

PRESS RELEASE

Education & Training: EU Chambers can drive towards knowledge-economy

Commenting on the European Commission's report on education, EUROCHAMBRES, the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry, is pleased that some Member States have made advances in this respect. However, the slow pace of progress – especially with regard to Life Long Learning – is worrying.

The Commission has initiated several programmes – such as Erasmus, Europass, EQF – to enhance the EU's education and training systems towards the goals set in the Lisbon Strategy. EUROCHAMBRES calls on the Austrian Presidency to put pressure on Member States at the next European Council in June for concrete actions to be taken in order to further complement these programmes.

Pierre Simon, President of EUROCHAMBRES, said: *“A well qualified workforce is of utmost importance to reflate Europe's economy. Member States should take advantage of the unique experience of Chambers in this field to bring about the convergence between training and labour that the market strongly asks for.”*

Chambers of Commerce and Industry, as representatives of the general interest of the economy, but also as providers of training, are strongly committed towards the building of a knowledge-based society. Most of them play key national roles in the development and implementation of training schemes tailored to the changing needs of both enterprises and individuals.

In this respect, EUROCHAMBRES is willing to cooperate with national and regional authorities, by offering the support of its network of 2,000 local Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and of their schools and institutes which train more than 3 million students per year.

Note to the editor:

Here are some examples of Chambers' training structures, with broadly-recognised competencies:

Austria: WIFI

With a market share of 20%, WIFI is the top training and further education institute in Austria. More than 320,000 participants attend approximately 26,000 courses taught by 11,000 trainers. WIFI has an extensive national network of institutes with at least one main WIFI in each province and 80 branches which all offer WIFI courses. WIFI Österreich is the platform for all WIFI institutes.

<http://www.wifi.at/>

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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.

France:

French Chambers manage 13 different school networks, including 214 life-long learning centres with 380,000 trainees; 157 centres for training with 80,000 apprentices; 70 institutes of sales force representing 4,000 students; 30 business and management schools; 16 engineering schools; and 151 language study centres with 140,000 trainees.

<http://formation-emploi.cci.fr/site/index.aspx>

Germany: DIHK-Bildungs-GmbH

German Chambers of Commerce and Industry represent an immense network of training centres, trainers, trainees and apprentices. 295,000 persons took part in life-long learning programmes offered by Chambers. 618,000 persons took part in the mid-term and final training exams.

<http://www.dihk-bildungs-gmbh.de/>

United Kingdom: Skills network

The British Chamber of Commerce Skills Network is one of the largest training providers in the UK

<http://www.chamberonline.co.uk/aKgOBvY.html>

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