

# EURO - info

The bulletin of enterprise policy

**White Paper on Commerce:  
the Commission highlights  
commerce**

**Electronic commerce:  
an opportunity  
for enterprises....**



European Commission

# S U M M A R Y

In this issue the most significant event described is the adoption by the Commission of the White Paper on Commerce. This document presents a series of Community actions for strengthening competitiveness in this important sector employing more than 22 million people. The dossier of

the month takes stock of the initiatives aimed at this sector, including the actions which are to be launched during 1999 by DG XXIII to facilitate the introduction of electronic commerce in SMEs, which constitutes a further sizeable factor in the progress of commercial exchanges.

In the second part of the bulletin DG XXIII emphasises the importance which it attaches to the strengthening of concerted actions and to making progress in fulfilling its commitment to the tourism sector. Indeed, the concerted actions, with identification of best practices in the different fields treated, will enable SMEs to improve their response, in a practical way, to the challenge set by the globalisation of the economy (In this issue we shall deal in particular with support for SMEs in their access to innovation as well as the strengthening of SMEs through the Internet).

The bulletin then reviews Community news of interest to SMEs, with special emphasis on the programme of support for the enterprises of the CEEC countries to enable them to benefit already from the opportunities offered by the EU, as well as on the activation of the BRE and BC-NET networks, which have contributed so much to changing the mentality of European SMEs in regard to achieving close transnational co-operation.

## Dossier of the month

- White Paper on Commerce: the Commission highlights commerce
- Electronic commerce: an opportunity for enterprises....

## Concerted actions

- Enterprise start-up schemes: a tool for creating enterprises
- When the Internet serves to strengthen SMEs

## Making tourism more dynamic

- Tourism is adapting to the progress of information technologies
- The international tourism fair in Berlin

## The news

## Calls for proposals

## For information

## Just published

## Seminars

**EURO - info** is a concise information bulletin for SMEs and the craft sector. It is sent to those who put in a written request. EURO-info is published 10 times a year.

The information contained in this bulletin can be reproduced, provided the source is mentioned. This publication, which is purposely written in a journalistic style, does not reproduce legal texts faithfully. Those texts should be referred to directly. The content of the current EURO-info is purely informative. **Responsible for editing:** Ranieri Bombassei – Director DG XXIII, with the contribution of Gian Piero Paganini

EURO-info and other information with regard to DG XXIII is available on INTERNET via the EUROPA server: <http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg23/index.htm>

## S U B S C R I P T I O N S

EURO-info is a tool at your service

Ask for your free subscription in writing:

**EURO-info** - European Commission - Directorate General XXIII

"Enterprise Policy, Distributive Trades, Tourism and Co-operatives"



## White Paper on Commerce:



### the Commission highlights commerce

*The importance of the commerce sector, which employs around 22 million people in the European Union, is highlighted by the White Paper on commerce adopted by the European Commission. However, to continue to generate jobs, the commerce sector must maintain a high standard. This is why the White Paper proposes a series of community actions aimed at strengthening the sector's competitiveness whilst taking its distinctive characteristics into account.*

Commerce is an economic activity of prime importance since it represents 30% of firms, 16% of jobs and more than 13% of the GNP of the European Union. Moreover, commercial enterprises are vital for the proper functioning of the single market and commercial exchanges with third countries. However, this sector must constantly develop in order to follow the evolution of the market and the structure of consumption as well as the explosion of new technologies.

Employment in the commercial sector will see changes in the years to come. On the one hand it may increase thanks to new forms of retail selling introduced to improve customer service, but on the other hand it will be subject to a drop due to the mechanisation and computerisation of logistics tasks and management of stocks. The structural changes which commerce in Europe is undergoing will necessitate more skilled labour and part-time jobs.

The commerce sector requires above all a strategy based on the improvement of competitive conditions, in a market where competitiveness is the best response to the demands of consumers. This strategy includes measures aimed at gathering information on retail commerce in order to distribute it later, ensuring that the interests of the sector are taken into account in drawing up Union policies, and making sure that the sector has full recourse to Community programmes. The actions proposed in the White Paper are brought together under four main headings:

- Improvement of the use of political instruments to help commerce

An information campaign will be carried out in order to publicise the White Paper, as well as Commission work concerning commerce. As for the European statistical system in this sector,

it will continue to be improved. In addition, information on the changes and trends in the structure of commerce will be distributed in an annual report and during a conference. Studies on the future development of sale by co-opted network, on commercial agents and on wholesalers will be carried out by the Commission and published.

- Improvement of the administrative, legislative and financial environment

Administrative simplification will consist of drawing up and publishing actions benefiting commerce, to be undertaken in the light of the BEST report (Business Environment Simplification Task Force). To facilitate the access of enterprises to financing, the Commission foresees a certain number of actions such as the identification of opportunities for access of enterprises to financing, the encouragement of mutual guarantee systems for enterprises, the implementation of a second programme for start-up capital, or the organisation of a third round table for banks and SMEs.

An in-depth examination of the question of means of payment as well as an evaluation of the impact of the introduction of the euro on their use will be carried out.

The Commission will also undertake actions to promote social dialogue in the commerce sector.

- Strengthening of competitiveness and promotion of the spirit of enterprise

The Commission will apply itself to encouraging the introduction of new technologies in commerce. It will also make efforts to promote electronic commerce.

Actions are also proposed by the Commission to promote co-operation between commercial SMEs. As far as the training of SMEs is concerned, the Commission will evaluate the needs of commerce in order to be able to include them in an integrated training policy. On the question of local development, the Commission will identify both the problems encountered in the field and also the best practices, which will be passed on to national and regional decision-makers. It will formulate a recommendation on the improvement of the access of SMEs to other Community programmes and, in particular, the structural funds.

A study, followed by a conference, on the interaction between tourism and the distribution sector will be organised by the Commission.

- The encouragement of Europeanisation and internationalisation

The Commission will undertake actions based on preparatory measures and information aimed at facilitating the introduction of the euro in commerce.

The development of European commerce at international level, as well as the integration in the European Union of the candi-





date countries for membership, will also give rise to actions on the part of the Commission.

## INFORMATION S

DG XXIII.C.2

Fax: 32.2.295 89 84

The White Paper is available in the 11 Official languages on Internet at the following address:

[http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg23/commerce/l\\_blan/whitepaper.htm](http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg23/commerce/l_blan/whitepaper.htm)

## Electronic commerce: an opportunity for enterprises....



*Electronic commerce constitutes real progress in the field of commercial exchanges and may prove to be a particularly beneficial tool for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) which decide to adopt it. Directorate-General XXIII of the European Commission has therefore decided to commence actions with a view to helping enterprises to use electronic commerce.*

The concept of "electronic commerce" covers essentially the purchasing systems of enterprises, that is to say, the promotion and sale of products or services by telematic means. This concept can take the form of exchanges among enterprises, between enterprises and consumers or between enterprises and the public sector.

Electronic commerce has, above all, the advantage of improving the competitiveness of enterprises. It can in particular extend and improve the dialogue between producers and consumers, which can lead to an improvement in the quality of products and a better after-sales service.

In addition, thanks to electronic commerce, SMEs can pool their resources to increase their purchasing capacities, to search for new low price markets, to have access to information on the market, or to improve their logistic support.

In order for SMEs to participate intensively in electronic commerce, a certain number of conditions must be fulfilled. Firstly

electronic commerce must be seen as a product which is easy to use and user-friendly, is applicable according to standards common to all, offers considerable commercial benefits, costs little and allows for easy transactions through the electronic market. It is, moreover, necessary for electronic commerce to be provided with simple and clear regulations and well-established telecommunications tariffs. It is with this in mind that the Commission recently proposed a directive aimed at establishing a legal framework for electronic commerce. The Commission has also published several policy documents and taken a certain number of legislative initiatives concerning taxation and consumer protection.

The principal initiatives which DG XXIII will launch during 1999 to facilitate the introduction of the electronic market in enterprises are the following:

- An action aimed at facilitating the provision to SMEs, at moderate prices, of the whole basic material for using electronic commerce. This should allow massive participation of SMEs in electronic commerce.
- A campaign to make SMEs aware of the advantages of a strategy to introduce electronic commerce, as well as the identification and distribution of good practices in this field.
- An action to help the private sector establish commercial services for SMEs such as arbitration services or quality labels. These services will help small enterprises to obtain visibility and credibility on the electronic market on an equal footing with large enterprises.
- Collaboration by DG XXIII with the services of the Structural Funds, and with the Research and Development programmes aimed specifically at SMEs and electronic commerce. This should lead to the conception and setting up of actions enabling SMEs to develop organisations of dynamic networks, new mediation systems, numerical models, training courses for management of products and services and increased contacts between consumers and suppliers. The objective of these measures is to help SMEs to adapt to the structural changes brought about by the Information Society.
- Ensuring that bodies representing SMEs are conscious of the implications which Community legislative initiatives could have for their access to electronic commerce. A study launched in 1999 will monitor the performance of European SMEs in electronic commerce. A workshop will be organised with the representatives of SMEs to present the results of this study. Finally, the basic data will be put together in order to identify the specific needs of SMEs, the obstacles encountered and the potential Community actions to overcome them. A publication will be produced by the SME organisa-

tions and national governments and a series of recommendations will be addressed to the Commission and the Member States in the final report.

## INFORMATIONS

José Alberto MILLAN NAVARRO  
DG XXIII.C.2  
Fax: +32.2/ 295.89.84

## Concerted actions

### Enterprise start-up schemes: a tool for creating enterprises

*Enterprise start-up schemes are a particularly effective tool for the creation of SMEs, for supporting them in the initial phase and for increasing their growth rate. In this perspective a seminar entitled "Support for Innovation and Best Practices in the Field of Enterprise Start-up Schemes" was held in Helsinki (Finland) on 19 and 20 November 1998 as one of the concerted actions between Member States and the European Commission.*

The objective of this seminar was to give an overview of the present state of enterprise start-up schemes in Europe and to identify best practices as regards support services to enterprises.

We recall that enterprise start-up schemes are structures which offer a whole range of services to small enterprises such as premises, secretarial services, assistance with management and financial support. Small enterprises can thus benefit from resources enjoyed by large enterprises at prices adapted to small budgets.

The discussions during the seminar covered three subjects:

- **The financing of enterprise start-up schemes and support for innovation.**

One of the major problems with which the enterprise start-up schemes are confronted is financing in the start-up phase. The leaders of enterprise start-ups schemes have therefore been

advised to make sure that the networks are in a position to provide support and training services for their clients.

- **Best practices in the matter of infrastructure for enterprise start-up schemes and support for the enterprise**

It has been suggested that a fund for small enterprises should be created in order to stimulate them to develop innovative projects. In addition, enterprise start-up schemes should become more involved in setting up networks of enterprise start-up schemes in Europe.

- **The role of enterprise start-up schemes as a vehicle for technology transfer**

On this subject, it has been proposed that enterprise start-up schemes, in particular those within universities, should act to spread ideas and provide training for heads of enterprises on the basis of their work. Research should be directed more towards applied research and development of products.

A report on the seminar describing best practices of enterprise start-up schemes will be available in spring 1999 in English, French and German.

## INFORMATIONS

Annette BIRCH  
DG XXIII/A/2  
Fax: +32.2/ 296.62.78  
E-mail: [annette.birch@dg23.cec.be](mailto:annette.birch@dg23.cec.be)

### When the Internet serves to strengthen SMEs

*The objective of the seminar, which was held in Paris on 8 and 9 February 1999, was to examine how the Internet could make support services to enterprises more effective.*

The principal problems concerning the strengthening of SMEs through the Internet were identified during this meeting. Thus the lack of awareness on the part of SMEs of the benefits to be acquired was shown clearly. SMEs also have difficulties working in a network. As for the most frequently encountered problem of a technical nature, this is the selection of the right window on the Internet. Moreover, enterprises have difficulty in



understanding the regulations, the needs of clients and market information. Finally, the rarity of financial resources constitutes a considerable obstacle to the strengthening of SMEs through the Internet.

A certain number of recommendations were then proposed to solve the problems mentioned, such as deregulation and liberalisation of the environment with regard to the Internet. In order to promote competitiveness, it was suggested that research and development, authentication, application and evaluation projects should be drawn up. As for the encouragement of partnerships and co-operation agreements, this could take place through industrial groupings. Of course, the need to

identify best practices and publicise them was emphasised. The creation of networks of financing organisations, Business Angels and enterprise start-up schemes to help during the start-up phase also features in the recommendations put forward. On the legal level, there was a request for model contracts to be drawn up, for legal assistance to be set up and for procedures to be created to monitor the use of the Internet. A proposal was also made for awareness and training activity campaigns to be set up and for interactive communication with public authorities through the Internet to be established.

In conclusion, it appears evident that the key to success with the Internet and new information technologies lies essentially in co-operation.

#### INFORMATIONS

Miriam IZQUIERDO  
DG XXIII/A/2  
Fax: +32.2/ 296.62.78  
E-mail: [miriam.izquierdo@dg23.cec.be](mailto:miriam.izquierdo@dg23.cec.be)

## Making tourism more dynamic

### Tourism is adapting to the progress of information technologies



*New information technologies will enable competitiveness in the tourism sector to develop considerably.*

The central theme of this 6th international congress on information and communication technologies was the use of the Internet as a sales tool by tourism enterprises.

The Commission civil servants present at this Congress stressed the importance for the Commission of supporting the adaptation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) in the tourism sector to new technological systems. It also provided an opportunity to present an Internet site launched by the Commission, on which tourism professionals can introduce their views on the guidelines for the next calls for tender within the Information Society Technologies programme (IST) which forms part of the 5th framework programme for technological research and development. (<http://www.lii.unitn.it/knite>)

Several technological products which could benefit tourism were presented during this congress. Mr. Patrick Lindsay from the Mastercard company gave a talk on the possibilities offered by the "smart card",

which is both a means of payment or authentication and a computerised document. The use of smart cards also makes it possible to travel without a ticket and this is already available on a certain number of airlines.

The representative of the Priceline company presented a new commercial sales model through Internet. Thanks to this system the consumer can communicate to Priceline, by means of its Internet site, the products or services which he wants to buy as well as the price which he is ready to pay. In response, Priceline searches amongst its suppliers for the one which would be prepared to sell the product or service at the price required by the consumer.

Another system for the sale of tourist products through the Internet was presented by Mr. Terrell Jones of Sabre. Through its site, called Travelocity, Sabre has already registered around 5 million clients.

This congress above all underlined the importance, in terms of competitiveness, of the development of information technologies in the tourism sector.

## The international tourism fair in Berlin



The Berlin Exhibition Centre and the International Congress Centre were the venues from 6 to 10 March 1999 of the big annual meeting of tourism professionals from the four corners of the world, that is to say, ITB-Berlin. Visitors, public authorities and tourism enterprises from more than 160 countries were able to appreciate the contribution which the European Union has made to the development of tourism as well as the important part this sector plays in the context of building Europe. The Commission delegation was led by Mr. Guy Crauser, Director-General responsible for enterprise policy, commerce, tourism and social economy.

The European Union stand promoted an awareness of Community actions in the field of tourism, in particular in the areas of technology and employment.

In the margins of ITB-Berlin a meeting of the "Consultative Committee on Tourism", with directors-general responsible for tourism in the countries of

the EU and EFTA (European Free Trade Area), was organised by DG XXIII.

This meeting was devoted mainly to following up the conclusions and recommendations formulated by the "High Level Group on Tourism and Employment", as well as to strengthening collaboration between the Member States of the European Union and the EFTA countries through this Consultative Committee.

On the occasion of ITB-Berlin, the most recent statistical results in the tourism sector established by Eurostat (European Community Office for Statistics) in co-operation with DG XXIII, were presented. It was first of all observed that air traffic linked to tourism is in expanding rapidly in Europe and thus provides perspectives for growth and employment. The 2 million enterprises which comprise the tourism sector in Europe generate directly 5.5% of the GNP, 6% of employment and 30% of the total external trade in the service sector. No less than 300,000 jobs were created in the hotel and restaurant sector between 1995 and 1997 in the EU. It is foreseen that the tourism sector will be able to create between 2.2 and 3.3 million additional jobs between now and 2010, on the basis of an annual increase of 1 to 1.5%.

## The news

### The Commission launches a support programme for enterprises in the CEEC countries

A programme entitled "Business Support Programme" was launched by the European Commission to benefit the horizontal and sectorial organisations with the task of representing enterprises in the ten countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEEC), candidates for membership (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic and Slovenia). This programme aims mainly to strengthen these organisations in their action to help and prepare enterprises for entry into the European Union.

Two calls for tender will be published during spring 1999 under this programme. In both support will be provided for projects of two years' duration covering a vast geographical zone. These support actions will take the form of partnership and twinning between organisations representing enterprises in Central and Eastern Europe and those representing enterprises in the European Union.

The first call for tender will concern projects aimed at consolidating the organisations of enterprises of the CEEC countries in the broad sense.

The second call for tender will encourage projects aimed at strengthening the capacity of organisations of enterprises in the CEEC countries to help enterprises in their preparation for membership.

The maximum amount per project under the first call for tender will be 2 million euros (budget for the action: 10 million euros).

For the second call for tender it will be 1 million euros per project (budget for the action: 6 million euros).

## INFORMATIONS

Kristin DE PEYRON  
Commission européenne, DG XXIII/A/4  
Fax: +32.2/ 296.47.84





## Activating and promoting the BC-NET and BRE networks at national level



To intensify personal relations between the members of the BC-NET (Business Co-operation Network) and BRE (Bureau de Rapprochement des Entreprises) and to strengthen networking among its members, DG XXIII has established a working programme which has been communicated to all the members of the networks. This programme is based on the following priorities: promotion of the networks, geographic expansion (in particular for the BC-NET network) and improvement of quality standards.

The 1999 work programme envisages the organisation of a series of meetings between the Commission and the members of the networks at national level in order to discuss the principal questions concerning the development of the networks and to provide the necessary technical assistance. In the Member States where the networks are not sufficiently widespread, the Commission envisages organising information and promotion sessions aimed at new potential members.

A first meeting at national level was organised by DG XXIII on the occasion of Europartenariat-98, which took place in Valencia (Spain) last November. The event, which was a real success, enabled the Commission firstly to transmit the message that a new impetus has to be given to the national networks. The meeting further provided the opportunity for the Spanish members to express their opinions on the 1999 work programme.

DG XXIII was able to note the suggestions put forward in this exchange of opinions and take account of them in the next phases of development of the networks.

In addition, the Spanish Ministry for the Economy (Ministerio de Economía y Hacienda, BRE no. 379) which brings together the Spanish members of the Networks, presented the "Spanish National Network for Co-operation", linked to the BRE and aimed at the internal market. This network will work in direct contact with DG XXIII and should increase the co-ordination and flow of information between the Spanish members and the Commission. Moreover, BRE no. 379 will act in some ways as a spokesman for all the Spanish members of the BC-NET and the BRE. However, the direct contacts between the national members and the Commission will not cease; on the contrary, they will be encouraged.

This co-ordination plan offers new prospects for the internal networks in terms of efficiency and better co-ordination. This is why the possibility of having "national co-ordinators" will be one of the principal themes covered at the next national meetings.

### INFORMATIONS

Luis CUERVO-SPOTTORNO  
DG XXIII/B/2  
E.mail:  
[luis.cuervo-spottorno@dg23.cec.be](mailto:luis.cuervo-spottorno@dg23.cec.be)

## Resolving the difficulties of access of SMEs to support programmes

*Lack of information, insufficient adaptation of programmes to SMEs, bureaucratic procedures.... Such are the problems encountered by SMEs in accessing programmes which experts have put forward with a view to helping the Commission find solutions.*

Although many support programmes for SMEs exist, the latter often encounter difficulties in gaining access to them. Consequently, SMEs do not manage to fully exploit the support which is offered to them to improve their competitiveness as well as their capacity to develop, to innovate and to create jobs.

To remedy this situation, the European Commission has gathered together groups of experts to examine obstacles to SMEs' participation in support programmes and find ways of overcoming these obstacles. The experts, who are representatives of Member States as well as professional organisations of SMEs, participated in a first series of five meetings during the month of October 1998. A meeting with the professional organisations representing SMEs also took place on 15 December 1998.

These groups established that difficulties of access arise mainly from lack of information, from programmes not being sufficiently adapted to the needs of SMEs, from procedures which are considered too bureaucratic and also from the lack of financial and human resources of SMEs. The means proposed for improving access of SMEs to programmes concern information, promotion, conception, putting into operation, follow-up and evaluation of programmes as well as the role of intermediaries. The work of the groups aims to help the Commission in the preparation of a recommendation on the improvement of access of SMEs to Community programmes.



## INFORMATIONS

Anne-Marie FIQUET  
Unité DG XXIII A2  
Fax: +32.2/ 296.62.78  
E-Mail:  
[anne-marie.fiquet@dg23.cec.be](mailto:anne-marie.fiquet@dg23.cec.be)

## The social economy and employment



The conference on the social economy and employment held in Stockholm on 21 and 22 January 1999 was organised by an association which works in the field of adult training: the Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan.

It was made clear during the conference that the social economy plays an increasing role in the fields of education, health, the care of children and adults and the rehabilitation of drug addicts and alcoholics.

The representative of the Swedish Government who attended the Conference, Mr. L. Nyberg, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Culture, explained that his government anticipates that the social economy will play an ever more important role in the future, in particular in as far as small co-operatives and associations are concerned. During the conference the necessity for developing information, training and management was discussed. A concrete proposal was put forward aimed at establishing a master's degree and a one-year training programme in the management of social organisations.

The discussion reflected the difficulties encountered by the organisations of the social economy in being integrated in the formulation and application of Structural Funds programmes.

Finally, in order to increase the influence of the social economy at national level, it was proposed to further develop the networks of representatives of the social economy.

## INFORMATIONS

Per-Ove ENGELBRECHT  
DG XXIII/C/3  
E-Mail:  
[per-ove.engelbrecht@dg23.cec.be](mailto:per-ove.engelbrecht@dg23.cec.be)

## Warning! The definition of SMEs has not changed!

Contrary to what was reported at the beginning of February by certain press agencies and newspapers, the definition of SMEs as it appears in recommendation 96/280/EC of 3 April 1996 is not changing.

The changes proposed by the European Commission concern only the thresholds indicated in the accounting directives (directives 78/660/CE and 83/349/CE). **SMEs are therefore still defined as enterprises employing fewer than 250 employees and with a turnover not exceeding 40 million euros or a balance sheet total which does not exceed 27 million euros.**

Raising the thresholds of the accounting directives would give Member States the possibility of granting certain SMEs exemption from the requirements of information and publicity normally imposed on limited companies. This would have the effect of increasing the number of SMEs which could benefit from these exemptions, thus contributing to an improvement of the environment of the enterprises.

The new thresholds proposed by the Commission under the fourth and seventh directives on company law would increase for small enterprises from 5 million to 6.25 million euros for turnover and from 2.5 million to 3.125 million euros for the balance sheet total.

As far as medium-sized enterprises are concerned, the thresholds would increase from 20 to 25 million euros for net turnover and from 10 to 12.5 million euros for the balance sheet total.

## Calls for proposals

DG XXIII, in its concern for transparency, has just published a recommendation concerning the list of calls for tender foreseen this year under the third multi-annual programme for SMEs. This recommendation describes the subject of the contracts and the publication date envisaged. It is published in the supplement to the Official Journal of the European Communities, No. 25 of 05 February 1999, page 29, and is also available on the Internet via the TED databank:

<http://ted.eur-op.eu.int/>.



**Information on certain decisions  
on co-financing relating to the call  
for proposals in the field  
of training for small and medium-  
sized enterprises  
(98/C 263-14 of 20.8.1998)**

In the framework of the third multi-annual programme relating to enterprise policy, and particularly to SMEs (1997-2000), the Commission has decided to subsidise (up to a maximum of 50%) a first group of projects following the call for proposals 98/C 263-14 entitled: "Several projects in the field of training and associated support services for the benefit of small and medium-sized enterprises". In this first group of 16 projects, only the proposals submitted concerning lots 5,6,7,8 and 10 are affected. The total amount of the subsidies is 3.6 million euros. The list of the projects is the following:

- Lot 5: «Appui au développement d'une réponse formative ouverte en direction des entreprises unipersonnelles» (189 485 euros, #134)
- Lot 6: «VISA pour ENTREPRENDRE» (142 450 euros, #17)
- Lot 6: «ENTREPREINING» (260 624 euros, #173)
- Lot 6: «IMUSTAR Innovative Model for Starters of SME's» (103 410 euros, #36)
- Lot 6: «DALLA VALORIZZAZIONE ALLA CONTAMINAZIONE» (60 280 euros, #44)
- Lot 6: «CONTIS-Consulting Training and Info Services for Young» (198 860 euros, #63)
- Lot 7: «projet COLEA - Collaborateurs-conjoints d'Entreprises Artisanales et de petites et moyennes entreprises» (158 333 euros, #130)
- Lot 7: «EURO-BCC» (79 743 euros, #149)
- Lot 7: «EUROTRAIN Europäisches Diplom für mitarbeitende Unternehmerfrauen» (213 305 euros, #28)
- Lot 7: «Co Working Wives» (427 402 euros, #70)
- Lot 8: «Los 8» (361 207 euros, #1)
- Lot 8: «Sistema di Formazione per reti in Franchising» (212 935 euros, #121)
- Lot 8: «Best Practices in Food Production» (451 070 euros, #164)

- Lot 8: «Managing Independent Workers and Subcontractors» (229.995 euros, #82)
- Lot 8: «NET QUALITY» (500 000 euros, #93)
- Lot 10: «Quatre Prix pour l'esprit d'entreprise» (268 975 euros, #32)

## For information

### Some recommended sites

<http://europa.eu.int/business/>

Guichet Internet aimed at enterprises wanting to consult data bases and find answers, information and advice originating from many sources.

<http://www.europs.be>

Information on the ADAPT and EMPLOI programmes.

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/welcome.htm>

RAPID is the data base of the spokesmen's service of the European Commission and contains the press releases of the Commission, the Council of the Union, the Court of Justice, the Court of Auditors, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

In order to increase our knowledge of useful addresses, you may indicate sites of interest to SMEs via e-mail [Carmelo.calamia@dg23.cec.be](mailto:Carmelo.calamia@dg23.cec.be), and they will be published in EURO-Info.

## Just published

The Office for Official Publications of the European Communities (OPOCE)

has just published the 9th annual report on the structural funds, "The Structural Funds in 1997". This report covers the theme of support by the structural funds for small and medium-sized enterprises. It describes, with numerous examples, the action of the structural funds on behalf of SMEs in the Member States.

This publication is available in the 11 languages of the European Union at OPOCE sales points. The catalogue number for the English version is the following: CX-17-98-443-EN-C



### "Your Enterprise and the Euro: a Strategic Guide"

A new brochure accompanied by a CD-ROM entitled "Your Enterprise and the Euro: a Strategic Guide" has just been published by the European Commission (DG XXIII) to help European SMEs make a successful transition to the euro. This new publication suggests in particular a strategic approach to the changeover to the single currency. It is especially suitable for medium-sized enterprises, enabling them to take advantage of all the opportunities offered by the euro, in particular on a commercial level.

Available in all the European Union languages, this publication consists of both a brochure of about 50 pages and a CD-ROM including an interactive questionnaire based on 35 case studies carried out throughout the European Union. The CD-ROM enables each user to obtain a personalised plan for changeover to the euro.

One or more copies of this publication can be obtained free of charge from the following address, mentioning the languages required:

#### INFORMATION

European Commission  
Directorate-General XXIII  
Pierrette PELHATE  
200, rue de la Loi (G1)  
B - 1049 BRUXELLES  
Fax: +32.2/ 299.27.69

## Seminars

### To promote the local development of small enterprises

Local authorities, in collaboration with the Committee of the Regions and Directorate-General XXIII of the European Commission, are organising three local development seminars to discuss the role of local and regional authorities in the promotion of small enterprises and the spirit of enterprise.

The seminars will examine pilot actions carried out at local and regional level on subjects such as awareness, training projects,

technical assistance for small enterprises, access to finance and improvement of administrative culture and procedures. It is expected that about 150 to 200 representatives of local and regional authorities, enterprises, partner organisations, European institutions and networks will participate in each of the seminars.

Each seminar should contribute in a concrete manner to the dissemination of best practices and methods to local and regional authorities. In addition, these seminars will serve as preparatory meetings for the European Forum of SMEs which will take place on 16 and 17 September 1999, under the Finnish Presidency of the European Union. This forum will consider prospective guidelines for the multi-annual programme in favour of SMEs for the period 2001-2004.

#### 1. Gijon, 18-19 March 1999

Theme: Young entrepreneurs

Workshop 1: Heightening awareness

Workshop 2: Training and the new technologies

Workshop 3: Financing

#### 2. Bayreuth, 22-23 April 1999

Theme: Enlargement

Workshop 1: Co-operation between enterprises

Workshop 2: Co-operation between institutions

Workshop 3: Activities of the European Union

#### 3. Sussex, 10-11 June 1999

Theme: New opportunities for commerce

Workshop 1: The electronic networks (SCREEN)

Workshop 2: The environment

Workshop 3: Globalisation

#### INFORMATION

Petri LINTULA  
EC DG XXIII/C1  
E-mail: [petri.lintula@dg23.cec.be](mailto:petri.lintula@dg23.cec.be)





Payments in euros accepted

REGIE



IBEX



## Europe even closer to the SMEs The Euro Info Centres at your service

The Euro Info Centres inform, advise and help enterprises on all European issues: the euro, standardisation, public procurement, R&D, environment, health and safety, competition, the information society, internationalisation...

With effect from 1 June 1998, to find the address of your nearest Euro Info Centre, please call **free of charge**:

|                 |               |                        |
|-----------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Belgium         | <b>00 800</b> | <b>0800.11.22</b>      |
| Denmark         | <b>00 800</b> | <b>0800.11.22</b>      |
| Germany         | <b>00 800</b> | <b>0800.11.22</b>      |
| Greece          |               | <b>00800.32.12.630</b> |
| Spain           |               | <b>900.98.32.98</b>    |
| France          | <b>00 800</b> | <b>0800.11.22</b>      |
| Ireland         |               | <b>1800.55.32.62</b>   |
| Italy           |               | <b>167.78.06.74</b>    |
| Luxembourg      |               | <b>0800.32.77</b>      |
| The Netherlands | <b>00 800</b> | <b>0800.11.22</b>      |
| Austria         |               | <b>0800.20.12.50</b>   |
| Portugal        |               | <b>0505.32.96.30</b>   |
| Finland         |               | <b>0800.11.32.41</b>   |
| Sweden          |               | <b>020.93.10.10</b>    |
| United Kingdom  |               | <b>0800.78.36.553</b>  |
| Iceland         | <b>00 800</b> | <b>0800.11.22</b>      |
| Norway          | <b>00 800</b> | <b>0800.11.22</b>      |



European Commission  
Directorate-General XXIII - Enterprise Policy

Internet: <http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg23/index.htm>

