



Press Release

Brussels, 20 November 2014

EUROCHAMBRES and Committee of the Regions join forces to address skills shortages, promote entrepreneurship and advocate better regulation

The EU's Committee of the Regions (CoR) and the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry – EUROCHAMBRES – are to cooperate to tackle youth unemployment and the "skills mismatch", encourage entrepreneurship, advocate better and more transparent EU law-making and facilitate access to finance. This was announced today at a [conference](#) co-organised by the two bodies on the theme "Forecasting and delivering skills at regional level".

Marking the start of the CoR- EUROCHAMBRES cooperation, today's conference gathered high-level representatives of both bodies, as well as from the EU institutions and the business community, to discuss means to identify and deliver the skills that local economies need.

Opening the event, **Michel Lebrun**, CoR President, stressed that: *"Professional skills must be adjusted to the reality of the labour market. They should include a theoretical part, guaranteed through quality education, and a practical part provided by formative traineeships. In this sense, it is important that we focus our efforts on the Youth Guarantee with concrete projects. I therefore warmly welcome enhanced cooperation with EUROCHAMBRES to further work together on this issue."*

The President of EUROCHAMBRES, **Richard Weber**, emphasised *"The regional component is of critical importance to the Chamber network and we need to collaborate closely with local and regional authorities in ensuring favourable business conditions. This joint cooperation will provide a valuable framework for that collaboration."*

The CoR and EUROCHAMBRES will be developing cooperation on four main aspects, namely:

- **Tackling youth unemployment and the "skills mismatch"**: the CoR will provide political support to EUROCHAMBRES' pilot projects on skills forecasting at regional level, starting with the launch of a comprehensive survey on skills shortages and needs on the regional level.
- **Promoting entrepreneurship**: the CoR will work on the promotion of the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme for which EUROCHAMBRES acts as Support Office. Conversely, EUROCHAMBRES will further support the [European Entrepreneurial Regions'](#) (EER) initiative launched by the CoR, for example by facilitating the participation of representatives of local Chambers in future EER evaluation missions.
- **Advocating better regulation**: CoR and EUROCHAMBRES will join efforts to advocate the need for a more systematic assessment of the territorial impact of EU policies. They will also work to ensure a consistent, transparent and efficient application of the so-called "SME test" aimed at analysing the effects of European Commission's legislative proposals on SMEs.
- **Access to finance for SMEs**: the CoR and EUROCHAMBRES will tackle topics such as access to finance, investments and financial liquidity through possible reports and events in 2015.



The EU's **Committee of the Regions** is the EU's assembly of regional and local representatives from all 28 Member States. Its mission is to involve regional and local authorities and the communities they represent in the EU's decision-making process and to inform them about EU policies. The European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council are obliged to consult the Committee in policy areas affecting regions and cities. It can appeal to the EU Court of Justice if its rights are infringed or it believes that an EU law infringes the subsidiarity principle or fails to respect regional or local powers.

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EUROCHAMBRES – the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry represents over 20 million businesses in Europe – 98% of which are SMEs – through members in 43 countries and a network of 1700 regional and local Chambers.

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