
September 2012

Response to Consultation
the Commission

EUROCHAMBRES – The Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry represents over 20 million enterprises in Europe – 93% of which are SMEs – through members in 45 countries and a European network of 2000 regional and local Chambers
EUROCHAMBRES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP 2020 ACTION PLAN

EUROCHAMBRES advocates an approach by the European Commission based on a small number of EU level measures/policies to stimulate and cultivate entrepreneurship, especially among the youth. The Chamber network proposes the following priorities:

- Channel Structural Funds resources towards boosting entrepreneurial training for students and other young people in education. This funding should also be used to stimulate public-private partnerships, notably involving Chambers of Commerce and Industry, which are well experienced in providing such training (see the examples of best practices below).

- Urge all Member States to ensure that the key competence entrepreneurship is embedded in national (or regional) curricula for primary and secondary level education.

- Similarly, urge all Member States to ensure that entrepreneurship is a mandatory requirement in all technical studies, including at tertiary level.

- In parallel to this, ensure that teachers receive training on entrepreneurship education and exposure to enterprise, both during their initial qualification process and subsequently during their teaching career.

- Develop initiatives to make certain that all young people have at least one entrepreneurial experience (e.g. mini-company, local community project etc) before they leave secondary school in order to develop various relevant skills (responsibility, creativity, risk assessment and management, project management, cross-cultural and sectorial management, negotiation, teamwork, staff management etc.).

- Invest in the skills/capacities of would-be and new entrepreneurs through the development of mentoring/coaching schemes, which provide useful and hands-on competences for a successful & immediate start of a business.

- Integrate entrepreneurship education into vocational education and training (VET) given that both initial and continuous VET learners are a potentially significant source of both intrapreneurship (i.e. entrepreneurial/innovative behaviour within an existing business) and future entrepreneurs.

The main focus of the Commission should be on ensuring access to entrepreneurship education at all levels.

The goal is to equip all students with an entrepreneurial mindset and develop their sense of initiative and creativity. Such attributes enhance career prospects, not only since potential employers increasingly seek enterprising staff, but also by opening young people’s minds to the positive alternative of pursuing their own business ideas.
The 2,000 Chambers of Commerce and Industry belonging to EUROCHAMBRES are continuously engaged in delivering support and services to Europe’s current and future entrepreneurs. As such, EUROCHAMBRES attaches great importance to stimulating and cultivating entrepreneurship in the EU and thus remains ready and willing to share Chambers’ experience and ideas with policy makers as they consider this hugely significant issue.

**General Assessment**

**Overlap with the Small Business Act (SBA) and Europe 2020**

EUROCHAMBRES recognizes the critical importance of an entrepreneurial environment to the Europe’s economic recovery and growth. To speed up economic recovery and growth, it is important to pay extra attention to supporting SMEs. However, the Small Business Act (SBA) is and should remain the main EU framework for SME policy. The SBA is reasonably high on the policy agenda, endorsed by the Member States and its implementation has been strengthened by a well-organised reporting and governance structure. Because of this, the SBA has gained political momentum, familiarity among policy makers and has begun to deliver results. An overlapping new initiative could undermine this effective process and create confusion. It is important therefore that this new document does not duplicate initiatives that are already underway, a comment that is prompted by the fact that all initiatives listed under Action Pillar 1 of the draft Entrepreneurship Action Plan are already integral to the SBA. **EUROCHAMBRES therefore recommends that this action plan becomes part of the SBA, e.g. as an addendum, and included in its reporting cycle.**

EUROCHAMBRES recommends that the Commission and Member States continue to pursue the processes and priorities set in place by the SBA and the 2011 review. There is certainly no room for complacency in tackling and constantly reviewing these conditions in order to make the EU a better place to create and run a business, but we believe that the SBA should remain the framework for doing so.

**Promoting an entrepreneurial spirit**

Reflecting this call for complementarity rather than duplication, EUROCHAMBRES recommends that the Entrepreneurship Action Plan specifically focuses on one key aspect that is not central to the SBA and where there remains considerable room for improvement across the EU: **how to stimulate and cultivate entrepreneurship.** Especially important in tackling this challenge is youth entrepreneurship, which is closely tied to instilling from very early on an entrepreneurial mindset. Fostering an entrepreneurial spirit should also be a key action against early school leaving, since it is a means of developing responsibility and confidence amongst young people and encouraging them to pursue their own entrepreneurial activity.
EUROCHAMBRES is in favour of the implementing measures from the Action Pillar II targeted at creating of entrepreneurial mindsets in early stages of education.

Implementation

EUROCHAMBRES suggests that national SME Envoys should be responsible in their country for the monitoring of the implementation of the actions in the Entrepreneurship Action Plan 2020 in close cooperation with SME organisations.

The SME Envoy Network should, moreover, commit to focus in 2013 on the implementation of entrepreneurship education actions/measures.

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All our position papers can be downloaded from www.eurochambres.eu/content/default.asp?PageID=145
ANNEX 1
Examples of good practices

Box 1. Entrepreneurship Module Eligible for Certification – Dutch Chamber of Commerce

The Entrepreneurship Module Eligible for Certification in the Netherlands gives educational institutions providing upper secondary vocational education the option to add entrepreneurship to existing vocational training courses. The module sets out the basis concerning what people should know and be able to do in order to start up their own business and how to ensure that that business survives during the first few crucial years and goes on to flourish. The Entrepreneurship Module consists of 7 work processes, elaborated in competences, knowledge and skills.

Since 2011-2012 the Entrepreneurship Module is embedded in the national qualification structure in upper secondary vocational education. At this moment 17 of 41 regional schools for secondary vocational education are participating in the pilot, with currently 6.000 students taking the module. The goal is to prepare 30.000 – 40.000 students for an entrepreneurial career annually as of school year 2015-2016.

The Centre of Expertise on Vocational Education, Training and the Labour Market for the Trade Sector (KCH) has developed this module together with a variety of stakeholders. The Dutch Chamber of Commerce is one of the main partners.


Box 2. Education for Entrepreneurship - E4E , Training Needs Analysis in small and medium-size enterprises with emphasis on entrepreneurial skills and cooperation with the South East European Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning (SEECEL) – Croatian Chamber of Economy

1. The E4E project (Education for Entrepreneurship) is aimed at creating an integral education system for entrepreneurship as a concept of lifelong learning with the emphasis on the educational goals of the EU. The active participation of all relevant bodies on E4E Coordination has created the joint platform for the development of Strategy for Entrepreneurial Learning, as adopted by the Croatian Government in June 2010. The CCE will carry out promotion activities regarding Strategy for Entrepreneurial Learning throughout the county chamber network. Within the Action plan 2010-2014 of the Strategy, the CCE will be especially engaged in the measure: “Development of entrepreneurial competences for all employees” that has the target group management and employees in companies, especially in SME.

2. The TNA project aimed at creating a comprehensive methodology and a continuous follow-up of future educational needs in SME as well as establishing the Competence Centre for research and training needs analysis in relation to entrepreneurial skills and follow-up of international trends and their implementation on the national level with a special emphasis on the EU. First research was conducting 2009, and at 2011 CCE was a pilot institution for regional research at SEECEL project

3. The Croatian Chamber of Economy and the Ministry of the Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship (today Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Crafts) are founders of the South East European Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning-SEECEL, the basic task of which is a systematic promotion and development of entrepreneurial culture and entrepreneurial learning. The funds for the operation of the Centre have been provided from the multi-beneficiary IPA package. The project is aimed to promote lifelong learning for entrepreneurship, which is compatible with the aim of the E4E project.

More information: http://analiza-potreba-za-edukacijom.hgk.hr/ or www.hgk.hr

Box 3: Entrepreneur’s Skills Certificate® - Austrian Federal Economic Chamber

The Entrepreneur’s Skills Certificate/ESC® is a modular training programme for upper secondary general as well as vocational education. The ESC® provides understanding of economic basics and entrepreneurial competencies. More than 50,500 students and young adults participated in ESC® online tests in Austria and abroad. The election as European best practice for entrepreneurship education in Oslo 2006 led to a broad dissemination of the ESC® to countries such as Germany, France, Albania, Kosovo, Switzerland, Italy (Alto Adige), Serbia, Poland, the Czech Republic, as well as to requests from Turkey and the Panafrikan Chambers.

More information: www.unternehmerfuehrerschein.at or www.wko.at/bildung