

PRESS RELEASE

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**EUROCHAMBRES Women Network starts
pan-European activities**

The EUROCHAMBRES Women Network (EWN) launches an intensive programme to increase Women's Entrepreneurship, the participation of professional women in the economic development and the recognition of equal opportunity rights. The action plan is co-financed by the European Commission in the framework of the Community Programme on Gender Equality (2001-2005).

The kick-off event addressing Chamber representatives will take place in Rome on 6 February. In addition to presenting the aims and the objectives of the Commission's programme on gender mainstreaming, the conference will launch a survey in the 15 EU Member States and the 10 accession countries aiming to identify the reasons for the under-representation of women in decision-making positions and gather best practices from Chambers actively supporting the professional development of women. The results will be marketed by EUROCHAMBRES through its network of 2,000 regional and local Chambers in 41 countries to the wider business community.

Furthermore, selected Chamber initiatives which support women entrepreneurs and professionals will be transferred to Chambers across Europe - amongst them careers counselling schemes, mentoring programmes and alternative ways of access to finance for female entrepreneurs.

A conference at the beginning of 2005 will evaluate the results of the activities and draw conclusions for further actions.

Isabella Moore appointed EWN-President

Dr. Isabella Moore, CBE, Vice President of EUROCHAMBRES, will head the EWN activities. As the first-ever female President of the British Chambers of Commerce – a position she has held since September 2002 – Isabella Moore herself is an outstanding example of a successful female career.

After having studied in Scotland and Warsaw, Isabella Moore worked on major bilingual contracts translating for governments, the European Commission and international companies. In 1982 she set up COMTEC, a company to offer specialized translating services of technical data for companies involved in exporting, in which she is still a managing partner.

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The Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry has member organisations in 41 countries representing a network of 2,000 regional and local Chambers with over 17 million member companies.

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Commenting on her aims as EWN President, Isabella Moore said, *“I am very pleased to take on the role of President of EUROCHAMBRES Women Network. As Europe faces increasing competitive pressures from abroad, it is essential that every individual, regardless of gender, is able to contribute their skills and expertise to the talent pool. This includes making the cultural changes necessary to increase both the numbers of women taking more prominent roles in political and corporate life, as well as the number of women starting and growing their own business in Europe. EWN will play an important role in ensuring this happens – both through its work with the European Commission, and through sharing Chamber best practice across Europe.”*

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