



# EURO-info

## THE ENTERPRISE DIMENSION ESSENTIAL TO COMMUNITY GROWTH

### Community measures to intensify and to ensure the continuity of a policy for enterprise, particularly SMEs, in the Community

On 14 June 1993, the Council adopted a Commission proposal<sup>(1)</sup> for a programme of Community measures to intensify, with immediate effect, a number of priority areas of Community policy for enterprise, in particular SMEs, and to ensure the continuity of this policy in a number of fields, given the need for enterprises to adjust to new circumstances and the changes brought about by the moves to complete the single market.

This decision<sup>(2)</sup> took effect on 1 July 1993, and provides for a budget of ECU 112.2 million for 1993-96, the aim being to **intensify some of the priority areas of the policy for enterprise** carried on by the Community since 1986. These include:

- improving the **administrative and legal environment** of enterprises, including in the field of indirect taxation, so as to reduce the costs imposed on SMEs by Community legislation (continuation of work on administrative simplification in conjunction with the Member States, assessment of the impact of Community legislation on enterprises, and improvement in the regular consultations with organisations representing SMEs);
- qualitative development of the **Euro-Info-Centre (EIC) network**: The principal task will be to improve the quality and relevance of information provided by the centres, and to expand the network by strengthening the relay points of existing EICs and opening correspondence centres outside the Community;
- Qualitative development of confidential and non-confidential **partner-search networks**: the main aim will be to increase the capacity of the BRE networks (Business Cooperation Centre — non-confidential) and of the BC-Net (Business Cooperation Network — confidential) inside and outside the Community, to improve the quality of services provided and to intensify cooperation between the two networks;

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<sup>(1)</sup> COM (92) 470 final — 13 January 1993

<sup>(2)</sup> Council decision 93/479/EEC of 14 June 1993. OJ of the EC — L 161 of 2.7.1993

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- Stepping up activities to put businessmen in direct contact with one another: this will involve continuing, improving and expanding the **Europartenariat programme** (Objective 1 — regions whose development is lagging behind; Objective 2 — regions affected by industrial decline; Objective 5(b) — rural areas) and Interprise (all regions, with possible sectoral specialisation) and to stimulate trans-national subcontracting following the pan-European Forum on Subcontracting held in Madrid on 14 and 15 December 1992;
- Taking account of the interests of SMEs in Community initiatives and programmes, in particular by **promoting Community instruments** and facilitating access by SMEs to instruments developed under the policy for enterprise, or under other policies (research and support for full exploitation of technological potential, regional policy).

In addition, the continuity and consolidation of Community action will be ensured, in particular:

- Towards those categories of SMEs which make a major contribution to the dynamism of the European economy, but many of which are still unable to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by the completion of the internal market: this will mainly involve identifying the needs of SMEs and developing pilot schemes, including for **very small enterprises and the craft sector**, the distributive trades, **cooperatives, mutual societies**, associations and foundations, in particular as regards trans-national information and cooperation;
- By **promoting a better financial environment** for enterprises: The main task will be to facilitate access by SMEs to sources of finance (e.g. mutual guarantees, venture capital, analysis of the feasibility of second-tier markets) and to Community financial instruments (in this connection, particular attention will be paid to monitoring developments concerning the new European Investment Fund (EIF), given its interest for SMEs);
- By ensuring a fuller **understanding of the situation of SMEs** and of the developments they have to come to terms with, as well as assessing Community measures to assist them (continued support for the work of the European SME Observatory<sup>(3)</sup> and for the work to improve statistics on enterprises).

In the context of the European growth initiative decided at the Edinburgh European Council in December 1992, a Council decision is a tangible signal for SMEs to help them benefit from the European dimension, stimulate new investment and economic activity as part of an overall strategy for growth and employment.

<sup>(3)</sup> The first report has just been published — see Euro-Info 60/93

## **EUROPARTENARIAT: After Lille, Glasgow**

EUROPARTENARIAT FRANCE NORD-EST is over. It was the largest European meeting for inter-enterprise cooperation ever organised in France and in Europe. It enabled 414 SMEs from the Nord-Pas de Calais, Picardy, Champagne-Ardenne and Lorraine regions and 80 businesses from Corsica and the French Départements d'Outre Mer to meet representatives of some 1800 visiting firms from all over the Community, as well as from the EFTA countries, Central and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean Rim.

In Lille, on 17 and 18 June last, EUROPARTENARIAT FRANCE NORD-EST enabled French firms to benefit from over 11 000 individual meetings between representatives of SMEs taking part. The objective is to enable these SMEs, located in a region facing problems of industrial restructuring to find partners willing to take part in the industrial regeneration of their region. Since the programme was launched in 1987, on average, 40% of firms from the host region have concluded cooperation agreements as a result of their participation in EUROPARTENARIAT.

### **How can you be involved in EUROPARTENARIAT?**

Each EUROPARTENARIAT event organised in the European Community is two-thirds financed by the European Commission. The Directorates General for Regional Policy (DG XVI) and Enterprise Policy (DG XXIII) are each paying half the Community funding, the remaining third being paid by the host region.

To be able to host a EUROPARTENARIAT convention, host regions must be classified as a region whose development is lagging behind (Objective 1 of the structural funds), or an area in industrial decline (Objective 2), or a vulnerable rural zone (Objective 5b). SMEs which wish to take part in the programme must satisfy three criteria adopted by the Commission: they must employ less than 500 people; they must have net fixed assets of less than 75 million ECUs; a maximum of one-third of the capital may be held by a large company.

The next EUROPARTENARIAT programme will be in Glasgow (Scotland) on 13 and 14 December 1993.

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## **EUROMANAGEMENT:**

### **New measures in the areas of standardisation, certification, quality, health and safety at work**

A new Commission action to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including craft firms, to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the Single Market was launched in June. As part of the EUROMANAGEMENT action, this pilot project is intended to help SMEs to identify and resolve, at least partially, the problems which they face in the areas of standardisation, certification, quality and health and safety at work.

In particular, the pilot project aims to:

- improve SMEs' awareness of both information sources and requirements regarding standardisation and certification of products of particular interest to SMEs, especially with respect to new European standards;
- assist SMEs to interpret and analyse the new standardisation and certification requirements as they apply to their business activities;
- identify particular adjustment problems experienced by SMEs with respect to standardisation and certification;

- assist those SMEs who potentially could benefit from achieving quality assurance certification to identify their management problems and to make them aware of the basic concepts of quality assurance;
- improve SMEs' awareness and understanding of the requirements of health and safety in the workplace.

To implement the programme, 43 consultants (40 of whom were from the European Community and 3 from EFTA countries), selected by call for tenders, will carry out evaluations of some 700 SMEs. The Commission will pay half the costs of the evaluations of the SMEs within the Community, and the consultants are responsible for finding other private or public sources of funding. The consultants from EFTA countries will have to pay the full cost of taking part in the pilot action.

The consultants should start their evaluation work soon, and in early 1994 submit a report to the external coordinator (AFNOR, a French standardisation body), which will present a synthesised report.

On the basis of this report, the European Commission will be better able to identify particular problems in adjusting to European requirements for standardisation, certification, quality and safety met by this representative sample of SMEs. The SME executives will receive a complete copy of the evaluation report, and so will be better informed about the Community framework and could take any remedial actions required.

SMEs which wish to take part in the pilot action should contact the consultant for their country.

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- EUROPEAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES Ltd. – Mr Gavin THOMSON, 10 Market Place, Hexham, GB-NE46 1XG NORTHUMBERLAND – Tel. +44/434-60 89 98 – Fax: +44/434-60 98 44
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## **INTERPRISE: to encourage partnership arrangements in Europe**

The objective of the INTERPRISE programme is to stimulate contacts between small and medium-sized enterprises in the Community. Three regions of three countries of the Community must band together to organise a meeting between firms, in order to set up commercial, technical, or financial cooperation etc. A programme between three regions of the Community may also include one or more regions outside the Community.

Projects supported in the context of INTERPRISE must include at least the following phases: identification and selection of firms in the regions concerned, interested in establishing a cooperation agreement with other participating regions; publication and distribution of a catalogue containing cooperation profiles; organisation of an event, in the context of which direct contacts are set up between participating firms (appointments planned in advance, interpreters present).

The following events are being organised as part of INTERPRISE in October:

**'EUROSHOE 93'**

*Meetings:* 1 and 2 October 1993 in Civitanova Marche (Macerata — Italy)

*Countries concerned:* Italy, the Netherlands, Greece and France

*Sectors concerned:* Shoe and shoe component making.

*Organisers:* UNAC (Un. Naz. Artigiani Calzaturieri)-CNA (Conf. Naz. Artigianato e Piccola Impresa) — comitato regionale delle Marche) — Mr. Luigi Silenzi — via Panfilo, 3 — I62100 MACERATA — Tel.: (39) 733 23 11 72 — Fax: (39) 733 361 87 40

**INTERPRISE J.M. CONSULTANTS**

*Meetings:* 7 and 8 October 1993 in BLAGNAC (France)

*Countries concerned:* France, Italy, Germany

*Sectors concerned:* agricultural machinery, plant manufacture, manufacture of agricultural implements, irrigation equipment, spraying equipment, packaging manufacture, climate control.

*Organisers:* J.M. CONSULTANTS — Mr. Jean MONCOUET — Aéro gare de Frêt — Bât. 29 — Porte H — F-31700 BLAGNAC — Tel.: (33)61 71 82 46 — Fax: (33) 61 71 82 54.

**INTERPRISE DECIDE**

*Meetings:* 14 and 15 October 1993 at BOURGES (France)

*Countries concerned:* France, Italy, Germany, The Netherlands

*Sectors concerned:* conversion of the armaments industry, civil diversification of defense industries

*Organisers:* CRCI Centre — EIC Centre — 35, avenue de Paris — F-45000 ORLÉANS — Tél.: (33)38-54.58.58 — Fax: (33)38-54.09.09

**INTERPRISE — CENTRE D'AFFAIRES EUROPEEN D'ECHANGES TECHNOLOGIQUES**

*Meetings:* 20-22 October 1993 in Toulouse (France)

*Countries concerned:* France, Spain, Portugal, Italy

*Sectors concerned:* environment; remote sensing and data collection, eco-industry (manufacturing or process limiting pollution effects); imaging: medical, cartography, simulators.

*Organisers:* Chambre régionale de commerce et d'industrie (EIC) Mr. Jean MESSEANT — 5, rue Dieudonné Costes — B.P. 32 — F 31701 BLAGNAC — Tel.: (33) 62 74 20 00 — Fax: (33) 62 74 20 20.

**INTERPRISE «GALICIA 93»**

*Meetings:* 21 and 22 October 1993 at SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA (Spain)

*Countries concerned:* European Community, Tunisia, Morocco, Chile, Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, Uruguay and Venezuela

*Sectors concerned:* all

*Organisers:* CEG (Confederation Entrepreneurs of Galicia) — c/Rosalía de Castro, 87, 2° H — E-15706 SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA — Tél.: (34)81-598720; Fax: (34)81-598714

**EUREGIO MEUSE — RHIN**

*Meetings:* 21-23 October 1993 in LIEGE (Belgium)

*Countries concerned:* Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, France

*Sectors concerned:* many

*Organisers:* CCI Liège — Mr. NEURAY — rue des Mineurs 16 — B-4000 Liège — Tel.: (32) 41 20 25 11 — Fax (32) 41 23 30 62

**EURO MALAYSIAN PARTNERSHIP DAYS**

*Meetings:* 27-29 October 1993 in KUALA LUMPUR (Malaysia)

*Countries concerned:* Belgium, United Kingdom, Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, Malaysia

*Sectors concerned:* High-tech industry, environmental control equipment, chemicals derived from oil, automotive components, precision instruments etc.

*Organisers:* GOM Vlaams Brabant — Mrs. C. BOM — Toekomststraat 36-38 — B-1800 Vilvoorde — Tel.: (32-2)251 5171 — Fax: (32-2)252 4594

**INTERPRISE 'NARBONNE 93'**

*Meetings:* 28 and 29 October 1993 in NARBONNE (France)

*Countries concerned:* France, Belgium, Spain, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy

*Sectors concerned:* food and drink; agricultural machinery and products for agriculture; medical and surgical equipment and pharmaceuticals; transport, logistics and packaging.

*Organisers:* CCI Narbonne — M.B. HOLDER — 1, avenue du Forum-Croix Sud — F-11100 NARBONNE — Tel.: (33)68 42 71 11 — Fax (33) 68 42 71 12

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## **ECONOMIC RECOVERY: Another 1 billion ECUs for SMEs**

Faced with rising unemployment and gloomy economic prospects, the Heads of State and Government of the Twelve decided, on 21 and 22 June at the Copenhagen European Council, to 'restore confidence'. In the short term, they decided to intensify the measures aimed at sparking economic recovery which they adopted at the Edinburgh European Council.

To do this the 'bridging loan mechanism' available to the European Investment Bank for a total of 5 billion ECUs has now been granted an additional 3 billion ECUs, of which 2 billion are earmarked for large transport, telecommunications and energy projects and **1 billion are reserved for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)**. For the latter, the Twelve also provided for interest subsidies, linked to job creation, which could reach up to 3 percentage points over 5 years. Finally, the Edinburgh facility, which originally should have operated until the end of 1994, will be able to continue its activities beyond that date.

Furthermore, the Heads of State and Government asked their Finance Ministers to examine a system which would enable the Twelve to carry out investment projects covered by the structural funds (the Community's regional, social and agricultural funds) earlier than planned. According to this proposal put forward by the European Commission, the States will borrow from the Community, between now and 1995, the amounts which they should have received until the end of 1999 for their regions and social categories with problems.

But these measures, even if they contribute to stimulating investment, will not be enough. In Copenhagen, Jacques DELORS, President of the Commission, presented the outline of plans for the 'economic renaissance of Europe': realisation of economic and monetary union, increased research and development expenditure, improved training, greater concern for the environment.

The Twelve asked the European Commission to submit a medium-term strategy to 're-establish sustainable growth, increase the competitiveness of European industry and reduce unemployment'.

## **ENVIRONMENT: adoption of the first ECO-LABELS**

The Community system for awarding ecological labels <sup>(4)</sup> was set up to award a label to products with a less negative influence on the environment. This is a voluntary system, and manufacturers can decide whether or not to introduce a request for an ecological label to be awarded. On June 29, 1993, the European Commission adopted criteria for awarding labels to 2 products: washing machines and dishwashers. For these 2 products, the criteria adopted are ceilings on consumption of energy, water and detergents, during manufacture, distribution and disposal. The optimal evaluation criteria (instructions, help for recycling) and performance criteria (effectiveness of washing) have also been defined.

After the definition of criteria, the following steps have to be completed for the ECO-LABEL to be awarded to products:

- the manufacturer submits an application to the competent body in the Member State where his product is manufactured, marketed for the first time, or imported from a third country;
- the competent body assesses whether the product complies with the ECO-LABEL criteria;
- if, after this assessment, the competent body decides to award the ECO-LABEL, it notifies the Commission, which in turn notifies the competent bodies in the other Member States;
- If no objection is raised, the competent body can award the label, on the basis of a contract with the applicant. If objections are raised, the decision on the award must be taken at Community level.

For companies, the ECO-LABEL means a saving in time and cost. The award of the ECO-LABEL in one Member State will be valid in the other 11, and will have the advantage of making it unnecessary to submit applications in each country which has its own label. The application cost will be limited to a single payment of 500 ECUs. If the label is awarded, companies will pay a fee to the national competent body calculated as 0.15% of the annual volume of sales achieved by the labelled product.

<sup>(4)</sup> The ECOLABEL and its operation have been defined in Regulation 880/92, approved by the Council on 23 March 1992, OJ of the EC — L 29 of 11 April 1992

Once the announcement has been published in the Official Journal of the European Communities<sup>(5)</sup>, interested firms are invited to contact the competent body for the country where the product is manufactured, marketed for the first time, or imported, to obtain all the information concerning the procedure for award of the label.

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## **ROAD TRANSPORT: the Twelve reach agreement on cabotage**

Cabotage, i.e. the right of a road haulier to operate within a country where his lorry is not registered, will be completed unrestricted in the European Community from **1 July 1998**. In other words, the national transport market in each Member State will be open to road hauliers from all Community countries. This is a real revolution in the transport industry. At present, due to the complex system of authorisations which applies within the European Community, lorries are almost always forced to return to the country where they are registered without being able to pick up or deliver a return load in another country. The number of lorries driving empty on the roads of the Community has been estimated as 30% of the total. However, to overcome the reluctance of those who feared they would lose out through this liberalisation, in particular due to the differences in taxation between Member States which always affect cross-border transport, a **transitional period** of 5 years was decided by the Council of Transport Ministers on 19 June 1993.

The transitional period will start on 1 January 1994, when the number of authorisations for cabotage offered to haulage contractors in the EC will increase from 18 530, the present figure, to 40 000. Thereafter, the number will be increased by 30% per year until total liberalisation. This will enable governments to adjust their regulations and taxation rules, while haulage firms will be able to prepare for the new situation.

### **... and on a motorway tax disc**

On 19 June 1993, the Transport Ministers of the Twelve succeeded in reaching agreement on the thorny question of motorway tax discs to be paid for lorries weighing over 12 tonnes which drive on motorways in countries which do not charge tolls: Germany, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. The amount was fixed at 1 250 ECUs for lorries with 4 axles or over, and 750 ECUs for lorries with 2 or 3 axles. It will be revisable every 2 years. Each of the 5 countries in question will keep the receipts from its own haulage contractors, those from other Member States and third countries will be divided between these five Member States according to percentages calculated on the basis of the length of the respective motorway networks and the intensity of use: Germany should receive 73%, Belgium, the Netherlands 9%, Denmark 4% and Luxembourg 1%. The countries which currently apply a toll system or which are remote from the centre of the Community will benefit from mitigating measures including a 50% reduction on the taxes per axle until 31 December 1997. Precise proposals will be made shortly.

<sup>(5)</sup> OJ of the EC - L 198 - 7.8.1993

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

### EUROPEAN ENTERPRISE WEEK

**From 4 to 8 October 1993**

**All the answers to your questions**

Are you a company executive, determined to exploit all the possibilities of the frontier-free single market, who would like to know more about it? The second 'EUROPEAN ENTERPRISE WEEK' will take place from 4 to 8 October 1993, throughout the European Community. On the theme of 'Your SME, the driving force behind the internal market', European information networks (EURO INFO CENTRES) and cooperation networks (Business Cooperation Network — BC-Net and the Business Cooperation Centre — BRE), which were set up by the European Commission (Directorate General XXIII) for SMEs, have devised a series of events (conferences, colloquia, seminars, round table discussions, open days) in many European cities throughout that week. To find out about the programme of events intended to help entrepreneurs derive maximum benefit from the single market, think more European and make the most of the cooperation opportunities offers by a frontier-free network, contact your EURO INFO CENTRE or your nearest BC-NET correspondent. You don't know who it is? Send us a fax on (32-2) 280 1993, and we will put you in touch with your nearest office.

Last year, during the first 'European Enterprise Week', the EIC, BC-NET and BRE networks organised over 2000 events, involving more than 60 000 entrepreneurs in no less than 400 cities!

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