

## PRESS RELEASE

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## EUROCHAMBRES Women Network urges increased support for women in business

In view of the International Women's Day on 8 March, EUROCHAMBRES Women Network (EWN) criticises the low number of female entrepreneurs and slow progress in approaching gender equality in Europe.

Isabella Moore, EWN President, said: *"A significant increase of female employment and the promotion of gender equality were among the key targets of the Lisbon strategy established in 2000. However, now - 5 years later – only 3 out of 10 self-employed people are women despite the fact that women represent more than half of Europe's population, and men are still about twice as likely as women to be in managerial positions, despite equal education levels. Involving women is a must for the upswing of the European economy.*

*This demonstrates the urgent need for additional measures to support and encourage female entrepreneurship."*

### 80% of women not involved in decision-making

A recent EUROCHAMBRES Women Network's survey shows that almost 80% of female respondents do not participate in the decision-making process of their organisation, and this mainly because of "lack of time" (49,5%) and "family obligations" (35,5%). Women, more than men, are facing the challenge of reconciling family responsibilities with full-time employment.

Additionally, there is a significant pay-gap between men and women. Mrs. Moore stated: *"Though holding the same working position, women earn on average 15% less than their male colleagues! Progress has been made over the last ten years, but gender equality is not yet in sight."*

### Easier access to finance and more flexible childcare facilities needed

Family obligations and difficult access to finance are still the main hurdles for female entrepreneurs (and to be).

To overcome these obstacles EUROCHAMBRES Women Network urges the Institutions and the Member States to adopt the following measures:

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EUROCHAMBRES has member organisations in 43 countries  
representing a network of 2,000 regional and local Chambers with over 18 million member companies.

- Ensure easier access to finance and micro-loans;
- Offer additional and more flexible childcare facilities – according to EWN, women work up to 60 hours per week;
- Promote household assistance to help women in dealing with their family life and – at the same time – to create new positions for jobless people.

### **EUROCHAMBRES Women Network**

EUROCHAMBRES Women Network was launched in September 2003. Its purpose is to establish a European platform of information and promotion of professional women's viewpoints and interests.

The objectives include, amongst other things, faster development of female entrepreneurship, increased participation of professional women in the economic development and the recognition of equal opportunity rights.

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