

PRESS RELEASE

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EUROCHAMBRES Women Network CH.A.S.E. Project: **A hat-trick against gender stereotypes**

Three key moments can determine a woman's career: their choice of studies, their entry in the professional world, and their decision to become an entrepreneur or not. The only way of helping women to overcome gender stereotypes that still persist in employment, is guiding them through these crucial moments in their professional life.

This is what EUROCHAMBRES Women Network endeavoured to do via its CH.A.S.E. Project – CHambers Against Stereotypes in Employment – which came to an end today at a high level conference in Brussels.

Assessing the state of gender equality in Europe, Pierre Simon, President of EUROCHAMBRES, said: *"It is amazing to see how great the chasm still is between men and women in business! Europe is on the way to reaching the Lisbon target set for female employment (60% by 2010), nevertheless much still remains to be done to translate the gender equality principles into reality, particularly in employment. CH.A.S.E. is the Chambers' answer to this challenge."*

Since its launch in January 2005, CH.A.S.E. has developed three distinct tools to encourage women in business, acting on the three main levels of a woman's career.

1. Talent Check – Guiding school-girls through their university studies

Chambers developed Talent Check, an on-line questionnaire created to help young students choose their career in an objective way. The tool, available in five languages, suggests young students career opportunities in non-traditional sectors, according to their true professional aptitudes. Talent Check was promoted by the project partners via meetings in schools and events at national level, and has since been accessed by more than 5,000 students, most of them younger than 20. Talent Check can be accessed via <http://www.talentcheck.org/index.php>

2. The mentoring programme – Linking students with the technical world

Thanks to the mentoring scheme, university students were put in contact with enterprises, giving them internship or career opportunities in technical/scientific sectors.

3. The role models brochure – Spreading positive examples

A brochure collecting stories of female entrepreneurs and managers who have succeeded in male-dominated sectors is being disseminated via the Chamber network. The objective is to propose positive examples and encourage women to actively consider sectors of activity they traditionally tend to discard.

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EUROCHAMBRES has member organisations in 44 countries
representing a network of 2,000 regional and local Chambers with over 18 million member companies.

Mr Simon concluded with an outlook for the future: *“Driving forward the female business agenda is a must if Europe wants to achieve its targets of sustainable economic growth and more and better jobs, as the interests and concerns of over half of the European population cannot be left aside. In this perspective, Chambers welcome the creation of the European Gender Institute.”*

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