

## Small companies in recent and potential member states need continued support to comply with EU Acquis

Businesses from Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia and Turkey have a satisfactory level of compliance with the *acquis communautaire*, but this trend is more evident in medium-sized companies than in smaller ones. This is a key conclusion of the 'CASE' project (Chambers towards Acquis Support and Business Ethics), presented by EUROCHAMBRES today.

Out of the 410 companies assessed in the framework of the programme, 68% of medium-sized and big appear to be in line with provisions related to health and safety at work, consumer protection, and the environment. The rate of micro and small companies complying with these areas is of 54%.

*"Small companies often lack the human resources to follow and therefore put in place EU regulations. They need continued support to become EU-fit,"* said Arnaldo Abruzzini, Secretary General of EUROCHAMBRES. *"Business Support Programmes such as CASE provide valuable help to companies in this respect. We believe these programmes should be extended to the entire Western Balkan region and have a specific focus on SMEs."*

Fulfilling the *acquis* requirements is not just an additional responsibility, but also an element that strengthens the companies' competitiveness in the EU as well as in global markets. One of the aims of the CASE project was to evaluate businesses' level of compliance with EU legislation via a self-diagnostic toolkit, and to offer them relevant training when necessary.

### **Corporate Social Responsibility: entrepreneurs can benefit, with proper support**

The CASE programme also encouraged the introduction of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategies among entrepreneurs in the participating countries.

Out of the 125 companies involved in this part of the project, most showed a clear awareness of the importance of CSR issues, such as improving the social and organisational performance of the business, preventing bribery and corruption, or minimising the negative impact of their activities on the environment.

Yet, some companies are not adopting CSR actions, either because they do not know what advantages it can bring, or because of the economic crisis and the subsequent lack of resources.

*"Here again, we witness the need for more support and communication to companies: CSR-related benefits should be further promoted to show that socially responsible activities can positively impact on a company's competitiveness and profit,"* said Mr Abruzzini.

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**The findings of 'CASE' activities are collected in two reports:**  
**the report on the *acquis communautaire* can be downloaded from**  
**[www.eurochambres.eu/content/default.asp?PageID=1&DocID=1876](http://www.eurochambres.eu/content/default.asp?PageID=1&DocID=1876);**  
**the report on Corporate Social Responsibility can be downloaded from**  
**[www.eurochambres.eu/content/default.asp?PageID=1&DocID=1877](http://www.eurochambres.eu/content/default.asp?PageID=1&DocID=1877)**

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