

10 years of Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs: stronger than ever a decade later

Since its launch in 2009, the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs (EYE) programme has helped to facilitate more than 7,000 collaborations between new and experienced entrepreneurs across the EU, enabling over 14,000 entrepreneurs to benefit from this EU-funded programme.

In 10 years, the programme has helped entrepreneurs to stimulate innovative business practices, develop new products and services, and expand into new markets.

Christoph Leitl, President of EUROCHAMBRES – the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry, which acts as the Support Office of the programme, reaffirmed the support of the European business community: *“This programme plays a crucial role in boosting entrepreneurship in the EU. Since its inception, EUROCHAMBRES has supported this unique entrepreneurial initiative and we will proudly continue to do so in the future! We need to build on the achievements of this successful programme: more people and businesses benefiting, more countries to connect with, more entrepreneurs in Europe!”*

The Director for the COSME Programme at the European Commission in the Directorate General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs **Kristin Schreiber**, added: *“Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs is highly appreciated by entrepreneurs because it helps them boost their business in a tangible way. It helps to create new companies and jobs and supports entrepreneurs on their path to growth. For example, between 2014–2016, over 250 new companies and more than 2,000 jobs were created thanks to the EYE experience. I want to see this programme grow in importance, with more and more successful entrepreneurs, more start-ups and more SMEs growing and scale-up within”.*

The EYE programme facilitates the exchange of entrepreneurial and management experience across the EU. It matches a newly established or potential entrepreneur with a well-experienced entrepreneur running a small business in another country. The exchange is partially funded by the European Union under the [COSME programme](#), Europe’s programme for small and medium-sized enterprises.

To mark the impact of the programme, **Nelly Davtyan** and **Ioannis Polychronakis** were selected as the EYE Entrepreneurs of the Decade during the award ceremony that took place in Brussels on 18 March. The event brought together the network of nearly 200 local contact points that implement the programme across Europe, as well as Members of the European Parliament, and representatives from the European Commission, the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME).

About the winners

Nelly Davtyan (Armenia) was awarded as **EYE New Entrepreneur of the Decade**. In 2016 Nelly put together a team of experienced IT developers and founded ‘IT Solutions’, a company for mobile and web-based applications. After her exchange in Malta in 2018, Nelly has managed to turn her start-up into a sustainable growing IT business with the help of the EYE programme and her host entrepreneur. She aspires to encourage more young women from small countries to run their own business.

In the **EYE Host Entrepreneur of the Decade** category, the prize went to **Ioannis Polychronakis (Greece)**. Ioannis runs a family business in the design and construction sector, offering customised design/building and consulting services on the island of Crete. The company focuses on the natural preservation, implementing environmentally friendly house solutions (energy passive houses, green energy solutions, recycling solutions). Since joining EYE in 2015, Ioannis has hosted 5 new entrepreneurs from various countries.

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More information on Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs: www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu

Download [pictures of the ceremony, free-of-use](#) | Download the [EYE 10th anniversary brochure](#)