



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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Vice President Tajani receives the award Innovadores by El Mundo and takes part into the 1st annual Innovation Forum

The innovation arm of the El Mundo publishing house will today present Vice-President Antonio Tajani, European Commissioner responsible for Industry and Entrepreneurship with an award in recognition of his support for industry, entrepreneurship and innovation. The award ceremony, held within the context of an annual innovation forum, will be attended by 500 young entrepreneurs and held at Valencia's Red Sea Oceanographic Auditorium in the City of Arts and Sciences.

Vice-President Antonio Tajani commented: *"I am honored by this recognition and to receive the Valencia Worldwide Innovative Award. Innovation is the key to economic growth in Europe. Competing with China and other emerging economies based on costs is no longer an option. Europe needs innovative products with high added value to stay competitive and return to the path of growth. There is much we can do to help new ideas transform into new products or services and then reach the market quickly. The commercialization of new ideas is key to creating jobs and growth."*

During the event, Vice-President Antonio Tajani will also participate in a round table on innovation and the spirit of entrepreneurship in Spain and the EU. High level attendees will include Alberto Fabra, the President of Generalitat Valenciana (the regional government of Valencia), and José Ignacio Goirigolzarri, president of Bankia and participant in the Garum Foundation and the Everis Foundation. The Valencian Business Association will also be present. The "Bank of Patents", a Spanish initiative which aims to generate quality jobs encouraging entrepreneurship and the emergence of new business initiatives, will also present its strategy for the next two years.

The award recognizes the advances in EU entrepreneurship policy carried out under Vice President Tajani. One recent highlight of the EU's entrepreneurship policy, which gave an overview of key projects, was the launch of the 2013 **Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan**. This Plan called on all administrations at all levels – European, national, regional – to put in place, improve, or extend a variety of measures to achieve three main goals: (1) increase the amount and quality of entrepreneurial education; (2) create an environment where entrepreneurs and their businesses can flourish and grow; and (3) propose positive entrepreneurial role models and reach out to those who might have entrepreneurial spirit but who may not be reached by traditional modes of business support.

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Other policies initiated during Vice President Tajani's time as Commissioner included:

SME Policy and Europe's Small Business Act

In 2011 the Commission carried out a review of its Small Business Act (SBA) – the principle piece of legislation to improve the overall approach to entrepreneurship, permanently anchor the 'Think Small First' principle in policy making (from regulation to public service), and to promote small and medium sized enterprise (SME) growth by helping them tackle the remaining problems which hamper their development. The SBA applies to all independent companies which have fewer than 250 employees: 99% of all European businesses. Considerable work was also carried to promote the Network of the national SME Envoys and the annual SME Assembly at EU level and Member States level. In 2014 year the Commission will also launch a [Green Action Plan for SMEs](#), to establish the most effective support measures for SMEs to become more resource efficient and take advantage of the growing international market for green products.

Improving SMEs Access to Finance

With a € 2.3 billion budget over the period 2014-2020 the Programme for the Competitiveness of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (COSME) will provide a guarantee facility for loans to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) of up to € 150 000. From now until 2020, 330 000 EU firms are expected to benefit from this facility.

A number of other key initiatives made more EU level funding available and also made it easier for SMEs to gain access to it:

- Online portal with information on all EU [financial instruments](#)
- Long-term financing - a Green Paper and consultation on on how to foster the supply of long-term financing and how to improve and diversify the system of financial intermediation for long-term investment in Europe
- [Capital Requirements Directive IV](#) package – entered into force and will ease SME access to financing, via a measure allowing the reduction of the level of bank's own funds required to covered loans to SMEs.
- Directive on [combating late payment in commercial transactions](#) - entered into force in 2013 and helps put an end to the damaging late payment which leads to SMEs losing time and money, and souring relations with customers.

Entrepreneurship, CSR & Social Economy

Vice President Tajani led a number of other successful entrepreneurship initiatives in recent years, including [the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs](#) programme, the European Network of [Female Entrepreneurship Ambassadors](#) and the European Network of Mentors for Women Entrepreneurs, as well as renewed EU strategy for Corporate Social Responsibility. In 2014 the Commission will present a proposal for a European Mutual Society, for entrepreneurs whose primary purpose is to satisfy their common needs and not to make profits or provide a return on capital.

Innovation

To maintain and improve our competitiveness and rejuvenate manufacturing, Europe needs investment in key technologies which stimulate growth in a wide range of other economic sectors, including more traditional areas. 2012 therefore saw Vice President Tajani's launch of a European strategy for Key Enabling Technologies (KETs). Further initiatives will take into account the requirements of new areas such as advanced manufacturing technologies, bio based products, raw materials and technologies for sustainable construction, clean vehicles and vessels, and smart grids and digital infrastructure. From 2014 to 2020 a new framework - Horizon 2020 - will be put in place for research, development and innovation with a budget of 80 billion Euros to cover the entire innovation chain, from basic research to commercialization.

The award giver, the El Mundo publication *Innovadores* (Innovators), aims to support new generation entrepreneurship projects in different Spanish regions through local newspaper editions in Valencia, Catalunya, the Balearics, Castilla-León and the Basque Country. The event will be broadcast live via streaming at elmundo.es.