

**PRESS RELEASE**

Brussels, 8 March 2006

**European Gender Institute:  
A flower for women – but still to bloom**

According to EUROCHAMBRES Women Network (EWN), the European Commission has well celebrated International Women's Day by announcing the creation of a European Gender Institute.

However, EWN questions whether this will be enough to fight against gender inequality, and make a real dent in the negative figures on female employment and salary rates presented in a Commission report last week.

Isabella Moore, President of EWN, said: *"The Gender Institute is a good initiative to gather comparable data on female employment and raise the awareness on gender equality. But now the issue needs to be taken up by Member States, and implemented at local level with concrete measures. If we are serious in Europe about our commitment to enterprise and wealth creation, then we should be determined to remove any barriers along the way that prevent women from achieving their full potential."*

EWN particularly welcomed the recent initiative of six Heads of Government to set up a European Pact for Gender Equality, and hopes the proposal will be endorsed by all Member States at the next European Spring Council.

Chambers of Commerce offer their full support to any initiative aiming at closing gender gaps and fostering female presence in the labour market. Chambers can play a major role in this respect thanks to their well established EU-wide network, close to companies and to female – and male – entrepreneurs.

**EUROCHAMBRES Women Network**

EUROCHAMBRES Women Network was launched in September 2003. Its purpose is to establish a European platform of information and promotion of professional women's viewpoints and interests.

The objectives include, amongst other things, faster development of female entrepreneurship, increased participation of professional women in the economic development and the recognition of equal opportunity rights.

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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.