

PRESS RELEASE

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“Women are less credible in business than men”
EUROCHAMBRES Women Network takes action to overcome stereotypes

Business is still considered to be a male affair. The professional environment is full of gender stereotypes like “Women are less credible in business than men...they face difficulties with decision-making...Men should not have female bosses”.

These are some of the prejudices women come across according to a survey carried out among 1500 female entrepreneurs and managers in 8 EU Member States in the framework of the CHASE Project (**CH**ambers **A**gainst **S**tereotypes in **E**mployment) of EUROCHAMBRES Women Network (EWN).

According to Isabella Moore, President of EWN there is a positive shift in women’s mentality, but it has not yet been turned into action. Mrs. Moore said: *“While almost 95% of the interviewed consider that they can argue their point as well as men in their jobs, nearly ¾ of them state that lack of self-confidence is the biggest handicap to their professional advancement.*

Disparities between men and women in Europe impact negatively on the economy - and consequently on the achievement of the Lisbon targets. In order to fully tap the female potential, positive measures need to be implemented in the professional environment as well as in society in general.”

Chambers launch positive role models

The promotion of role models is one way to spread new ideas and different ways of thinking. Chambers have collected stories of women entrepreneurs and managers who overcame stereotypes in traditionally male-dominated sectors. The brochure will be distributed via the Chamber network and can be downloaded from the EWN website - http://www.eurochambres.be/women_chase/publications.shtml

Additionally, an on-line test for school girls which should widen their professional choice is in the pipeline.

According to EUROCHAMBRES Women Network, additional efforts should be made to create family-friendly conditions at work both for men and women, e.g. flexible working arrangements/teleworking, childcare facilities, parental leave, to name only a few.

The CHASE Project

The CHASE Project was launched in January 2005 and is funded under the European Commission's gender equality programme. It aims to investigate gender stereotypes and develop tools to surmount obstacles that hinder women from accessing typical "male" sectors.

As from September 2005, the project partners* will present measures to fight stereotypes in their countries. The outcome of the project will be discussed at a closing conference in Brussels in February 2006.

*Project partners: Austrian Federal Economic Chamber – Austria; Union of Hellenic Chambers of Commerce and Industry – Greece; Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry – Cyprus; Agenzia del sistema camerale per la promozione, l'imprenditorialità e la formazione – Italy; Observatoire de la formation, de l'Emploi et des Métiers of Paris CCI – France; Oldenburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry – Germany; Project promoter and coordinator: EUROCHAMBRES

The survey report and the brochure on role models can be downloaded from
http://www.eurochambres.be/women_chase/index.shtml

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