the European Day of the Entrepreneur

Newsletter

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Entering the consultation process

After the first 8 months of operation, the pilot project can show its first tangible results. Many cities have developed state-of-the-art entrepreneurial events promoting awareness, networking of local partners and awarding successful entrepreneurs and ideas. The variety of innovative approaches has shown again that cities are 'vital cells' for the promotion of entrepreneurship. But the EDE pilot initiative has come up with more: there is potential for transfer to other cities, potential to integrate new approaches in established events and a keen interest in the existing and the new member states to learn from this pilot experience.

The interest in raising the awareness around entrepreneurship is high. Both the "newcomers" and the experienced cities want to explore new possibilities to raise the awareness on entrepreneurship. Each city that currently organises an entrepreneurial event has provided in-depth information with the help of questionnaires and telephone interviews. A number of cities have also been visited during the events to get a better understanding of the objectives and activities directly on the spot. The events vary greatly from short half-day events for specific audiences to very developed promotional activities reaching an important part of a city's population. Each contribution has been invaluable to better understand the local activities and to provide an insight on how these efforts can become a European initiative.

After this concerted effort, the basic tools (label, website 'www.entrepreneurday.org', newsletter and some promotional material) have been finalised and the first draft of the EDE Manual has been produced. The 'Manual for Organisers' is presenting a set of guidelines on the methodology of the initiative, case studies and graphic guidelines for the use of the EDE label. The manual comes in the format of a ring binder to allow consultation and updating of the content as well as the production of more case studies. It will be made available to all cities that have cooperated in the pilot initiative as well as to cities that have shown a keen interest in initiating their own event. It is planned that the final text will be available at the end of November 2003, after the suggestions and ideas of the cities have been included. "We hope that the manual is well received by the cities. It is a working document that requires more refinement and information. This lies in the nature of the project since The 'European Day of the Entrepreneur' is a truly a bottom-up pilot initiative and it is not always easy to filter out successful concepts and ideas that can be transferred to the European level", says Tomas Botella, Project Officer at the European Commission. "Nevertheless, we are very happy with the way the initiative has evolved and at this point, we are discussing ideas such as the flag city and a rotating EDE presidency. What has become very clear in this short process is that cities are not only very interested to learn what their homologues are doing but that they also want to bring a range of European elements into their events. Businesses, small or big, have to go European and the cities want to be able to help them do this step."

The idea of a flag city

In the EDE framework the flag city could play a very important role. The future development of the EDE initiative needs to count on pillars that support the initiative at European level and the flag city can be one of them. "Flag city" is the working title for an idea that implies that every year a European city takes the lead in promoting entrepreneurship through hosting a major event. The conceptual backbone of this event should be in parallel to the local interests and to the European policy priorities. In addition, the flag city could collaborate with a number of other cities based on an agreed thematic agenda. Such an agenda of priorities will be proposed to the European Commission and to the EDE help desk in order to agree on the main working areas.

"The flag city concept could have a lasting impact on the future development of the EDE", says Tomas Botella. "Obviously, it would be difficult to promote European policy priorities in each individual entrepreneurship event that is organised in European cities. Also we do not have the resources to support such an approach. But if a city would take the lead during a limited time period, setting priorities and directions, it would be possible to achieve a European cooperation and to have an impact on entrepreneurship in a wide range of European cities."

A look at the future

EDE is a bottom up initiative that is developing on the basis of the experience, knowledge and ideas of the cities. This concept will continue to be the baseline of the EDE in the future. Based on that is seems logical that EDE should be developed at two levels. One level is the wider use of the EDE label and concept by a large number of relevant events in various European cities that are organised according to the EDE manual specifications. The second level is to simulate the flag city concept with a rotating presidency that is held each year by a different flag city. This city will propose and follow policy priorities in agreement with the European Commission and the EDE secretariat. The second level will allow a more intense political discussion on European matters and allow each flag city to collaborate with a limited number of other cities based on its own priorities.

The above-mentioned dual nature of EDE will bring decision-making to the cities themselves and could support EDE in developing into a major yearly European activity that successfully promotes entrepreneurship.

After conclusion of the first phase of the pilot initiative, the EDE team would like to thank all cities that have helped to gather and analyse information, especially Soraya Villarroya, 'envoyé speciale' of Barcelonactiva, and to EUROCITIES for the smooth cooperation. Keep up the good work.

For more information, please visit the EDE website at:

www.entrepreneurday.org.

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The EDE concept goes east

The University of Sofia is a project partner of the PAXIS project Promotor+ which aims at improving the performance of the start-up market in the Newly Associated Countries (NACs) by promoting the cooperation between companies and organisations from the Member States and the NACs. Through this cooperation with the PAXIS network, the University of Sofia "St Kliment Ohridski" learnt about the European Day of the Entrepreneur (EDE) and decided to promote a first local Entrepreneur Day with a European dimension in Sofia, on 8-9 October 2003.

The idea to organise a 'European Day of the Entrepreneur' was highly welcomed in the Bulgarian capital and the cooperation on this event was formalised by a Memorandum of Understanding between the university and the municipality. On 3 July 2003, the Mayor of Sofia Municipality, Mr Stefan Sofianski, and the Rector of Sofia University, Prof. Dr. Boyan Bioltchev, agreed to cooperate on organisation of a European Day of the Entrepreneur. "It is symbolic that the National University of Bulgaria - Sofia University, and the Bulgarian capital city - Sofia, take a joint initiative for opening European perspectives for Bulgarian innovators and entrepreneurs, underlines Rector Bioltchev, "This will help us pave the way for the European future of the country." and Mayor Sofianski added: "We are very glad to be able to integrate the City of Sofia into the European initiatives towards the development of entrepreneurship. It could help our capital city to serve as a regional centre for the Balkans and will foster further development of innovations and entrepreneurship in the whole region."

The key objective of the 'European Day of the Entrepreneur' in Sofia is to unite the efforts of all parties interested in the development of innovative, entrepreneurial activities taking advantage of the best ideas and results of local and European partners. The organisers expect up to 500 participants per day from the business environment, central government and regional administrations, the university and other interested parties.

On 8 October, the event will focus on "European strategy and policy for the entrepreneurship". This first day aims to give an inside to Bulgarian policy makers on European strategies and to present the viewpoints of the Bulgarian industries and companies on these issues. The second day will inform a wider public on "Europe of the regions". Several working sessions will be presenting good practices from Bulgarian and European regions focussing on different services for entrepreneurs. In addition, a close cooperation with media partners from TV and press will help to reach a wider audiences with the messages and ideas on entrepreneurship.

Sofia's Entrepreneur Day will hopefully develop into an annual event helping to stimulate entrepreneurship in the city and creating a model that can be used elsewhere in Bulgaria and the Balkans.

For more information on the EDE in Sofia, please contact:

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Bulgaria – short country profile

Bulgaria is one of the most ancient states in Europe, founded in 681. It borders to the north with Romania and the Danube River, to the east with the Black Sea, to the south are Turkey and Greece, and to the west – the FYR of Macedonia and Yugoslavia.

Area:	appr. 111,000 km^2
Population:	appr. 8 million
Capital:	Sofia (1 million inhabitants)
Largest cities:	Plovdiv (341,000 inhabitants), Varna (314,000 inhabitants)
Form of State:	Parliamentary Republic
Main export:	Light industry products, food and wines
Economic growth:	Accelerated from 2.4 % (1999) to 5.8 % in 2000

Bulgaria's roadmap to EU accession

Bulgaria (and its neighbouring country Romania) are preparing for accession to the European Union in 2007. At its Copenhagen Council in December 2002, the EU agreed to a detailed roadmap to prepare accession and on increased pre-accession assistance. The roadmap puts particular emphasis on administrative and judicial capacity necessary to implement the acquis and on economic development. This process is accompanied by a considerable and progressive increase in financial assistance from the date of the first round of accession.

For more information on accession and the development of Bulgaria, consult the following websites:

www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/bulgaria and www.eumap.org

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LEARNING FROM.... Berlin

German Start-up and Entrepreneur Days'

From 16-18 May 2003, over 9600 visitors came to the Berlin Fair for the 19th edition of the Entrepreneur Day. Berlin's Entrepreneur Days have developed from a local event into an event with a German aspiration. Hence the title 'German Start-up and Entrepreneur Days' (Deutsche Gründer- und Unternehmertage).

Since 1999, the City of Berlin is organising the Entrepreneur Day in collaboration with the Land Brandenburg (the region surrounding Berlin). The third body involved in the organisation of the event is the Messe- und Ausstellungsgesellschaft Lübeck (M&A), a specialist event organiser. Politically, the event was strongly supported through the presence of Berlin's Mayor and Senator for Economy, Work and Women, Mr Harald Wolf, and the Minister for Economy of the Land of Brandenburg, Mr Ulrich Junghanns. Germany's Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder has been addressing the participants of the event through prefaces to the event catalogue and newsletter.
Berlin's Entrepreneur Day aims to demonstrate how entrepreneur-friendly Germany is and to give start-ups and entrepreneurs the possibility to test the diverse offer that is available to them.

Competent seminar programme

The element of the event that widens the focus to Germany is the prize-giving event 'Start-up Champions 2003'. During the opening of the Entrepreneur Day, entrepreneurs from the 16 German regions (Bundesländer) obtain an award from the hands of the Mayor and the Minister. The Start-up champions are selected with the support of the Deutsche Ausgleichsbank and a competent jury. The champions are chosen for their outstanding innovative performance. All Start-up Champions are presenting their ideas, their company and Land at the common stand in the exhibition area.

For the organisers the most important aspect of the 'Deutsche Gründer- Unternehmertage' is the extensive programme of over 50 seminar and workshops offering information, inspiration and knowledge. An Entrepreneurship Congress discussed with experts and entrepreneurs new trends and best practice models with regard to entrepreneurial personalities and start-up teams.

The seminar programme is a competent forum for established companies and start-ups from different sectors and in different stages of start-up development. For the first time this year, the programme is not only addressing start-ups but also offers information for established SMEs. For this group, subjects such as crisis management, opening of international markets and growth financing are offered.

The area for start-ups focussed on 'Planning, Creating and Securing & Growth' thus giving the young start-ups the possibility to get the advice that they need according to their individual stage of development.

Route planer to entrepreneurial subjects

The programme is also focusing on specific subjects / target groups such as unemployed people, women and migrants, trade, crafts, heritage of companies and tourism/wellness. Big exhibition pillars are providing information about these specific subjects. In addition, special route planers allowed people to follow a subject in the exhibition, the workshops, seminars and the presentations. This allowed everybody to easily find the information and partners for discussion on a specific subject of interest. Migrants for example have a very high entrepreneurial rate of 15% in Germany which is by 6% higher than the average. The programme addressed this issue with a range of workshops that treated that subject such as "Migrants as start-ups – different cultures, different ideas".

The exhibition

Over 200 exhibitors (companies, associations and public institutions) presented on 5000 m_ their services for entrepreneurs and start-ups. The exhibition covers all thematic areas from consulting, financial services, franchising, training to office equipment. Ministries, professional and trade associations, chambers of commerce, are as well presented as banks, business incubators and tax auditors.

A new concept is the 'Walk of Fame' that aims to motivate potential entrepreneurs by illustrating on special exhibition panels how some entrepreneurial personalities have made

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their way to success.
For the last three years, the International Window' is one of the highlights of the exhibition. Under the heading 'Our neighbours, our future – the new EU member states', the trade departments of the embassies of Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Hungary were represented in the exhibition. Switzerland and Turkey have also been joining this international panel. This area of the exhibition provided the opportunity to directly discuss possibilities for cooperation or investment bypassing lengthy administrative procedures.

Promotion

To draw the attention towards start-up and entrepreneurship a special information and motivation campaign has been preceeding the Start-up and Entrepreneur Days. This extraordinary campaign distributed over 10,000 flower pots and 300,000 post cards in Berlin and Brandenburg. The flowers represent the economic growth that can be created with the foundation of a company. In addition the flowers served as reminder on the dates of the event.

Radio station

Already in preparation of the event, the radio station deGUT went on the ether of Berlin and environment. The start was given with by a school company of the "Achievers International" initiative at the British embassy. The 10 day project reported before the actual event about start up creation and entrepreneurship. As 'Innovation and Motivation Station', the radio could also be accessed digitally.

The radio station offered interviews with personalities from the economic and political world, representatives of the Investments Banks Berlin and Brandenburg, politicians and artists and different radio stations spoke about their visions, enterprises, starting up and growing. The radio aspires to reach the population. Moreover, the population has been asked to send their own concepts for radio emissions and the best ideas will be put into practice.

Next year, the Berliners celebrate the 20th edition of their Day of the Entrepreneur on 21-23 May 2004.

www.deGUT.de

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Rotterdam

A city of entrepreneurs

The local Chamber of Commerce and the Rotterdam City Development Corporation are co-organising the event since many years to stimulate and reward valuable and outstanding entrepreneurship in the region. The event attracts every year some 500 attendees from the business community as well as local politicians.

Rotterdam actively wants to build an image as a city of entrepreneurs, open and supportive for any innovative entrepreneurial activity. "By rewarding the best entrepreneur, Rotterdam wants encourage competition and best practice in order to attract and guarantee high quality of business in the area," says Mr Lenferink of the Rotterdam City Development Corporation, " and we believe that it could be interesting to test the idea of a 'European Entrepreneur of the year'".

Joining forces

For the organisation of the event, the city actively cooperates with municipalities in the region of Rotterdam. The organisers believe this cooperation to be vital for the success of the Rotterdam Award. This is one of the reasons why Rotterdam speaks in favour of a European approach for this kind of events. "We are currently reviewing the 'Rotterdam Award for Entrepreneurs' to include some new aspects. In our experience, projects that have been set-up with European assistance always led to further initiatives. Without this European "push" local actions would not have been possible."

Rotterdam is proud of its achievements and has been able to create lasting relationships with the entrepreneurs that have been nominees and winners of the event. As Lenferink puts it: "Our nominees are our success stories. We want to show these successes to stimulate entrepreneurship and to allow exchange of best practice."

Piztu BILBAO!

The Basque country's capital Bilbao has made outstanding efforts to stimulate economic growth and create employment. And these efforts have born fruit: Bilbao's economic growth is greater than both the Spanish and European average and unemployment was reduced by 10% between 1993 and 1999 to 13%. Now, under the motto "Create Bilbao!', the city has also organised an outstanding event, reaching up to 100,000 people with ideas, projects and policies around entrepreneurship. The event was designed to involve the entire city, giving special emphasis to primary, secondary and university students, potential and existing entrepreneurs.

After a first successful event in 2002, Bilbao wanted to spread the idea of entrepreneurship even further and encourage the participation of a wider public. To reach this ambitious goal, a large range of promotional activities were targeted at the population of Bilbao already some weeks before the event,. These activities were organised at university faculties, training centres or simply at the neuralgic points of the town:

- On Bilbao's central square, several entertainment and information tents were installed to promote the participation of citizens in the promotional activities organised around the Day of the Entrepreneur
- A big structure was created with 1000 bottles in which citizens could leave messages related to the Day of the Entrepreneur. On the eve of the Day, this structure was transferred to the Palacio Euskalduna where the main activities were taking place
- An entrepreneur corner was reserved for people to use a test measuring their profile as potential entrepreneurs.
- During two weekends prior to the Day, a series of activities was organised to promote the event among children and teenagers using games and workshops.
- Special presentations in universities and educational institutions aimed at promoting the Day of the Entrepreneur and to increase the participation in the event among the academic world, such as the School of Journalism, Business Schools, etc.
- The specialised publication "El Correo del Emprendedor" was inserted in one of the main local newspapers.

Acknowledging entrepreneurial potential

The official 'Day of the Entrepreneur' was opened by the Major of Bilbao and involved a number of personalities and politicians. One of the key objectives of the day itself was to acknowledge entrepreneurial projects and to award prizes to initiatives that actively contribute to local social and urban development by creating and maintaining businesses and employment.

The Day of the Entrepreneur presented an exhibition, provided information to potential entrepreneurs, organised workshops with well-known businessmen, promoted the exchange of experience through the use of a TV studio and allowed the public to access a large number of new technologies in a Technology corner. The Day was closed with a ceremony and cocktail to present the prizes 'Emprender en Bilbao' and the 'Big Entrepreneurs Award Ceremony' rewarding entrepreneurs from several categories.

See you next year in Bilbao

The outcome of the event was considered to be extremely positive for many reasons: the successful co-ordination of the organisations involved, the co-operation of public institutions, the impact on the population of the city and the metropolitan area, the relationship of the city council with a local network of businesses, the increase of entrepreneurial initiatives and, last but not least, the media coverage.

The City of Bilbao is already planning the next edition of the Day of the Entrepreneur to take place in 2004 and will include new activities, such as a 'Fair of the Entrepreneur' and a 'Business ideas' contest.

For further information, please visit

www.bilbao.net/lanekintza/

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YES for Europe is the European Confederation of Young Entrepreneurs representing 35000 entrepreneurs from 10 countries. This network aims at improving the economic and social performance of European entrepreneurship.

The initiative to create YES goes back to 1988 when seven national groups of entrepreneurs decided to face the challenges for businesses created by the European Single Act (1987). In Capri, they signed the 'International Young Entrepreneurs Charter' establishing the fundamental principles of free world trade, an independent free enterprise system, the recognition of social charges, free competition rules and the protection of the environment.

After its official establishment as the European Confederation of Young Entrepreneurs in 1991, the organisation has intensified its lobbying activities at European level and aims at improving the exchange of information on European activities for its members. Currently, the association has 10 members involving associations not only located in EU countries (Austria, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden) but also coming from candidate countries (Turkey and Cyprus). The key objectives of YES for Europe are :

- To maintain an ongoing dialogue with the institutions of the European Union
- To foster business cooperation and networking activities between young entrepreneurs
- To establish links with entrepreneurial organisations in Europe and elsewhere.

Tjark de Lange, President of YES for Europe points out :
« We are interested in all European initiatives that foster entrepreneurial spirit. Currently, we are focussing our efforts and the discussions with our members on the recent political developments at EU level and what they mean for entrepreneurs. This includes the impact of EU enlargement, the Lisbon process and new European constitution. These will also be the main subjects of our yearly event on 21 November in Brussels. We believe that our dynamic network can provide the EU with valuable feedback on the effects that these European developments have on entrepreneurship and business creation. »

Students in the entrepreneur's seat

Entrepreneurship is usually not a daily experience for young students. The German and Dutch national members of YES have developed a project that offers young students the possibility to be "in the seat of an entrepreneur" for one day. This project aims to give a realistic picture to the youngsters illustrating what entrepreneurship means in real life. After a day in a company, the students prepare a pamphlet which is read by a jury that awards the three best papers. The success of this project has led to more ideas spreading the spirit of entrepreneurship to school teachers and a project that invites entrepreneurs to schools to speak about their experiences.

For more information, please visit the website:
www.yes.be

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