

European Enterprise Awards: 51 nominees compete for the title of most entrepreneurial region in Europe

This memo informs on the 51 candidate regions/towns selected by the twenty-eight participating countries to compete in one of the six categories of the European Enterprise Awards. They represent a wide variety of projects that are successful in facilitating business and supporting entrepreneurship across Europe.

Category I

The Entrepreneurial Trailblazer Award

It rewards actions that promote an **entrepreneurial culture and mindset**.

1. Safeguarding Business Transfers, Baden-Wuerttemberg, Germany

The *Initiative for start-ups and business transfers* (IFEX) consists of a team of 15 business experts whose main task is to design, coordinate and implement the state's business support policies especially in areas such as women's and youth entrepreneurship.

Web: www.newcome.de

2. New Routes for Women, Larnaca District, Cyprus

The *Larnaca District Development Agency* Ltd in Cyprus promotes the development of new professional routes for women, the support of local action groups in the agricultural sector as well as the implementation of training programmes for local self-government.

Web: www.anetel.com

3. Bringing the Centre to the front, Central Finland

The *Y4 committee* consists of 36 public organisations brought together to make central Finland the most entrepreneur-friendly region in the world through appreciating, motivating and encouraging people to be entrepreneurs while complying with ethically sustainable values.

Web: www.y4.fi

4. Home Sweet Home, Getting French Investors to return Home, Provence, France

Provence Promotion works as an interface between investors and the different private and public players in its strategy to target French or French-speaking business actors to bring international projects to the region so as to create jobs and to strengthen the economy.

Web: www.investinprovence.com

5. TECHNOGENESIS Knowledge and Innovation for a new Economy, Eastern Macedonia-Thrace

The Region of Eastern Macedonia-Thrace implemented “*TECHNOGENESIS*” as a regional programme that identifies and supports innovative ideas and products by helping entrepreneurs bring them to market in a region threatened by deindustrialization.

Web: www.remth.gr

6. The Bioincubator, Regione Piemonte, Italy

The *Discovery Bioindustry Park del Canavese SpA* in Colletterto has been set up as a science park and business incubator specialised in biotechnologies and life science. The bioincubator has already attracted five new companies specialising in biotechnologies and biosciences.

Web: www.bioindustrypark.it

7. Lidere – Uniting Latvian Women, Riga, Latvia

The *LIDERE* association provides mentoring and support to women entrepreneurs by matching them with experienced entrepreneurs and leaders. The results and experiences of the programme have been published in a book on mentoring.

Web: www.lidere.lv

8. Northtown Business Plan Competition, Vilnius, Lithuania

The *Northtown Technology Park* (NTP) provides business incubation services for innovative companies and uses the Business Plan Competition to help inventors, scientists, business beginners and students develop their business ideas and get practical advice and training.

Web: www.smtp.lt

9. Discover Enterprise for a prosperous Malta

Malta Enterprise offers investment support services, overseas promotional activities and tailor-made assistance to SMEs. The Discover Enterprise programme provides financial assistance and support to education institutions to promote entrepreneurship and enterprise education.

Web: www.maltaenterprise.com

10. Graduate companies in higher education, Oslo, Norway

Ja-Ye, an independent NGO works with universities and the national tax authorities to help students establish and operate real companies as part of their higher education. Almost one third of the participants in the programme start their own firm later on.

Web: www.ue.no

11. The Rescue of Swidnica, Poland

To rescue the town from economic collapse the Municipality of Swidnica implemented a dynamic economic development project which has resulted in attracting investment, creating jobs for more than 1.500 people, improving the infrastructure and revitalising the town centre which includes a UNESCO world heritage site

Web: www.um.swidnica.pl

12. New Hope through Foreign Investments, Kechnec, Slovak Republic

The creation of the *Kechnec Industrial Park* was an ambitious municipally funded and managed project which succeeded in bringing foreign companies to its new industrial facilities thus creating 30.000 jobs in a relatively short period of time.

Web: www.kechnec.sk

13. Finding the Best in Business, Maribor, Slovenia

The *Best Business Idea* is a joint project between a newspaper and the Institute for Entrepreneurship Research in Slovenia. It aims to recognise the most innovative young and mature businesses and offer them funding and professional support.

Web: www.tovarnapodjemov.org

14. Barcelona Activa, Introducing the seed of entrepreneurship, Spain

Barcelona Activa fosters innovation and entrepreneurship through 30 initiatives including a business incubator with 110 businesses, an entrepreneurship centre that coaches more than 1.000 new projects each year and the Day of the Entrepreneur conference attended by 3.000 entrepreneurs.

Web: www.barcelonanetactiva.com

15. Rock City, Music meets Business, Hultsfred, Sweden

Rock City in Hultsfred is a meeting place for creative entrepreneurship in the fields of music, media and tourism with a dynamic business environment where new enterprises and products such as music associations as well as event and production companies are constantly emerging.

Web: www.rockcity.se

16. Communicare, Everyone can learn to be an entrepreneur, Värmland, Sweden

The *Communicare* project in Karlstad is run by young people to encourage young people to become entrepreneurs and to dare to do their own thing. Between 2004 and 2006, the project has helped 63 young people start their own company while more than 600 have found jobs in the region or abroad.

Web: www.regionvarmland.se

17. The Craft & Design Town, West Kilbride, United Kingdom

West Kilbride has regenerated itself by creating Scotland's first craft and design town. Its vibrant social enterprise driven by the local community has attracted 9 new businesses by offering affordable studio accommodation, workshops and gallery space for crafts and design.

Web: www.westkilbride.org.uk

Category II

Enterprise Support Award

The **Enterprise Support Award** will reward innovative policies that promote enterprise and attract investment, particularly in disadvantaged areas.

18. More than Marketing a City, Lienz, Austria

The marketing department of Lienz has revitalised the city through its co-operative town development programme which brings together citizens, businesses and public authorities to improve local economic, social and environmental conditions.

Web: www.stadt-lienz.at

19. Gaining Independence, Ostrava City, Czech Republic

The City of Ostrava in the Czech Republic has managed gradual diversification and declining dependency on coalmining by developing properties for entrepreneurial use, building a science and technology park, and supporting innovation and R&D among its small and medium-sized enterprises.

Web: www.ostrava.cz

20. Aktiva: The Information Gateway, Tallinn, Estonia

The *Aktiva information portal* was established by Enterprise Estonia to provide enterprises with business news, information and online services. In its five years of existence it has managed to become the country's main government-to-business information and communication channel with more than 100.000 users per month.

Web: www.eas.ee

21. Female success through Co-operation, Helsinki, Finland

The *Women's Enterprise Agency* in Finland helps women to become entrepreneurs by providing training, advice, support, networking opportunities and successful examples of functioning enterprises. Making extensive use of mentors and existing entrepreneurs, the project has contributed to the establishment of 140 businesses in the past two years.

Web: www.naisyrittajyyskeskus.fi

22. Mobilising for the creation and transfer of business, Nord-Pas de Calais; France

Given the region's below-average results at national level, a partnership of regional actors in Nord-Pas-de-Calais set up a programme to coordinate actions to support the creation and transfer of businesses leading to a 46% increase in company formations in the last three years.

Web: www.jecree.com

23. Mechatronik, Skills at Work, East Bavaria, Germany

The Mechatronik Skills Network in Cham was set up as a public-private partnership under the Bavaria High Tech Offensive to provide research and development as well as needs-oriented training both to companies and also to local stakeholders such as the unemployed or school leavers.

Web: www.mc-netz.de

24. Agricultural August, Nutrition for Life, Chania, Greece

The "Agricultural August" exhibition is a series of events organized yearly by the administration of Chania, to help the promotion, standardisation and trading of local natural products and market Cretan nutrition as the core of the Mediterranean diet.

Web: www.nax.gr

25. KA-VOSZ, Solving the Liquidity Problem, Budapest, Hungary

The *Széchenyi Credit Card* scheme was introduced in 2002, today it is the market leader in simplified liquidity for small- and medium-sized enterprises in Hungary. By granting loans with discounted interest rates this scheme has helped enterprises avoid daily liquidity problems.

Web: www.kavosz.hu

26. Hidden Resources, Meath, Ireland

By investing in business infrastructure projects such as broadband, business standard accommodation and documenting its skills pool, the Meath County Council has positioned itself as the business location of choice near Dublin attracting investors and giving the district a new lease on life.

Web: www.workinmeath.ie

27. LIDA, bringing US Business to the Baltic Region, Riga, Latvia

The "*U.S. Business Investment and Trade Mission to the Baltic States*" event held in Riga in 2006 aimed at promoting Latvia's advantages for U.S. business investment and trading resulting in several US companies announcing their intentions to invest in the country.

Web: www.liaa.gov.lv

28. Promoting Young Entrepreneurs, Vilnius, Lithuania

To curb the rising number of students leaving to live and work abroad, the Vilnius City Municipality launched a programme to support, train and subsidise business creation by young people, resulting in the creation of 9 new companies and 22 jobs.

Web: www.vilnius.lt

29. Taking the Time to Listen, Clervaux, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

The *Guichet Unique PME* (single entry point for SMEs) believes that what small and-medium-sized companies need the most is someone to listen and give advice, and that is what they provide to companies and entrepreneurs in rural Luxembourg.

Web: www.guichetunique.lu

30. Chemicals in Limburg, The Netherlands

The business community and the authorities in the Region of Limburg in the Netherlands are jointly promoting the chemicals sector as an important source of innovation and as a classic example of modern industry. The project centres around a chemicals cluster, an R&D campus and building networks of chemical firms in the wider region.

Web: www.limburg.nl

31. Fishing for Success, Gamvik, Norway

The most royal of shellfish, the king crab and the help of an experienced US investor have strongly improved the economic situation of the region around the village of Gamvik, Norway by setting up a fish processing company that specialises in the production of this delicacy.

32. Supporting Economic Growth in Pomeranus, Poland

Apart from offering much needed training and advice to micro- and small businesses, the *Pomeranus* project in the West Pomerania Province in Poland has also granted 140 loans to companies contributing to the creation of 280 new jobs.

Web: www.pfp.com.pl

33. Development and Production under one Roof, Transylvania, Romania

The *Tetarom Industrial Park* in Romania was created to support and stimulate better capitalisation of regional competencies in hi-tech industries, as well as to foster academic research and industrial integration. The success of the first park has led to the creation of a second, with a third one also under way.

Web: www.tetarom.ro

34. Bringing the Enterprise Spirit to Rural England, Welland, United Kingdom

The *Welland SSP Ltd* initiative has turned a stunningly beautiful part of rural England into an economically viable area by setting up locally based Enterprise Centres, linking up with Business Incubation Centres and working with the Rural Energy Trust on using bio-mass.

Web: www.thewellandssp.co.uk

35. Keeping tradition alive, Slovesky Grob, Slovak Republic

By marketing and promoting its traditional roast goose dish, the Slovesky Grob municipality has built a variety of businesses including 23 restaurants which serve this local delicacy produced mainly by local housewives. As a result, the village is now Slovakia's fourth most visited tourist attraction.

Web: www.slovensky-grob.sk

Category III

Red Tape Reduction Award

The Red Tape Reduction Award will reward **measures to simplify administrative procedures for businesses, in particular for start-ups.**

36. Working Together, Eisenstadt, Rohrbach, Zell am See, Austria

The *Euroze* project "Learning from each other - Learning with each other" allowed three district administrations to streamline their authorisation procedures in order to make the workflow more efficient. This innovation in administration procedures has increased the number of cases completed while shortening the necessary time.

Web: www.euroze.at

37. Centralizing Services, Chomutov, Czech Republic

“*All in one*” is the idea behind the City of Chomutov in the Czech Republic’s new electronic services package. Its aim is to simplify administration and reduce the red tape load for its clients by concentrating its client services in a one-stop-shop facility.

Web: www.chomutov-mesto.cz

38. Open the Way for Foreign Investment, Luxembourg, The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

The Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce takes advantage of the country’s strategic location and attractive tax system to simplify business creation for foreign investors. Its *Espace Enterprises* team provide advice and assistance to 5.000 clients a year.

Web: www.cc.lu

39. Quick Scan, Scrapping Regulations, West Brabant, The Netherlands

“Half the regulations can be scrapped”. This at least is the opinion of the Chamber of Commerce of West Brabant in the Netherlands where all municipalities in the area are eagerly cooperating in their scheme to reduce regulations for both businesses and municipalities.

Web: www.breda.kvk.nl

40. On-the-Spot-Firm, Coimbra, Portugal

The *On-the-Spot Firm* initiative in Coimbra, Portugal is a new special regime for creating firms that makes it possible to set up commercial companies in less than an hour and at a much lower cost for the companies by enabling them to do everything in just one office.

Web: www.cec.org.pt

Category IV

Investment in People Award

The Investment in People Award will recognise initiatives to **improve entrepreneurship education and training**.

41. Teaching entrepreneurship, FREE, Wallonia, Belgium

The Walloon region works with a non-profit association to strengthen the entrepreneurial spirit in primary, secondary and higher education using toolkits, teacher training, mini-companies, awareness-raising events and clubs for student entrepreneurs.

Web: www.freefondation.be

42. Helping the Self-employed, UNIZO, Flanders, Belgium

UNIZO, the Union of self-employed persons in Flanders aims to assist non-native self-employed persons to start up and run their business. By the end of 2005, 1.673 prospective self-employed people had sought advice, and half of them received training or continuous support.

Web: www.unizo.be

43. Boosting the Skills of Minority Groups, Nova Zagora, Bulgaria

The Business Centre of Nova Zagora in Bulgaria is aimed at boosting the entrepreneurial skills of disadvantaged young people especially from minority origins to help their integration into the labour market and the community as a whole. Media publicity raised awareness about the action and increased interest in participation.

Web: www.bcnzagora.org

44. Enterprise Training for the Unemployed, Ida-Viru, Estonia

The Ida-Viru County Employment Office and Enterprise Centre help unemployed people become entrepreneurs by offering training and support. To date 60% of participants have started businesses such as private messenger services, ostrich farming and sewing.

Web: www.ivek.ee

45. High School Economists, Szeged, Hungary

Inspire them while they are young, is the idea behind Junior Achievement Hungary, a public utility foundation running entrepreneurship education programmes in high-schools to introduce young people to business and economics. Several thousands of students participate every year in its student enterprises, company visits and business lectures.

Web: www.ejam.hu

46. Exploiting Knowledge for Business, Porto, Portugal

To achieve a greater collective source of knowledge, Cotec, a non-profit entrepreneurial association helps individual Portuguese R&D institutions pool their knowledge and create combined technology-based business projects.

Web: www.cotec.pt

47. The Smart Start Student Company, Bucharest, Romania

"SMART START- Student Company" is a 'learning by doing programme', set up by the Junior Achievement Romania organization as an extracurricular programme for high school and university students who gain practical experience and insights into the organization and operation of companies by earning money at the same time.

Web: www.jar.ro

48. A Company in my School, Asturias, Spain

Children at play while learning about the entrepreneurial spirit. This is the idea behind the project “A company in my school” which has 8-11 year old children create a cooperative in which they make products and sell them in their local market.

Web: www.emprendeastur.com

49. Combining Theory with Practice, Samso, Denmark

A creative approach to innovation and product development is the basis of this course held in Samso, Denmark, focused on innovation competence development for small companies. The 16-month part-time course uses a combination of theory and practice including a trip to the Blue Room at the Danish Technological Institute.

Web: www.samsoliv.dk

Category V

Responsible Entrepreneurship Award

Responsible entrepreneurship will honour **corporate social responsibility and sustainable business practices**

50. Taking on the Responsibility, Cherven Bryag, Bulgaria

“Terra 2000” Ltd., a brick-making company works in partnership with the municipality of Cherven Bryag to show the “new face of business” by providing financial and organizational support for local health care facilities, kindergartens, schools, sport clubs, talented children and people in need.

51. The City invests in you, Rome, Italy

Autopromozione Sociale is the office of the Municipality of Rome set up to promote businesses in the so-called “other economy.” More than 750 companies are now operating in the social and environmental domains including fair trade, biodynamic agriculture, ethical finance, recycling, energy savings, responsible tourism and free software.

Web: www.autopromozionesociale.it

Category VI

Jury’s Grand Prize

Finally, a **Jury’s Grand Prize** will be awarded to the candidate from all categories that is considered the most creative and inspiring entrepreneurship initiative in Europe.