

**PRESS RELEASE**

## **International Women's Day 8 March** **Female entrepreneurship is huge untapped potential, Chambers criticize**

On the occasion of this year's International Women' Day on 8 March, EUROCHAMBRES has re-affirmed the importance of the participation of professional women in the economic development of Europe and the recognition of equal opportunity rights. For Chambers, female entrepreneurial activities and the better integration of women into the working process are one of the key factors for the EU in order to become the most competitive and knowledge-based economy of the world.

Isabella Moore, President of EUROCHAMBRES Women Network (EWN) said: *"The creativity and entrepreneurial drive of women is indispensable for Europe's economy. If we want to raise female employment over 60% in 2010 according to the Lisbon agenda, Member States who lag behind, have to implement targeted actions, and the Commission should closely monitor those activities and their outcomes."*

EUROCHAMBRES welcomes initiatives by DG Enterprise to promote female entrepreneurship as they tackle points of importance to women entrepreneurs such as access to finance, access to information and networking. However, the business organisation representing more than 17 million enterprises in 41 countries insists that women entrepreneurship still has to be mainstreamed into all policies and programmes of the European Commission.

EUROCHAMBRES stressed the proposals in the recently published Entrepreneurship Action Plan must be made more concrete for fostering female entrepreneurship.

Mrs Moore said: *"Women make up over half of the EU population. We must ensure they are encouraged and facilitated to play a fully equal entrepreneurial and business role."*

### **Activities of the EUROCHAMBRES Women Network**

EWN is currently running an intensive pan-European programme under the European Commission's Community Programme on Gender Equality (2001-2005). Activities include a survey on reasons for the under-representation of women in decision-making positions, an exchange of best practices from Chambers supporting the professional development of women and events to increase the political awareness on the professional situation of women.

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**EUROCHAMBRES** has member organisations in **41** countries representing a network of **2,000** regional and local Chambers with over **17 million** member companies.