party, the largest political grouping in the European Parliament.

Before entering politics, he was an officer in the Italian air force. He then embarked on a varied journalistic career which saw him edit the Italian weekly *Il Settimanale*, work as a presenter on the RAI 1 radio news, head the Rome office of the Italian daily *Il Giornale*, and work as a special correspondent in Lebanon, the former Soviet Union and Somalia.

Born in Rome in 1953, Commissioner Tajani is married with two children.

During your hearing at the European Parliament, you talked about a “green economy in a marriage of convenience with industrial policy to fight climate change”. Is putting the green economy at the heart of EU industrial policy a priority for you? How do you intend to do this?

Of course, it is part of the European strategy. I am convinced that we need to engage with the green economy. It is a challenge spearheaded by the European Union and we must succeed.

Even those who have not signed an agreement with numbers, like the Chinese and the Americans, are in the process of investing a lot more than us in the green economy. That is why we need to continue our work and, as I said to the European Parliament, we can organise marriages between the environment and industrial policy. Sometimes these marriages will perhaps be ones of convenience, but over time they can be very successful. In addition to this, I said that we have to work on making the economy greener. This, with the green economy at its heart, will be an underlying leitmotif of my work.

Why do you think a cross-cutting industrial policy is important for the EU and how do you envision this would work?

It is the end of an economy based on financial speculation. We need a policy in all areas which tries to answer the need for a real economy. So that is the big challenge: we must not simply aim to achieve that in the remit of the Commissioner for Industry and Entrepreneurship but in all areas that have even the slightest impact on industrial policy. You cannot take the risk of having a sectoral policy that is not linked to a strategy. We have a strategy for the development of Europe and each Commissioner has a role to play.

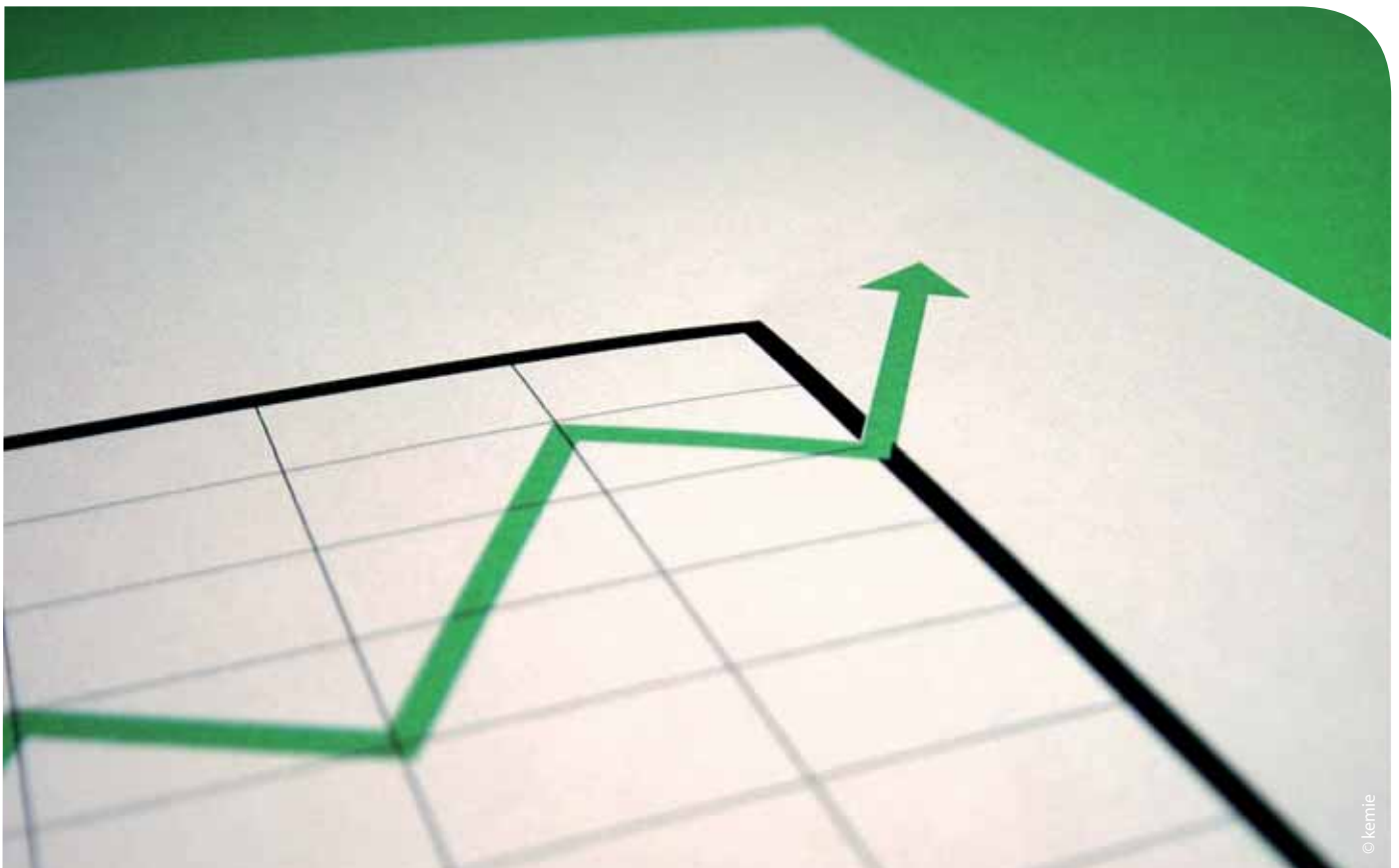
It is like a football team – we are all on the same team and each of us tries to play their role, but we are all wearing the same colours. If we want to succeed in defeating unemployment, it is necessary to have a policy and a strategy which is transformed into concrete actions on the part of each Commissioner.

What role can the EU’s innovation policy play in the economic recovery?

Innovation breeds economic revival. Since we cannot face the challenges of the global market if European businesses don’t change, they must be innovative. And to do this, we must ensure that they – especially SMEs – have access to funds, to credit. This is why I am working on improving access to credit and to guarantees for SMEs. We need to study a number of possibilities, including in the upcoming Framework Programmes. I am working on innovation with European Research Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn, and we are going to release a Communication on the subject soon. Innovation strategy touches on all areas of the economy and it is necessary for industry to co-operate with other sectors.

What results do you expect from European space initiatives, such as Galileo and GMES?

Space is one of the major challenges for Europe. Galileo is an important project. The Americans, Russians, Chinese and Indians have or are developing their own systems. Europe also needs its very own. It will be very useful and is a big challenge for European companies and the economy.



Of course, Galileo will bring about a good number of practical benefits that outweigh the challenges. Some of these applications were displayed at a recent exhibition in Brussels. From 2014, using Galileo will provide us with new opportunities and more services for our citizens – we can even try to have Galileo and GMES work together. For example, one must never forget that when there have been earthquakes and tsunamis, the images that were used by civil protection services to help the victims came from GMES. It is possible to use both Galileo and GMES in a wide range of fields including disaster response, agriculture, the reduction of pollution, as well as lots of practical applications that improve the quality of life for Europeans.

You intend to focus on SMEs to overcome the economic crisis and prevent it from becoming a social crisis. What specific measures do you envisage? What new ways do you foresee for the application of the 'Think small first' principle and the Small Business Act?

Access to credit, above all. The Small Business Act is the practical application of what needs to be done. The approval of the Late Payments Directive, which is currently being discussed by the European Parliament, is also very important. In addition, it is necessary to work outside the EU for the internationalisation of SMEs. I recently met with the president of Eurochambres, the association of European chambers of commerce, and we spoke about what can be done beyond the EU's borders for SMEs. Of course, they need to be innovative, they must coordinate with each other, to organise themselves to compete with the SMEs of other continents. They are European and so we must try to help them. Better regulation is also very important – lots of things have already been done by the European Commission in this field and we must continue to improve the regulatory environment for businesses with tools like impact assessments.

Internationalisation is very important for the competitiveness of SMEs. Does this also mean that SMEs should be helped to benefit fully from the internal market of the EU?

Of course. I am thinking of a number of things that can be done, such as electronic invoicing, which at the moment is not always possible due to problems with the compatibility of accounts. I am working to resolve this problem. We need to develop further exchanges and technology which will help us in the area of computerisation. We must work in this area because, in the coming years, most jobs will be based on information technology. For example, I visited factories in Germany – they did not have manual workers, they had technicians working with computers controlling the machines. The economy, including manufacturing, is changing, so we have to help SMEs to computerise and workers to acquire the skills the knowledge society requires. This is a major challenge for the coming years.

As regards the internal market, how can the EU enhance the role of standardisation?

European standards are very useful for SMEs, larger companies and the internal market as a whole. It is necessary to allow them to

Europe's new decade

In March 2010, the European Commission unveiled its much-awaited proposal for a policy road map to replace the Lisbon Strategy (2000-2010). Following a broad stakeholder consultation, the new 'Europe 2020' strategy provides a blueprint for innovation-driven growth that is smart (fostering knowledge, innovation, education and the digital society), green (more resource-efficient and competitive production) and inclusive (creating more jobs, while fighting poverty and social exclusion).

Industrial policy for green growth is a flagship initiative of the Europe 2020 agenda: the strategy seeks to help the EU's industrial base be competitive in the post-crisis world by promoting entrepreneurship and helping workers to develop new skills.

"Europe 2020 is about what we need to do today and tomorrow to get the EU economy back on track," said European Commission President José Manuel Barroso. "We need to build a new economic model based on knowledge, low-carbon economy and high employment levels."

participate in the quest to harmonise EU standards. Standardisation not only reinforces the internal market, it also strengthens European SMEs outside the EU. It is necessary to sign agreements with other countries to open up their markets and to try to get other countries to accept our standardised system.

How do you intend to boost confidence in the CE marking?

A lot has been done on this, but there is still also the problem of counterfeiting – even of the CE marking itself. So we need to watch what is happening on the market in each Member State – in other words, better market surveillance.

It is a big challenge and I am trying to keep the promise that I made during my hearing at the European Parliament. Commitments that are taken need to be fulfilled. For me, that is the first thing to do. For example, I said that I would sign an agreement with the Commissioner for the Environment on the REACH chemicals directive, and I did. I have likewise promised an information campaign on the CE marking, and I am happy to say that it has started. Politicians must always try to respect what they have promised to citizens and their representatives. For me, this is a priority.

You mentioned counterfeiting, what will you be doing to stop this?

Yes, we need to work on this, including the faking of the CE marking. The mark is useful in barring the placing of goods on our market that do not respect our standards. But when the marking itself is counterfeited, you need to put extra controls in place – at the borders and on the internal market itself. Reinforcing market surveillance mechanisms requires co-operation across Europe to maintain respect for and conformity with European rules. It is difficult, but you must try to do it. The aim of each Commissioner must be to protect citizens, not to give orders. Politics is a service and you must never forget that. ■





GALILEO: A STAR PERFORMER FOR EUROPE

Galileo, the EU's strategic global navigation satellite system (GNSS), is set to be operational in 2014.

*This is **good news for European enterprises**, as Galileo's advanced technological features will make it a valuable tool for nearly all economic sectors. It is also good news for European citizens who will enjoy more accurate positioning technologies and **greater safety** in the air, on land and at sea.*

The European satellite navigation market is tangible proof that the best way to deal with a recession is to be bold and reach for the stars. While many sectors of the European and global economy have stagnated or even shrunk, the GNSS market – which includes such things as the navigation devices in vehicles – has grown at a healthy rate.

Between 2009 and 2013, GNSS markets are expected to grow at impressive compound annual growth rates of around 24%. This builds on years of sustained growth which saw GNSS-based

products and services generate around €20 billion in direct revenues in Europe in 2007.

The longer-term future also looks extremely promising. A market study carried out by the GSA, the EU's GNSS agency, predicts that the global GNSS civilian market will amount to some €235 billion by 2025.

In fact, the GNSS market provides a wealth of opportunities for upstream and downstream European enterprises and public services in a variety of sectors, including space technologies, software, hardware, social services to all kinds of citizens, real time information to people on the move, road transportation, public transport management, aviation, agriculture, energy, the protection of the environment, civil engineering, security, and much more.

Traditionally, the GNSS sector has been reliant on American infrastructure, in the form of the GPS system. This dependence not only means that Europe loses out on certain economic opportunities, it also leaves the EU vulnerable to disruption, as the US system is a military one that could potentially be brought offline for technical or political reasons.

Given the huge potential of the GNSS sector and Europe's vulnerability to external suppliers, the EU has, for the past few years, been developing its own independent global system, Galileo.

GIANT step for air safety

The EU-funded GIANT demonstration project sought to pave the way to the introduction of EGNOS and Galileo services in the aviation sector. The project demonstrated to airline operators both the short- and long-term benefits of switching to the new European satellite navigation systems.

Test flights in Italy, Spain and Switzerland using aircraft and helicopters, were, for the first time, guided by the EGNOS signal. The trials went very smoothly and showcased the promising use of Galileo for future safety-critical applications.

On track with tracking

One important GNSS application is the tracing and tracking (T&T) of sensitive assets, such as nuclear material. The EU-funded MENTORE project demonstrated the current and future applicability of EGNOS and Galileo technology for T&T activities.

The project carried out five demonstrations, focusing on a number of areas including the transportation of nuclear materials and livestock, multi-modal freight transport, as well as urban logistics.

The demonstrations were such a success that the Italian oil and gas giant, ENI, decided to install EGNOS on almost 2 000 trucks in its fleet.

© PaulPaladin, © sololos

Positioning the EU on the global navigation map

The Galileo story began over a decade ago, at the end of the 1990s, when the EU decided to set up its own GNSS infrastructure for civil and commercial use. Named after the famous Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei, the ambitious system is a great achievement in space engineering. With a fully deployed configuration of 30 satellites in medium Earth orbit, it will provide unprecedented positioning precision and accuracy down to a few metres.

In addition to its high precision, the Galileo constellation will improve the availability of positioning services in cities where tall buildings can obstruct signals from satellites that are low on the horizon. Galileo's navigation signals will also be more available than GPS at high latitudes, such as in Scandinavia.

Moreover, not only will Galileo provide both its European and global users with guaranteed uninterrupted service – something GPS and GLONASS do not – it will also possess a built-in reliability check to warn of any loss of integrity in the system, a crucial feature for emergency and other critical services, such as police and search and rescue units.

As a pre-cursor for Galileo, the EU has officially launched its first venture into satellite navigation, the European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service (EGNOS). EGNOS, an augmentation system, makes GPS more accurate and reliable for European users.

EGNOS will offer three services. The EGNOS Open Service – which is free and available to all – was launched on 1 October 2009.

The EGNOS Safety-of-Life Service is due to be certified in 2010 for the purposes of air and maritime transport. EGNOS is also providing a terrestrial commercial data service: EDAS (EGNOS Data Access Service), which disseminates EGNOS data in real time and is the single point of access for the data collected and generated by the EGNOS infrastructure. This service is currently being beta-tested.

Galileo takes off

As for Galileo itself, the satellite navigation system has reached the most advanced stages of development. Two experimental satellites were successfully launched in 2005 and 2008. In addition, in November 2009, the Kourou ground station was inaugurated. This marks an important milestone in the in-orbit validation phase of the Galileo programme.

And the process is gathering pace. In January 2010, three of the six contracts for the delivery of Galileo's full operating capability phase were signed. The remaining three contracts are due to be awarded later this year. This latest phase will build up Galileo's operational infrastructure and will allow three of Galileo's five services – the open service, search and rescue, and public-regulated services – to be fully operational by 2014 using an initial constellation of 18 satellites.

So far, €5.8 billion has been earmarked for Galileo and EGNOS. Although this is a substantial amount of money, given the expected impact of Galileo (the European market for GNSS civil applications is expected to be worth at least €60 billion in 2013), this is relatively modest.

And European public opinion is firmly behind Galileo. According to an EU survey, 80% of citizens are in favour of an independent European satellite navigation system and nearly two-thirds are in favour of allocating public funds to the initiative. ■

» Contact

EU Satellite Navigation Programmes Units
Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry
entr-galileo@ec.europa.eu
www.satellite-navigation.eu

A MORE INNOVATIVE EUROPE

*EU Member States continue to improve their innovation performance, according to the 2009 edition of the **European Innovation Scoreboard**, and the difference between the leaders and the catching-up countries is narrowing. However, there are signs hinting that the good progress of recent years may now be faltering.*

The generally good news in the 2009 annual report from the European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS) is tempered by a recognition that next year's report may not be so encouraging.

The EIS follows a new methodology first used in 2008 which gives more weight to service sectors, non-technological innovation and innovation outputs. The 29 indicators are designed to measure the conditions in which innovation can flourish (human resources, finance and support), the innovative activities of companies (investments, linkages and entrepreneurship, and throughputs, such as patents) and outputs (innovations and economic effects).

EIS covers 33 European countries, including all 27 EU member states. For each country, a summary innovation index (SII) is calculated from all 29 indicators which is then used to rank European countries into four groups.

The **innovation leaders** group is topped by Switzerland, followed by Sweden, Finland, Germany, the United Kingdom and Denmark.

The **innovation followers** have SII scores below those of the innovation leaders, but above or near the EU-27 average. They include Austria, Luxembourg, Belgium, Ireland, France, the Netherlands, Estonia, Iceland, Cyprus and Slovenia.

Moderate innovators, with below-average SII scores, include the Czech Republic, Portugal, Norway, Spain, Greece, Italy, Malta, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland and Lithuania.

Finally, the **catching-up** countries, whose innovation performance is well below the EU-27 average, although increasing towards it, are Romania, Croatia, Latvia, Bulgaria, Turkey and Serbia.

Over the past five years, the EU's performance has improved by an average 1.8% a year. Germany, Cyprus, Malta and Romania are the

fastest improvers within their respective groups. Gains can be seen in every country and the groups continue to converge, with the most rapid improvement occurring in the lower-ranked countries.

Movers and shakers

Estonia and Cyprus have risen from below the EU average in 2008 to above average in 2009. Five catching-up countries have improved sufficiently to be reclassified as moderate innovators, namely Malta, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland and Lithuania. And despite their low ranking, Bulgaria and Romania have been improving their performance faster than any other EU states. Conversely, the least growth is seen in the UK and Denmark, two of the top performing countries.

However, this generally upbeat assessment does not cover the current recession. More recent statistics hint at some worrying trends and indicate that the steady convergence observed until now between EU member states is unlikely to be maintained in the short term and may even be reversed. An Innobarometer survey in April 2009 showed that firms in the countries with the fastest growing innovation scores are those most affected by the slump. Likewise, firms in countries that have been hardest hit by the downturn are also those most likely to curb their investment in innovation.

Innovating in tough times

But the same poll also has some encouraging findings. While 23% of innovative EU firms had cut their spending on innovation and 29% expected to spend less in 2009 than the previous year, the more innovative firms appeared to be less likely to curb their spending than the less innovative ones. A similar finding emerges for many of those firms pursuing broader innovation strategies.

The scoreboard also compares innovation in Europe with our main competitors. The EU still lags behind the US and Japan in innovation performance and the steady gains of EU countries relative to the US appear to have flattened out since the 2007 assessment. Underperformance compared to Japan has changed little in the past five years, while China is catching up fast. In contrast, the EU still has a clear and steady lead over India and Brazil.

"This scoreboard provides invaluable evidence on trends in innovation performance," said Commission Vice-President and Commissioner for Entrepreneurship and Industry Antonio Tajani and Research Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn. "The overall picture is positive, there are, however, some worrying signs and we will have to take this very seriously in developing the measures to accomplish what we just laid out in our Europe 2020 strategy. Increasing investment in research and innovation is the key to moving from crisis to sustainable prosperity. That is why the Commission is maintaining the 3% of GDP target for R&D investment in Europe and proposing realistic national targets with robust monitoring." ■

Internationalisation and innovation reinforce each other

As in previous years, the 2009 EIS also looks at specific areas of innovation. This year, the topics reviewed are sectoral innovation performance, user innovation and internationalisation.

The report finds little difference in innovation performance between the manufacturing and service sectors, except that manufacturing tends to be more driven by R&D, which is related to the size of the firm, while service companies tend to innovate to meet demand and through the adoption of technology.

More than half of innovative firms are working with their customers to improve products, processes and services. Firms engaged in user innovation can be classed as 'super-innovators' and they are more likely to introduce new products, processes or services and to perform (both intra- and extra-mural) R&D and apply for patents.

An exploratory study shows a positive association between the innovation performance of a country and the degree to which it maintains business connections beyond its borders. Innovation and internationalisation may be mutually reinforcing. The key factors appear to be outward foreign direct investment, foreign students and foreign employees.



»» Contact

Innovation Policy Development Unit
Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry
entr-innovation-policy-development@ec.europa.eu

PROMOTING AND SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

*Hundreds of events are being organised in 37 countries for the **European SME Week 2010**, which will mainly take place between 25 May and 1 June, but will run throughout May and June. This initiative will showcase the support available to business at the European, national, regional and local level. Under the slogan 'Training business champions', it will also provide inspiration and practical help for the existing and future generations of entrepreneurs.*

All 27 EU Member States are taking part in the European SME Week 2010, along with Albania, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia and Turkey.

The European Commission is coordinating activities with a great deal of help 'on the ground' coming from business organisations, as well as national, regional and local authorities.

Activities will get underway at a launch event in Brussels, Belgium, where the winners of the European Entrepreneurship Video Award 2010 will be announced. The competition was open to film-makers who were asked to provide a short video exploring the nature of entrepreneurship and ways to encourage more people to start up their own businesses.

Small business, big results

First held in 2009, European SME Week builds on last year's success and is central to the European Commission's actions to support small and medium-sized enterprises, particularly through the EU's Small Business Act (SBA). Adopted in 2008, the Act calls on the Union and its Member States to develop an environment "within which entrepreneurs and family businesses can thrive and entrepreneurship is rewarded".

SMEs are the primary engines of growth and wealth creation in Europe: more than 99% of all European businesses are classed as SMEs, and they provide two-thirds of all private-sector jobs. The SBA recognises their key role in the EU economy and puts a policy framework in place which aims to support and nurture their growth. The objective is to 'Think Small First' in all areas of policy-making which affect SMEs.

Available support

Events for 2010 have been organised to help SMEs and micro-firms share experiences and develop their businesses. Fairs, conferences and workshops, among other things, will provide information on European, national and local authority support programmes that are designed to help growing SMEs and those planning to start a business.

There is also a special focus on promoting entrepreneurship as a career option, especially for younger people. Some countries will run company open days, which will provide an insight into the challenges and rewards of running a business.

In addition, the European SME Week will be an opportunity to recognise the work of entrepreneurs and SMEs and the contribution they make to Europe's economic competitiveness, along with their pivotal roles in generating jobs and building innovative capacity.

Road to recovery

The week will close in Madrid, Spain, with a high-level conference on 31 May-1 June entitled 'Getting SMEs on the road to recovery'. The conference will address the difficulties faced by businesses during the recent recession while showcasing good practice generated through the implementation of the SBA.

It will also announce the winners of this year's European Enterprise Awards, which seek to identify and reward excellence among local authorities that promote entrepreneurship and small businesses.

The European Commission has revamped its website to promote European SME Week. As well as being packed with the latest

information on events around Europe, the website provides interactive tools, such as a twitter sub-site, which will allow event organisers and participants to report on the week's activities.

The website also enables event organisers to register on-line through an easy-to-use registration form. ■

Inspirational stories

As part of the European SME Week 2010, the Commission is producing the 2010 edition of 'The secret of success' brochure, which showcases some of the many faces of European entrepreneurship.

Those featured have battled the odds to establish thriving businesses across a range of sectors. The stories have been selected to inspire budding entrepreneurs to have a go and start their own businesses. All 36 entrepreneurs have been invited to the opening of the European SME week in Brussels on 25 May.

Among these, Kath Sutherland from the UK has developed training and consultancy services that help disabled people to start their own businesses. Sutherland, who is herself disabled, set up her company, START (Ability), in 1999. She provides one-to-one support to individuals who need intensive assistance to realise their goals and offers tailored equality training to a range of organisations.

One of Sutherland's major successes has been to develop a resource guide to help disabled people through the intricacies of becoming self-employed. The guide builds on one of Sutherland's core skills, which is her ability to adapt key business documents into plain language.

Miguel Pina is the 25-year-old president of Science4You, a Portuguese company that specialises in making scientific toys for kids. The company also runs workshops and designs programmes for science museums, all with the aim of getting children interested in science.

The Lisbon-based venture started out as a collaboration between business students and is still dominated by young people – all nine employees are under 30 years of age. The company's products are now being sold all over Portugal through a number of large, well-known chains and via smaller retail outlets. Expansion into Spain and Brazil is the next step for this dynamic company.

The brochure will be downloadable from the European SME Week website from 25 May onwards.



© European Union

» Contact

Entrepreneurship Unit

Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry

entr-entrepreneurship@ec.europa.eu

European SME Week: **www.ec.europa.eu/sme-week**

Closing event in Madrid: **www.ec.europa.eu/enterprise/SBAconference2010**

The Small Business Act: **www.ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/small-business-act**

EU SME policy: **www.ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme**

ERASMUS FOR ENTREPRENEURS GETS OFF TO A GOOD START

*Now in its second year, the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme has approved more than a thousand applications from would-be entrepreneurs to spend time working with an experienced business person in another EU country. Ninety have already completed their stay abroad and participants comment on their experience, with **positive and interesting feedback**. The new entrepreneurs are now well placed to do business within the wider EU market.*

Starting out in business is always tough but the way can be smoothed if the would-be entrepreneur can turn to an experienced colleague who has done it before. That is the thinking behind Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs. This programme, launched by the European Commission in the framework of the Small Business Act, aims to promote entrepreneurship by connecting novice entrepreneurs with a long-established SME business person in another EU country.

The highlight is a stay of between one and six months in which the new entrepreneur works alongside their host. Not only does the newcomer learn about the realities of business in their chosen field but he or she also gains an appreciation of the opportunities offered by the wider market within the European Union.

"During these difficult economic times we need to unlock the huge potential of start-up entrepreneurs and stimulate them to take the final step and set up a new enterprise", said Antonio Tajani, European Commission Vice-President in charge of Industry and Entrepreneurship. "They gain a unique opportunity to learn from experienced colleagues so that their business ideas can become a reality. We need more SMEs to get out of the current crisis. They are creating most new jobs and are the driving force of our economy."

Launched in February 2009, the programme has approved more than 1 500 applications from both new entrepreneurs and their prospective hosts. Applications are handled and matches brokered by more than 160 intermediary organisations across the EU, which are coordinated by a European support office currently managed by EUROCHAMBRES, the European association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry. Financial support for the stay is provided by the European Commission.

By mid April 2010, the scheme had received 2 088 applications from all 27 EU countries, of which 1 430 were from new entrepreneurs and 658 from host entrepreneurs.

The share of female entrepreneurs among the start-ups is promising as, with 39%, it is clearly above the current EU average. With around 15% of new entrepreneurs indicating that their business has a "green" dimension, more and more start-ups are including corporate social responsibility aspects in their business model.

Setting up in architecture

Jaime Paez Maña is an architect based in Santander in northern Spain. He wanted to give a newcomer to architecture the benefit of his 20 years' experience in running a practice and also bring in some new ideas. Erasmus matched him up with Leonardo Candaten, a young architect from Italy who was keen on starting his own business.

In his four-month stay in Santander, Candaten learned about office and site management, practical architecture, structural calculation and budgeting, as well as how to meet clients and suppliers. He also picked up ideas on how to start his own practice. In return, Paez Maña learned about Italian architectural techniques, acquired new software skills and discovered how to submit work to current architectural competitions.

"It was a fantastic, unique opportunity that has allowed me to understand what steps I need to take to open my own studio", said Candaten.

"Working with and learning from a new entrepreneur was a fantastic way of giving energy to my studio", said Paez Maña. "It has provided a great opportunity for future collaborations and has allowed me to extend my work into the job market in another country."



Luca Poli from Italy travelled to Spain to be mentored by Francine Huaman: both entrepreneurs found the exchange useful.

Benefiting from the scheme

In a survey of participants who had completed the scheme, 92% of new entrepreneurs said their objectives were fully or largely met and 94% of host entrepreneurs agreed. Likewise, 92% of new entrepreneurs said their host had contributed to the development of their business and 83% of hosts repaid the compliment.

Even if all was not entirely rosy (20 visitors said that the financial assistance was not enough to cover their travel, accommodation and subsistence costs), 96% of new entrepreneurs would recommend the programme. Benefits of their participation most frequently mentioned by respondents include: useful knowledge for their (future) company; better understanding of how to manage an SME; insight into a different cultural and organisational setting, and a broadened network of contacts. From their side, more than 80% of host entrepreneurs indicate they would like to participate in the programme again.

In addition, feedback indicates that the first results from the programme in promoting entrepreneurship seem encouraging: of the visitors, 32% were entrepreneurs before the stay, 12% had subsequently started a business, and 42% intended to start one either immediately or within the next 12 months.

Now into its second year, the scheme is open to anyone who has set up a business in the past three years or has firm plans to do so. Applications from businesses willing to host young entrepreneurs are also welcome. ■

Tourism exchange

Joseph Bugeja runs Globalair, a family-owned business in Malta. The company specialises in services for visitors to Malta, organising conference and event management, language schools and personal travel. Bugeja applied to the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs scheme in the hope of expanding his company into new markets and opening it up to new ideas.

He was paired up with Alena Seginkova, from Slovakia, who wanted to set up her own tourism business following a career as a financial adviser and business manager.

Seginkova worked at Globalair on internal company management, marketing and client affairs and also worked on a pilot project to develop ecotourism. The four-month exchange helped her to acquire international contacts, too. "This experience and networking will definitely help me when I set up my own business in Slovakia", she said.

"The programme is of great benefit to the company," continued Bugeja. "It is creating future opportunities for collaboration in the tourism sector between Malta and the international market."

» Contact

Entrepreneurship Unit

Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry

entr-entrepreneurship@ec.europa.eu

www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu

www.ec.europa.eu/enterprise/e_i/news/article_8811_en.htm

BOLSTERING EUROPE'S CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

*Europe's creative industries are becoming evermore important to the rest of the economy. This **broad sector** covers a variety of disciplines, but its fragmentation is a challenge to policy-makers in terms of providing support. A recent workshop supported the creation of a European platform for the creative industries, while the European Commission is working to develop new tools that can help the sector realise its full potential.*

The creative industries defy tight definition as they bring together a diverse collection of business disciplines that have both a cultural and economic impact on European life.

Advertising and public relations, architecture and web and graphic design sit beside the performing arts, publishing and software development. The sector also covers music, arts and antiques, crafts and fashion design, as well as film, TV and radio production.

Many of these sub-sectors are commercially oriented and are crucial to the well-being of other areas of the EU economy.

For example, architecture plays a key role in the construction industry; computer game and software development is vital for the health of the ICT sector; and fashion design is indispensable to the clothing and textiles industry.

Fresh ideas

Creative industries innovate by bringing fresh ideas and new ways of thinking to a European economy which is increasingly characterised by the customisation of products and services.

This capacity for services innovation combined with their 'spillover' into other areas of business means that the creative industries are vital to the long-term health and competitiveness of the entire economy.

In a recently published Staff Working Document, 'Challenges for EU support to innovation in services',

the European Commission recognised the innovative capacity of creative industries while noting their economic potential.

In addition, creative industries were identified as one of the most dynamic emerging sectors in world trade.

Workshop recommendations

But how can policy-makers at all levels best support such an important, if nebulous, sector? This question was addressed at a workshop held in Amsterdam in February and entitled: 'Towards a Pan-European initiative in support of innovative creative industries in Europe'.

The event was organised by the European Commission and co-hosted by the City of Amsterdam, the European Design Centre, the Association of Dutch Designers and IIP Create, a Dutch network for creative industries.

Around 70 innovation experts and representatives from the creative industries attended the event. They took part in discussions that centred around how best to link their sector with other industries in a way that would benefit the development of Europe's knowledge-based economy.

The outcome was the adoption of 'The Amsterdam Declaration' which calls for Europe to take full advantage of the creative industries' potential. By doing this, creative industries will become an enormous asset to Europe which can be turned into a competitive advantage and lead to the creation of new, high-quality jobs.

Those signing the declaration have urged the European Commission to develop new or better policy incentives and practical tools that can strengthen this creative sector.

The declaration says that the European Commission, Member States and regions must do all they can to promote clusters and develop financing techniques and foresight activities that will help nurture the sector and unlock its innovative potential.

Making a stand

Perhaps one of the most important aspects of the document is its support for a Commission initiative to develop a European platform for the creative industries.

The 'European Creative Industries Alliance' (ECIA) would bring together policy-makers and stakeholders from all levels to devise better tools and policies for the sector.

The ECIA would act as a counterweight to the fragmentation of the sector by providing a strategic overview of what Europe's creative industries need to thrive in the global economy.

It would set a common agenda for the creative industries and ensure that existing funds are used more efficiently while stimulating public and private partners to do more to support the sector's growth.

Potentially, such a platform could generate a large number of new research and innovation support programmes for the creative industries while mobilising about €100 million in public and private capital for the sector's development.

A policy forum will deliver policy recommendations for the ECIA, with a particular focus in five key areas:

- Developing framework conditions and foresight: the platform could help deal with issues such as guaranteeing appropriate payment for professional content creators and the protection of intellectual copyright.
- Assessing research and skills needs: the platform could help to develop a roadmap to examine the sector's research and skills needs.

- Developing new cluster concepts: the platform could foster co-operation and networking while developing a plan to establish links between clusters at European level.

- Nurturing business and innovation support services: activities could include developing and trialling voucher schemes that provide businesses with access to expertise and creativity. The platform could also seek out and promote knowledge transfer mechanisms for the sector, such as creative brokerage facilities for SMEs.

- Improving access to finance: the ECIA could help by identifying European financing opportunities and by creating a database of business angels and venture capital funds. In addition, the platform would have the profile to arrange international events to raise funds for creative industries and 'matchmake' businesses with international investors.

Other duties could include awareness-raising via the development of an ECIA website for stakeholders, a European award to showcase best practice, and the identification of creative industry ambassadors.

The platform proposal represents the first large-scale sectoral initiative on services innovation at European level. The European Commission will shortly publish a Green Paper setting out a process of consultation on the ECIA and other actions that aim to unlock the potential of the creative industry sector. ■

» Contact

'Support for Innovation' Unit
Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry
Entr-support-for-innovation@ec.europa.eu

GO DIGITAL!

PROMOTING E-SKILLS IN EUROPE

*The success of the European economy is linked to information and communication technologies (ICT) which means that an ever-increasing number of e-skilled workers are required. If the EU is to be more competitive, then it must do everything in its power to ensure that highly skilled ICT jobs are filled. With this in mind, the first **European e-Skills Week** took place from 1 to 5 March 2010, with a large number of activities taking place across Europe. The initiative culminated on Friday 5 March in Brussels with the 'Go digITal' closing event, which looked back at the week's successes and forward to what more needs to be done.*

Over 200 events took place in 35 countries as part of European e-Skills Week. The closing event offered an opportunity to gather first impressions of how the campaign had gone and to look at ways to build on it in the future.

Attracting young people

It is predicted that, within five years, there will be a growing shortage of highly skilled ICT professionals in Europe due to a decrease in the number of applicants for ICT-related programmes, especially amongst women. The task is, therefore, to improve the image of ICT education and careers, encourage young people and increase the talent pool with a view to boosting productivity, efficiency and competitiveness.

Presentations made during the session on best practices demonstrated the possible ways to go about organising successful awareness raising activities. Laura Franchesi from the Italian education agency ANSAS provided an overview of actions taken

in Italy's regions.

Focusing on schools and coordinating with regional organisations, a proactive campaign was launched to encourage involvement in the event and to gain media coverage. The campaigns in Denmark, Sweden and Norway focused on showing that ICT is fun, is taught on interesting courses, leads to good jobs, and is the future. A programme of exciting events was devised: it included an exhibition which offered the opportunity to play with technology; visits to schools; and the creation of an e-skills technology tent in the centre of Oslo.

The common thread between all of these activities is that they aimed to capture the imagination of young people and try to encourage them to think of a career in ICT. The experiences show that young people react well to hands-on activities and to hearing



© ewg3D

e-Skills prize for entrepreneurship: the winners

The e-Skills prize for entrepreneurship was won by two Romanians: Cezar Ursan and Adrian Brudaru. Their Green Cell Phone Charger impressed the jury with its combination of practicality and environmental applications. It aims to solve the problem of your mobile phone running out of battery when you're on the move. Not near a power socket? No need to fear. The charger uses energy that would otherwise be wasted – that produced as you walk – to recharge your battery, offering a carbon neutral way to charge your phone.

Cezar and Adrian say that the idea came to them over a pint of lager and that it struck them as a fun way to save money and help the environment. The device is attached to the user's shoe and, as they walk, converts mechanical energy into electrical energy, charging a 3.7 volt battery – the standard in most mobile phones. So far only two prototypes have been made, but the inventors are looking into the practicalities of mass producing their product and unlocking its commercial potential.



the personal stories of ICT professionals who are relatively close to their own ages. Getting the issue of e-skills onto the political and media agenda is not always easy, but large-scale and unusual actions are more likely to succeed. Event organisers also reiterated the need to start preparing well in advance and to be proactive in alerting the press – a press pack CD created by the team in Romania is a good example of how to go about this.

Ensuring sustainability and competitiveness

A key theme of the European e-Skills Week was the fact that we are living in a fast-changing world with an accelerating pace of ICT innovation, and our enterprises need to reflect that. It is estimated that only 10% jobs will not require e-skills five years from now and it is expected that 60% of five-year-old children today will work in jobs that do not currently exist. The need for well-trained ICT professionals can only continue to increase. It is, therefore, vital that solutions are put in place to get more young people to study the subject and its related fields. The results of a project led by INSEAD on European e-competence curricula development guidelines were presented during the European e-Skills Week. It aims to increase the attractiveness, the quality and the relevance of ICT curricula.

Speakers from the United Kingdom explained how ICT is being made a priority, especially with regards to encouraging 14-19 year olds to enter the field. A strategic plan is being implemented in the UK that includes the promotion of specific degrees to make students job-ready when they leave university and an initiative to 'upskill' the workforce. Nigel Payne from e-Skills UK – the body

putting the plan into action – presented an e-skills manifesto and said that filling skills shortages and gaps need to be prioritised. The ICT industry in the UK is not in recession and companies using ICT also offer an opportunity to boost employment rates. Thinking ahead is key to ensuring that Europe is not left behind – and focusing on e-skills is a vital way to do this. e-Skills UK is a very good example of how to foster partnership between the public and the private sector to promote e-skills. ■

Competition rewards young entrepreneurs and innovators

A highlight of the closing event was the presentation of awards in six categories, demonstrating the wealth of possible practical applications for ICT skills. Finalists were invited to the ceremony and, later in the day, given the opportunity to talk about their ideas in a more intimate workshop setting. The awards recognised both young people and teachers, whose inventive use of ICT shows what can be done if you apply e-skills to a range of situations.

Details of all prize winners can be found on the European e-Skills Week website.

» Contact

ICT for Competitiveness and Innovation Unit
Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry
entr-ict-for-comp-and-innovation@ec.europa.eu
<http://eskills-week.ec.europa.eu>

THE FLOOR TO IRINI PARI

INNOVATION THROUGH DESIGN

Irini Pari with James Ennis, the winner of the Design ZeroNine competition.

Irini Pari, vice-president of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), speaks to our magazine about the importance of design for the European economy and society.

What is the role of design in EU policy, particularly innovation policy?

The European Union was created to ensure prosperity and a better quality of life for its citizens. If we want Europe to stay ahead and maintain its international competitive position, if we want Europe to be a good place to live in, innovation and creativity are vital. Innovation and creativity are factors that promote growth and prosperity in Europe. This is where design comes in. We need creative minds to respond to the demands of our world and even sometimes as a driving force for a better future. We cannot develop the EU further without facing the upcoming challenges at all levels. We cannot ensure a better quality of life, if we do not support creative processes that lead to innovation.

How did you come up with the idea for the EESC's competition 'Design ZeroNine for a Sustainable Present' and what did you hope to achieve?

We wanted to celebrate the European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009, so in our Committee, in co-operation with Designed in Brussels, we were creative and innovative by launching the EESC Design ZeroNine competition in art schools in all 27 EU Member States. It is the first time that a European institution has organised a competition like this and we are very happy that it was such a great success. Especially in the year when the Copenhagen climate summit took place, we also wanted to stress the importance of environmental protection and energy efficiency. So, the idea was to reduce the very complex topic of climate change and sustainable development to a very simple and concrete idea. Young designers were invited to create an innovative design product that could be used by the EESC as a promotional gift with a strong message.

What were the competition's greatest successes?

First of all, the competition owes its great success to the talent, inspiration, work and commitment of young European designers from 24 Member States. Second, the level of participation, in terms of eligible projects, geographical distribution and gender balance was impressive. In addition, this competition gave a general insight

into how sustainable design is perceived and practised all over Europe, and gave all those young designers the opportunity to work around Europe and its values, to turn their ideas into concrete products. Finally, with this competition, the EESC succeeded in addressing a double challenge: that of fostering sustainable, innovative and creative design, and investing in sustainable public procurement by promoting a new, environmentally friendly form of promotional gift.

What can design contribute, both directly and indirectly, to the EU economy?

If you look back at the history of design, it has always been closely related to the economy. Since emerging during the 19th century's Industrial Revolution, design has brought together the values of art, craftsmanship and mass production. Design means creating products with the clear aim of selling them. But design is not merely about economics – the creative and innovative aspect gives a human face to the economy. The designer's task is not only to develop a new product but to come up with more useful, more functional and even more beautiful products. Those creations should also provide better services, be more ergonomic and easier to use.

Well-designed products favour cheap mass production but the artistic approach brings an added value and thus more profit for companies.

If you put this all into the European context, it means that the EU economy cannot only be profit-driven but also needs to follow humanitarian reasoning. In the EU, we need to follow our values to ensure a better life for our citizens – in all fields and in every respect. Design can contribute to achieving these aims in a very crucial way. ■

>> Contact

European Economic and Social Committee

press@eesc.europa.eu

www.eesc.europa.eu



THINKING **SMALL**, ACTING **BIG**

In a new series, E&I magazine looks at how the Enterprise Europe Network helps European SMEs do business in the single market and beyond.

The Enterprise Europe Network helps European companies to do business beyond national and EU borders, calling on its 3 000 experts based in 570 branches in 46 countries. The latest branches to join the network are in South Korea and Mexico.

Since its launch in 2008, the network has provided information and services to more than 3 million SMEs. In that time, its member organisations have organised nearly 10 000 events and information days, bringing together more than 400 000 companies, often from different countries.

Some 3 000 staff members have conducted over 50 000 technology and business reviews to help firms license the right technology and locate the best business partners. Thanks to the network, small companies have signed more than 1 500 technology and business co-operation agreements to date.

The network pools its expertise in key industries in 18 sector groups, ranging from intelligent energy to nanotechnology. They provide companies with customised support and sector-specific events. In addition, network branches have access to two powerful databases to help companies: one for business partnerships and the other for technology transfer. These databases now contain around 20 000 company and technology profiles.

Making waves in water treatment

Fewer than one in 10 European small businesses trade beyond their own national borders, according to the Observatory of European SMEs. This is mainly due to their lack of knowledge of foreign markets. So when Scottish firm Scotmas set its sights on marketing its water treatment, hygiene and environmental care products in Turkey, it needed the right kind of support to bridge the business culture gap.

As the company has experience working abroad, it is well aware of the importance of having a local contact as a first stepping stone when entering a new market, says Scotmas director Alistair Cameron. This is why he decided to turn to the Enterprise Europe Network for help locating a partner in Turkey.

Jane Watters, a network adviser based at Scottish Enterprise, teamed up with Serdal Temel, her counterpart at the Ege University Science and Technology Centre in Turkey. Together, they lined up a three-day programme of interviews in Turkey for Scotmas. Their work, and their client companies' commitment, has blossomed into five commercial and technical agreements and the opening of a small production plant in Izmir.

Over the months, Temel has used his local expertise to help the Scottish business. On one occasion, he even went to the airport to help smooth over a customs misunderstanding and release impounded Scotmas goods. "For the first year we were in Turkey, I came to see Dr Serdal as almost an honorary employee of Scotmas", says Cameron. ■

The network online

Launched in February, the Enterprise Europe Network's powerful new website is packed full of exciting features. It explains how the network supports SMEs. In addition to an in-depth presentation of the services the network offers enterprises, an interactive map helps SMEs locate the branch nearest them.

Firms looking to license out their technology or acquire other companies' innovations can consult the 'technology market', which currently contains over 13 000 offers and requests.

Brokerage events that SMEs can take part in to find potential partners are listed in the events calendar, while those seeking inspiration should visit the regularly updated 'success stories' section, to see how the network has helped businesses in similar industries or situations.

Contact

Enterprise Europe Network
ec.europa.eu/enterprise-europe-network



Business Support on Your Doorstep

NEWS IN BRIEF

ENTERPRISING REGIONS

The winners of the first European Entrepreneurial Regions (EER) awards were announced in February 2010. The regions which walked away with the prizes were Brandenburg (DE), Catalonia (ES), County Kerry (IE), Murcia (ES), Trnava (SK) and Uusimaa/Helsinki (FI).

www.ec.europa.eu/enterprise/e_i/news/article_10003_en.htm



© blackred

AN INNOVATION BOOST

Since its launch in 2007, the EU's six-year Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIP) has given Europe a significant innovation boost. Over 50 000 enterprises have already taken advantage of its financial guarantee scheme and more than 11 000 SME co-operation agreements have been put forward.

www.ec.europa.eu/enterprise/e_i/news/article_9975_en.htm



© Mooneydriver

MILESTONE FOR SAFE ELECTRIC CARS

The United Nations has passed the first international regulation on the safety of electric cars, including hybrids. The European Commission has welcomed this decision as the first step towards facilitating the early roll-out of entirely safe electric cars onto our roads. The regulation outlines how manufacturers should protect car users against the high voltages – typically around 500 volts – used to operate electric vehicles.

www.ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/itemlongdetail.cfm?item_id=4104&lang=en



© Alexey Dudoladov

SAFE PRODUCTS IN THE SINGLE MARKET

A package of reforms is gradually being implemented so as to help businesses and consumers benefit fully from the EU's single market for goods. In January 2010, the components of the package relating to accreditation and market surveillance entered into force. Market surveillance is crucial to ensuring the quality and safety of products in circulation, and provides a level playing field for economic operators.

www.ec.europa.eu/enterprise/e_i/news/article_10099_en.htm



© Alex Slobodkin

MICROFINANCE FACILITY TO CREATE NEW JOBS

In response to the recession and rising joblessness across Europe, EU employment and social affairs ministers agreed a €100-million European Microfinance Facility, which could leverage up to €500 million in loans to help the unemployed and small entrepreneurs – especially those who cannot normally obtain credit – start their own businesses.

www.europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/244&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en



© Joshua Hodge Photography

A NEW DECADE, A NEW STRATEGY

Following a broad stakeholder consultation, the European Commission has proposed its new 'Europe 2020' strategy, which will provide a road map, over the next decade, for economic recovery, as well as growth that is smart, green and inclusive. The proposal includes a series of flagship initiatives and involves action at EU, national, regional and local levels. "Europe 2020 is about what we need to do today and tomorrow to get the EU economy back on track", said European Commission President José Manuel Barroso.

www.ec.europa.eu/eu2020



» Find out more...

For information on further recent activities and policy developments related to Enterprise and Industry, visit our website:

www.ec.europa.eu/enterprise

UPCOMING EVENTS

● Getting SMEs on the road to recovery, 31 May-1 June, Madrid

In the context of the Small Business Act, this conference is the closing event of European SME Week 2010 and will present good practice in getting Europe on the road to economic recovery through SMEs. The event will revolve around a number of workshops focusing on entrepreneurship, the business environment, benefiting from the single market, and more. The annual European Enterprise Awards – which reward excellence among public authorities in promoting entrepreneurship and small business – ceremony will also take place during this closing event.

www.ec.europa.eu/enterprise/SBAconference2010

● The Calypso study: recommendations and conclusions, 10-11 June, Mallorca

Social tourism is tourism for all and gives specific target groups, such as senior citizens, youths and disabled citizens more opportunities of travelling, thereby strengthening European solidarity. Calypso's work programme includes promoting social tourism as a means to facilitate tourism in low seasons, thus extending the seasonality spread, stimulating economic growth, and improving local economies. The EU-funded Calypso study has been analysing

appropriate good practices and potential mechanisms accordingly, and its conclusions and recommendations will be presented at this conference.

www.ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/calypso/2010/meeting4

● Europe INNOVA annual partnering event, 14-16 June, Copenhagen

This year's Europe INNOVA annual partnering event, co-organised with EPISIS INNO-Net, will focus on how innovation in services can act as a catalyst for the EU's new 'Europe 2020' strategy. The event will address the topic from both the policy and SME perspectives.

www.europe-innova.org

● European minerals conference, 16-17 June, Madrid

Under the auspices of the Spanish presidency of the EU, the European Minerals Conference 2010 will provide stakeholders with the opportunity to discuss the follow-up to the European Commission's Communication of 2008 on a Raw Materials Initiative: a special focus will be on sustainable access to resources from an industrial, land planning and environmental standpoint.

www.eu2010.es/en/agenda/seminarioscongresosyconf/evento21.html

ENTERPRISE & INDUSTRY *magazine*

The *Enterprise & Industry* on-line magazine provides regular updates on policy development, on legislative proposals and their passage to adoption, and on the implementation and review of regulation affecting enterprises. Articles cover issues related to SMEs, innovation, entrepreneurship, the Single Market for goods, competitiveness and environmental protection, industrial policies across a wide range of sectors, and more. In short, it addresses all EU policies under the responsibility of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry.

Three times a year, the best of the on-line articles, together with a feature article, are presented in the printed edition of the magazine. You can subscribe to receive the magazine – in English, French or German – free of charge by post. Visit the website and subscribe on-line.

Visit the magazine website to find out more:
www.ec.europa.eu/enterprise/e_i

On the site, you can sign up to receive notification of all new articles through the RSS feed.

