

# EURO - info

The bulletin of enterprise policy

**The new Director General  
Mr. Guy Crauser**

**The role, objectives and  
the 8 priorities of  
DG XXIII in 1998**



European Commission

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## Interprise Meetings

### European Water Forum Interprise

21-23 April 1998 in Marseille, France

Organiser: Actim, Mr. Alain d'Eylau Tel: + 33-1-44.34.50.00, Fax + 33-1-44.34.50.01

Countries participating: France, Germany, and Italy.

Sector of activity: management of water services and technology.

### Electrotechnical Interprise

14-15 May 1998 in Nuremberg, Germany

Organiser: LGA Technology-Transfer and Innovation Department, Mr. Georg Piehler. Tel + 49 961 67 06 351, Fax + 49 961 67 06 350

Countries participating: Germany, Austria, France, Denmark, Sweden, Italy, Finland, Slovenia, Czech Republic and Hungary.

Sector of activity: electronic technology

### Brno Interprise

13-15 May 1998 in Brno, Czech Republic

Organiser: Euro Info Centre of Brno, Czech Republic, Mr. Peter Bauer, Tel + 420-5-41-15.95.38, Fax + 420-5-41-15.30.55

Countries participating: Czech Republic, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Poland and Slovakia.

Sector of activity: machinery, textiles and corresponding sectors.

**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.

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Paola PICCAROLO - European Commission - Directorate General XXIII  
 "Enterprise Policy, Distributive Trades, Tourism and Co-operatives"



It was with great pleasure that, on the 1st of December 1997, I took up my post as Director-General of DG XXIII.

The importance of SMEs as creators of jobs was highlighted at the European Council in Amsterdam and then again at the employment summit in Luxembourg.

From this we can draw a strengthened mandate to support SMEs in their efforts to integrate themselves into the single market, become more competitive and increase their potential as the foremost provider of employment in the Community.

One of the characteristics of DG XXIII is its openness to the external world, its contact with and responsiveness to the economic world. Our Directorate-General is very aware of the entrepreneurs, the small and medium-sized firms, the craft sector, business, tourism and the social economy and generally all the firms, which constitute the fabric of the economy.

Our information bulletin EURO-info is in tune with these characteristics, since it is our monthly contact with entrepreneurs. For this reason, my intention is to strengthen EURO-info as a means of communication and information between DG XXIII and business.

Guy CRAUSER

## CURRICULUM VITAE

**NAME:** Guy Crauser  
**NATIONALITY:** Luxemburger  
**EDUCATION:** Doctor of Law  
 «Diploma of the Institut d'Etude Politique de Paris»

### PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

**1964-66** Lawyer at the bar of the city of Luxembourg  
**1966-70** Member of the Board of the National Savings Bank (Luxembourg), head of the legal department  
**1970-80** European Commission: member of the cabinet and assistant head of cabinet to the Commissioner responsible for competition policy  
**1981-88** Head of Unit «Industrial relations and international technology» in DG III  
**1989-90** Head of cabinet for Commissioner Jean Dondelinger, responsible for audiovisual and information policy.  
**1990-97** DG III Industry - Assistant Director-General  
**1/12/97** Director-General DG XXIII «Enterprise policy, Distributive Trades, Tourism and Co-operatives»

## The role, objectives and the 8 priorities of DG XXIII in 1998

### The role and objectives of DG XXIII

DG XXIII recently prepared its work programme for 1998. It also finalised its **role**, setting out clearly the **objectives** of DG XXIII.

- Improve and simplify the business environment
- Promote the spirit and culture of enterprise, in line with the conclusions of the European Employment Council in Luxembourg on 20 and 21 November 1997
- Strengthen the competitiveness of SMEs and improve their access to research, innovation and training
- Promote the activities of the tourism, commerce and social economy sectors to conform with the Community norms, in particular that of job creation
- Ensure that SMEs are taken into consideration in the different Community initiatives and policies

Small and medium sized enterprises play an important role in economic growth and job creation. They can influence the labour market in a positive way. In Europe, there are 16 million SMEs, making up 99.8% of firms in the Community, which employ two-thirds of the work force in Europe. Today, these European enterprises operate in an environment characterised by strong competition and pressure. On the one hand, the enterprises must constantly improve their competitiveness and, on the other, they are faced with administrative difficulties and with difficulties of access to finance, information and training.

### The 8 priorities of DG XXIII

DG XXIII has identified its priorities for 1998. These are set out below. Other important activities are being carried out and are in progress, such as that of the Euro Info Centres, which will continue in 1998. The fact that this activity and other major ones do not appear in the list of priorities does not mean that they are not important.

#### 1. Development of the spirit of enterprise:

DG XXIII will:

- Draw up a communication on the spirit of enterprise. The Member States should take this into consideration in defining their plans on employment at national level.
- Draw up a communication on training in SMEs.

- Draw up a communication on co-operative entrepreneurship in Europe of the year 2000.
- Support training activities in the field of the Euro, enterprise transfer and financial management.
- Promote training in the workplace, particularly through the use of computer networks.
- Launch campaigns to promote the spirit of enterprise, in particular aimed at young people and women.

#### 2. Improvement of the financial environment of enterprises.

- Draw up a directive on payment delays
- Launch the JEV II (Joint European Venture) initiative
- Launch the «Seed Capital II» action

#### 3. Contribution to preparing SMEs for the change to the euro

- Publish the work of the working groups on small enterprises and the Euro and on the acceptance of the new prices and scales of value in euro
- Publish and distribute tools for preparation for SMEs in the form of brochure and CD-ROM
- Support initiatives, which contribute, to the preparations of enterprises for the euro

#### 4. Simplification of the administrative and legislative environment of enterprises

- Publish the results of the BEST Task Force (Business Environment Simplification Task Force)
- Draw up recommendations destined for the Council

#### 5. Improvement in access of SMEs to Community programmes

- Develop specific mechanisms to ensure the participation of SMEs in Community programmes
- Send recommendations to the Member States

#### 6. Preparation for enlargement

- Open the multi-annual programme to the associated States of Central and Eastern Europe as well as Cyprus
- Extend the networks of co-operation and information to these countries
- Identify the needs of SMEs and of the specific sectors of these countries in order to help them to adapt to the requirements of the Internal Market

#### 7. Promotion of enterprises in the tourism and commerce sectors

- Set up a high level working group on employment in tourism
- Prepare a communication on tourism and employment and present it to the European Council in Cardiff (June '98)

- Adopt a multi-annual work programme for commerce and distribution, following the Green book
- 8. Improvement in the visibility of the CMAFs (Co-operatives, Mutual Societies, Associations and Foundations) and strengthening of their capacities to respond better to the various European challenges
- Prepare a proposal for a working programme for the CMAFs (1998-2002)
- Organise events on social economy, co-operatives and mutual societies
- Apply the conclusions of the communication on the promotion of the role of associations and foundations in Europe.

## The Commission has adopted its fourth report on the co-ordination of activities on behalf of SMEs and the craft sector

The European Commission, on the proposal of Commissioner Christos Papoutsis, responsible for enterprise policy, has adopted its fourth report on the co-ordination of activities on behalf of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and the craft sector - Ref.COM (97) 610 Final.

Commissioner C. Papoutsis declared: *«The report shows the progress achieved and recognises that the efforts for co-ordination can still be strengthened.. I intend to pursue the Commission's efforts to co-ordinate activities at the highest level in the framework of the group of Commissioners responsible for of enterprise policy. Although SME policy is essentially a responsibility of Member States, the Commission can play a significant role. However, the mobilisation of all the partners is indispensable in order to translate the political priorities into concrete reality».*

This report provides a global panorama of all the Community activities on behalf of SMEs resulting from co-ordination between enterprise policy and the other Community policies.

Since the adoption of the first report on co-ordination in 1992, the Commission has further developed its considerations and

has brought about changes both in the structure and the content of the report. It now presents, in an integrated manner, all the activities of the Union on behalf of SMEs, thus improving their coherence and their visibility. This report updates the last report of 1995 and **centres on two main themes: the improvement of the environment of enterprises and the programmes and measures in support of SMEs.**

The **improvement of the environment** of enterprises deals mainly with the simplification of administration and regulations, (in particular by the setting up of the BEST Task Force), the work on the question of payment delays, transfer of enterprises, the change to the Euro and the improvement of access to financing and credit. The Commission also attaches great importance to taking better account of the specific needs of SMEs in the development of all Community policies such as the internal market programme, competition, fiscality, environment and social policy.

The **programmes and measures of support for enterprises** aim primarily at access to financing and credit, support for the development of SMEs in the less-favoured regions, europeanisation and internationalisation of SMEs, strengthening of competitiveness, better access to research, innovation and training, promotion of the spirit of enterprise and greater incorporation of the environmental dimension.

The programmes and measures of support for SMEs concern **first of all the measures taken in the framework of the enterprise policy.** Principally these measures concern: information (Euro Info Centres); europeanisation and internationalisation of enterprise (BC-NET, BRE, EUROPARTENARIAT and INTERPRISE); transnational sub-contracting activities (organisation of IBEX cross meetings (salons inversés); as well as activities on behalf of the craft sector, trade and the social economy.

The **measures taken on the basis of other policies** mainly concern structural funds, technological research and development programmes, activities of the European Investment Bank and the European Investment Fund, co-operation programmes with third countries and vocational training programmes. Other activities concern SMEs in the fields of quality and standardisation, innovation, environment (ECO-AUDIT), transport, energy and the audiovisual industry.



The report shows that the participation of SMEs in the programmes has increased progressively. In the *structural funds*, SMEs constitute a public target for aid. Between the periods 1989-1993 and 1994-1999 we note almost a doubling of the Community allocations to SMEs. The *European Investment Bank* doubled the volume of its global loans to improve the competitiveness of SMEs between 1993 and 1996. In the *Technological Research and Development Programmes* (RDT), the introduction of specific measures for SMEs enabled a doubling of the participation of SMEs in the Fourth programme compared to the participation in the Third programme. In the matter of *vocational training*, SMEs are targeted as a priority in the programmes arising from objective 4 of the European Social Fund, of the ADAPT initiative and within the part of the LEONARDO da VINCI programme concerned with enterprises.

The conclusions present the progress achieved, which is demonstrated by the emergence of a political priority for SMEs within the Union; greater consideration for the special situation of SMEs in policies having an impact on their environment; the introduction of measures to support SMEs in most of the Community programmes and increased participation by SMEs in the programmes.

The Commission recognises, however, that the co-ordination efforts can be further strengthened in order to rationalise activities on behalf of SMEs and make them more effective. Although SME policies come mainly from the Member States, the Commission can play a significant role by stimulating closer co-operation between the Member States, through the organisation of the exchange or transfer of good practice in the matter of policies towards SMEs by means of joint activities. Moreover, the dialogue with the professional organisations enables the reality of SMEs to be well-reflected and political action to be taken further.

Finally, the European Council on employment (Luxembourg 20 and 21 November 1997) sent a strong political signal in the direction of SMEs. It invited the Commission to propose concrete measures to SMEs, creators of long term employment, and accompanied these measures by a new budget line of 420 MECU for three years, to support the opening of a «risk capital kiosk». In addition, it supported the creation of joint transnational enterprises (JEV initiative) and set up a special guarantee fund for the institutions financing SMEs.

## Euro Info Centres Concrete aid for European SMEs



For 10 years, the 226 Euro Info Centres (EIC) have informed, advised and helped European SMEs on all European Union matters.

Established in each Member State of the European Union and in various non-Community countries, they answer the most diverse questions. Some 400,000 questions are dealt with each year.

Anticipating their questions, the EICs put at the disposal of SMEs a vast range of documentation such as brochures, newsletters, practical guides, etc. For example, a group of EICs specialised in the environment has published the Eco Management Guide, a self-analysis and awareness tool for the application of European environmental norms destined for SMEs. (Utrecht EIC, fax: 31.30.236.85.41),  
E-mail: [eicmn@worldaccess.nl](mailto:eicmn@worldaccess.nl)

The Euro, an essential issue for which SMEs must prepare in time and under the right conditions, is one of the priority themes on which the EICs concentrate their efforts of information as well as education.

Therefore, in 1997, the EICs organised 360 events specifically conceived to respond to the needs of SMEs (seminars, conferences, information sessions, and exhibitions); they have also developed a large number of operational products, which are simple but complete. Various self-teaching tools have been specially conceived to enable SMEs to assess the consequences of the transfer to the Euro and to plan appropriate measures for their business.

Here are some of these products:

- A CD-ROM developed by the German EICs (Stuttgart EIC, fax: 49 711/165 7300),  
E-mail: [eic@hwk-stuttgart.de](mailto:eic@hwk-stuttgart.de)  
Internet: <http://www.eic.de>
- Eurochallenger, a software tool covering the fiscal, legal, financial and accounting aspects linked to the transfer to the Euro. Available in French, Dutch and English (Zaventem EIC, fax 32 2/751 78 11),  
E-mail: [ccihv@cci.be](mailto:ccihv@cci.be)  
Internet: <http://www.accountancy.be>

### INFORMATION

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- «Euro. Le plan d'action», a diskette developed by the French network (Lyon EIC, fax: 33 4/ 78 379 400)
- Italian practical guide «EUROKIT: le piccole e medie imprese verso la moneta unica», (Rome EIC, fax: 39 6/559 003 291), Internet: <http://www.tesoro.it>

As organisers of seminars and conferences, the Euro Info Centres participate actively in mass audience events. In October 1997, the European Week of the Information Society, which was organised in collaboration with ISPO (Information Society Project Office), gave businesses the opportunity to become familiar with new products and services (multimedia, electronic trading, teleworking), which are imposed more and more by the phenomenon of market globalisation.

Since June 1997, in the framework of the SAFE (Safety Action for Europe) programme, 90 EICs have organised 150 open days with demonstrations of good practice for the prevention and reduction of professional risks (Luxemburg EIC, fax: 352.438326), E-mail [eic@cc.lu](mailto:eic@cc.lu)

In addition to information, the EICs provide concrete aid to European enterprises in cases where, for example, a partner is sought, this being an essential condition for participation in Community programmes.

## Growth and Employment: the Commission's proposals for a new programme for SMEs

The European Commission made proposals to the Council of Ministers aimed at improving access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which are job creators (COM(98) 26 of 21/1/98). A sum of 420 million ECU to support growth in employment will be allocated over the period 1998-2000. This initiative has three components: a risk capital kiosk, aimed at SMEs in the start-up phase, a system of financial contributions to support the creation of joint transnational enterprises between SMEs of different Member States and a system of guarantees to increase the volume of loans available for very small or recently created SMEs.

This initiative follows a request by the Heads of State at the Employment Summit held in Luxembourg on 21 November 1997. In fact on this occasion the Heads of State gave consid-

erable political support to these proposals, which encourage SMEs in the creation of jobs.

The proposal was presented on the initiative of Mr. Yves Thibault de Silguy, member of the Commission responsible for economic, monetary and financial affairs and Mr. Christos Papoutsis, member of the Commission responsible for SMEs, as well as Mrs. Edith Cresson, member of the Commission responsible for research and innovation. The objective is to allow SMEs, through better access to finance, to increase and take more advantage of their potential for job creation. It is particularly aimed at SMEs who are exploiting advances in technology.

### IMPORTANT

To contact the nearest Euro Info Centre consult the DG XXIII site:

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

or send a fax to 32.2/230.05.20

In the next few months freephone numbers will be at your disposal to obtain information about the Euro Info Centres.

This information will also be published in EURO-info.

## A flexible distribution of funds

Taking into account the characteristics of the financial markets of the Member States, the Commission proposes to implement a flexible distribution of funds between the following three mechanisms: a risk capital facility, a system of financial contributions for the creation of transnational enterprises and a guarantee system.

- "ETF start-up" is a risk capital scheme managed by the European Investment Fund (EIF), which will invest in certain specialised risk capital funds. This mechanism will strengthen the present ETF by targeting a segment of the risk capital market for enterprises, in particular SMEs in the process of being set up or in the start-up period, in which investment risks are at their highest. This scheme focuses on a segment of the market with a higher element of risk and will make it possible to target SMEs which neither the EIB nor the EIF can support, due to their statutory higher risk criteria.
- In the same way, the SME guarantee facility, in appealing to enterprises which represent a relatively high risk, complements the activities of the EIB and the EIF on behalf of SMEs. The guarantee mechanism is managed by the EIF on a legal basis. It concerns, above all, SMEs with high growth potential, in particular very small enterprises, new enterprises and those which are growing. The resources of this mecha-

nism could give guarantees by increasing the capacity of the guarantee systems already in place in the Member States, in the public or private sector, including those for joint guarantee systems. It is also possible to help SMEs with the aid of national or regional systems, conceived to respond to the demands of the enterprises operating in the area concerned.

- As regards the support mechanism for creating transnational joint ventures, this aims to achieve better integration of SMEs into the internal market through the creation of joint ventures. The initiative is called JEV (Joint European Venture). It foresees a financial contribution by the Commission via a network of financial intermediaries (Call for Expressions of Interest published in Official Journal S 42 of 28/2/98). Thus, in order to encourage the setting up of transnational enterprises, the Commission foresees a contribution of 100,000 ECU, which will provide for the administrative preparation of an enterprise. A first part (maximum 50,000 ECU) will cover 50% of the expenses related to the conception of the joint venture (market research, preparation of the business plan, carrying out studies on the impact on the environment, administrative preparation). A second part will cover 10% of the fixed investments.

This initiative constitutes an important element in the EU's employment strategy. Its rapid adoption should therefore represent a political priority for the Council (which will have to vote unanimously). To ensure proper follow-up, the Commission will report to the Council and the Parliament on an annual basis on the implementation of the programme and will present an assessment of the functioning of the mechanisms over a four year period from the date of the adoption of the decision by the Council.

#### INFORMATION

M. Mulfinger DG XXIII/C/2,  
E-mail:  
[Albrecht.Mulfinger@dg23.cec.be](mailto:Albrecht.Mulfinger@dg23.cec.be)

## Commerce and Distribution Committee (CDC)



The Commerce and Distribution Committee was set up by a Commission Decision of 20 May 1981 and confirmed by the Council Resolution of 14 November 1989. It concerns a consultative committee whose aim is to improve the dialogue with the commercial partners and to serve as a forum for experts in the field in order to discuss a broad spectrum of subjects relating to commerce. In the preparatory framework of the propos-

als on Community legislation, the CDC, recognised as a reliable source of advice, advises the Commission on technical questions.

The CDC has 65 titular members who are appointed by the Commissioner (decision of the Commission on basis of competence), on the proposal of 86 professional organisations, which are European and national as well as horizontal and sectorial. 65 substitute members are appointed in an informal manner. The members of the CDC must be entrepreneurs or managers and must be active in the commercial sector in the broadest sense. The duration of the mandate is two years, the last renewal taking place in mid-October 1997. Eurochambres and UNICE have the status of permanent observer. EuroCommerce is regularly invited to participate in meetings.

Amongst its members, the CDC has representatives of the wholesale and retail trades, the hotel and restaurant sectors, advertising, the rental sector as well as franchisees, commercial agents and mail order firms.

The CDC holds two plenary sessions per year and works in small ad hoc working groups. The Steering Committee has the task of preparing plenary sessions and advising the CDC secretariat on the activities of the working groups. Unit A.3 of DG XXIII provides the CDC secretariat.

1997 was an atypical year in view of the considerable time taken to re-appoint members. The members' mandates were renewed in October 1997. Two plenary sessions took place in April and October 1997. Working groups met on the following themes: electronic trading, vertical restrictions, the Euro (including two joint meetings with the Consumers' Committee of DG XXIV). The CDC adopted decisions on electronic trading, vertical restrictions and

law in the food sector.

In 1998 two plenary meetings are foreseen, the first taking place on 23 April 1998. The first meeting of the Steering Committee took place on 11 January 1998. Three working groups have been set up:

- Action programme on commerce
- Electronic trading
- The Euro

The members of the CDC will also participate in two seminars organised by the Commerce Unit of DG XXIII on commercial statistics and commerce in rural areas.

## The CDC summarises the key points of the introduction of the single currency

The CDC working group on the Euro met on 11 February 1998 with specialised experts and examined the reports of the five working groups of the Commission, established as a follow-up of the Commission Round Table of 15 May 1997. At this meeting various conclusions were drawn and key points summarised. On February 20 the CDC adopted an opinion on the key points concerning the introduction of the single currency, which was distributed and presented at the European Commission Round Table on the Euro on 26 February 1998. The most important elements of the CDC's opinion are the following:

- Nobody should be forced to provide a double indication of price
- There must be no obligation to accept the two currencies before 1 January 2002
- The period of circulation of the two currencies must be as short as possible, nevertheless with special solutions for specific sectors. The banks must provide absolute transparency and not make charges for administrative costs. Payment in euro before 1 January 2002 may not be imposed to the detriment of SMEs
- SMEs may not be forced to invest
- The Member States must provide fiscal incentives
- Commercial firms and SMEs in particular must be encouraged to prepare detailed plans for the transition
- Consumer education is not a requirement for commercial firms

### INFORMATION

For more information on the CDC:  
Moritz Röttinger  
(Tel. 02/299.63.94, fax 02/295.89.84)  
E-mail [Moritz.Roettinger@dg23.cec.be](mailto:Moritz.Roettinger@dg23.cec.be)

## «The new BC-NET & BRE tool»



The BC-NET/BRE networks are based on the exchange of information on business co-operation opportunities through a network of business consultants. BRE correspondents focus on the dissemination of business opportunities in markets where they are active, whilst members of the BC-NET network are specialised in giving advisory services to small and medium sized enterprises which want to internationalise. Membership of the

BRE is free, whilst BC-NET members pay an annual fee of 1,000 ECU.

Both networks have recently started to use a new computer tool, which enables them to find business partners anywhere in the world in an easy and fast manner.

The new tool, based on client-server technology, provides BRE correspondents and BC-NET members with a user-friendly interface for data input and retrieval of business co-operation opportunities.

SMEs can benefit from the networks in the following way: first, they get in touch with network members operating in their area (a complete list may be found at [http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg23/guide\\_en/index2.htm](http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg23/guide_en/index2.htm)). At a second stage, assessment is done by network members on the quality and chances of success of any particular business opportunity; then the contacted work member (BRE or BC-NET) introduces the business opportunity data in a database where details of all business opportunities are kept.

This database can be consulted at any time by all network members, and contains both confidential (only available to BC-NET members) and non-confidential data (available to members of both networks). It is up to the BRE or BC-NET members to consult the data-

base with the frequency and intensity they wish, according to their clients' particular needs.

BRE correspondents are expected to disseminate the business opportunities of their choice in the most effective manner. Information related to the BRE is distributed free of charge. BC-NET members are expected to give full assistance to SMEs wanting

to internationalise (i.e. financial, technical or legal assistance, market research, etc.).

Further information on the BC-NET business co-operation networks can be found on the «Europa» server ([www.http://europa.eu.int](http://europa.eu.int)) or through the dedicated help desks:

#### \* BC-NET Help Desk:

Tel: + 32 2 296 28 08, Fax: + 32 2 296 25 72  
E-mail: [bcnet-helpdesk@dg23.cec.be](mailto:bcnet-helpdesk@dg23.cec.be)

#### \* BRE Help Desk:

Tel: + 32 2 295 91 17, Fax: + 32 2 296 42 71  
E-mail: [bre-helpdesk@dg23.cec.be](mailto:bre-helpdesk@dg23.cec.be)

## Important meetings for entrepreneurs

### Sixth Conference on the social economy "New Millenium. New Economy"



#### 3 to 5 June 1998 in Birmingham, United Kingdom

The conference, co-financed by DG XXIII, will take place from 3 to 5 June 1998 in Birmingham, United Kingdom. This large forum on the social economy will bring together more than 800 representatives of co-operatives, mutual societies and foundations from the whole of Europe. Ministers, national and European members of parliament, representatives of European and international institutions have already confirmed their participation. The main themes of this conference will cover active citizenship, competition and partnership, the future of employment and evaluation of the implementation of the Commission Communication on «the promotion of the role of associations and foundations in Europe». This biennial Conference offers participants in the social economy an opportunity for meetings, exchanges of ideas with those responsible operating at political level. For more information contact, at DG XXIII, Serafin GONZALEZ or Alice COPETTE,  
E-mail: [alice.copette@dg23.cec.be](mailto:alice.copette@dg23.cec.be) Fax: + 32 2.296.58.57.

### European Conference on Distributive Trades in the less-favoured rural areas



#### 11-12 May 1998 in Brussels, European Parliament

The European Conference on Distributive Trades in the less-favoured rural areas is organised jointly by DG XXIII and the Committee of the Regions on 11 and 12 May 1998 in Brussels, at the headquarters of the European Parliament.

The Conference will be opened by Mr. Guy Crauser, Director General of DG XXIII and by Mr. Dietrich Pause, Secretary General of the Committee of the Regions. Several workshops will be organised.

For more information, contact Mr. Patrick Fourquette:  
Tel. + 32.2/296.10.37, Fax +32.2/295.89 84  
E-mail: [Patrick.Fourquette@dg23.cec.be](mailto:Patrick.Fourquette@dg23.cec.be)

## Japanese internal industrial programme (H RTP)



#### 12 May - 24 July 1998

Since 1988 DG XXIII has provided grants to help European SMEs to participate in the Human Resources Training Programme (H RTP Japan Industry Insight Programme) managed by DG III with the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Co-operation. The next programme (H RTP Japan Industry Insight) will take place from 12 May to 24 July 1998. Priority will be given to candidates who have industrial experience. The Centre also organises thematic missions lasting 10 days. The next one will deal with market and product strategy, from 6 to 16 July 1998. EURO-info will return to this subject in more detail in subsequent issues. Candidate application forms may be obtained at the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Co-operation - European Office: 52, rue Marie de Bourgogne, B-1000 Brussels. Fax: + 32 2 /282. 00.45.

## European alliance meetings

#### 13-14 May 1998 - Euroexpo, Lyon, France

The organisation of two days of meetings between European sub-contractors in the framework of Alliance 98 (Sub-contractors' Fair) and the launching of the «European Guide for Alliances between sub-contractor SMI's». The aim of these meetings is to promote and initiate co-operation and/or alliances between SMI's in the sub-contracting field. For information please contact Martine Barras, Patrick Clert-Girard, Lyon CCI - Direction Industrie. Tel: +33.4/72.40.57.02, Fax: + 33.4/72.40.57.45. E-mail: [clert@lyon.cci.fr](mailto:clert@lyon.cci.fr)

### Vibex (Vehicule Industry Buyers' Expo): Cross Meeting (buyers' exhibition) in the vehicle sector

## IBEX

#### 12-14 May 1998, in Gothenburg, Sweden

A cross meeting (buyers' exhibition) on heavy vehicles (buses, trucks) will take place on 12, 13 and 14 May 1998 in Gothenburg, Sweden. Organised jointly by Nutek and Tida, the VIBEX Fair will run parallel with a motor show (VISE: Vehicle

Industry Suppliers Expo) and conferences organised by the Swedish Fairs and Congresses Centre in Gothenburg.

For further information: Vibex: Tel: 46-31-701.32.20,

Fax: 46-31-701.32.29.

E-mail: [vibex@tida.goteborg.se](mailto:vibex@tida.goteborg.se)

Internet [www.swefair.se/visevibex](http://www.swefair.se/visevibex)

## SMEs and tourism

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### 20-22 May 1998, Llandudno, Wales,

With the aid of the European Commission, the British Presidency of the Council is organising a conference on tourism, which will take place in Llandudno, Wales, from 20 to 22 May 1998. The title of the conference is: Agenda 2010, for small businesses - «the biggest industry in the world» - an increasing contribution to European tourism. The purpose of this conference is to identify the aim and characteristics of the important role which small businesses play in the economy and culture of the European Union Member States. For further information contact: Christine Mason Tel.: + 32-2-295.79.49, Fax +32-2-296.13.77. E-mail: [Christine.Mason@dg.23.cec.be](mailto:Christine.Mason@dg.23.cec.be)

## The integration of "Quality Management" in tourism

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### 9-12 July 1998, Mayrhofen/Zillertal, Austria

On the occasion of the first Austrian Presidency of the Council (second semester 1998), DG XXIII is organising a conference on the integration of quality management in the tourism sector and in particular with regard to new technology. Three workshops will be organised: the strategic dimension of quality in tourism policy, the operational dimension of the integration of quality management and the integration of quality into management: strategies and implications.

For further information contact: Mr. Pierre Godin

Tel + 32-2-295.19.35, Fax +32-2-296.13.77.

E-mail: [Pierre.Godin@dg23.cec.be](mailto:Pierre.Godin@dg23.cec.be)

## Citizens and the information society

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### Brussels 21-22 April 1998 - Palace Hotel

The conference is organised by CECUA (Confederation of European Computer User Association) in partnership with several European associations and federations and financed by ISPO (Information Society Project Office) of the Commission. The President of the European Parliament, José Maria Gil-Robles Gil-Delgado will open the conference; Commissioner Bangemann will present the European dimension; Lone Dybkaer, Member of the European Parliament, will present the social dimension of the information society and Rolf Skoglund, Vice-President of Ericsson, will present «The technology which will shape our future»; four parallel workshops will also be organised. For information: Conference office: Rue du Moniteur 9, B-1000 Brussels. Tel: + 32-2-219 12 49, Fax: + 32-2-219 32 15, E-mail [CECUA@emf.be](mailto:CECUA@emf.be)

Internet: <http://www.ispo.cec.be/citizen>

## International conference on the challenges and way forward to the 21st century

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### Marbella, Los Monteros Hotel, Malaga, Spain, 3-5 June 1998

The conference will be developed around two main themes: the directive on payment delays and the introduction of the single currency.

For information: Marga Ramthun, LIC-international - Römerstrasse 56, 51486 Overath, Germany.

Tel: + 49-2204-71189, Fax: + 49-2204-71608

E-mail: [100273.1035@compuserve.com](mailto:100273.1035@compuserve.com)





**Euro Info Centre** First point of contact with Europe for businesses, the Euro Info Centres inform, advise and help SMEs on all European questions.



**Tourism** DG XXIII Tourism



**Commerce** Commerce and Distribution



**Regie** European network of European Economic Interest Groupings (EEIG), an instrument for international co-operation between SMEs



**Craft sector** A «Craft sector and small enterprises» unit. Its principal tasks are: the development of strategies for this sector and its target groups: women entrepreneurs and young entrepreneurs; co-ordination with other Community policies; follow-up to the Milan Conference; the implementation of specific programmes and pilot projects.



**Social economy** DG XXIII/A/2 Social Economy (co-operatives, mutual societies, associations and foundations)



**Competitiveness** strengthening of competitiveness (access of SMEs to technology and training), promotion of sub-contracting.



**IBEX** International Buyers' Exhibitions - Cross Meetings. The formula of inter-enterprise meetings organised on the basis of demand by large companies to develop new inter-industrial partnership relations.



**Europartenariat** Europartenariat events stimulate the development of less-favoured regions by encouraging SMEs from all over the Community and non-European Union countries, to establish business relationships with local companies. Two Europartenariat events are organised per year, with face-to-face meetings between participant entrepreneurs.



**Interprise** Events under the INTERPRISE programme support local, regional and national initiatives, which are aimed at promoting Cupertino between SMEs in Europe. Entrepreneurs are offered a series of pre-arranged face-to-face meetings. Interprise events take place around 30 times a year.



**BC-NET** Business Co-operation Network is a network of business advisors, which assists SMEs with well-defined services in their search for cross-border co-operation. The advisors handle both confidential and non-confidential business opportunities.



**BRE** Bureau de Rapprochement des Entreprises is an extensive network (around 500 correspondents world-wide) which promotes the concept of SME cross-border co-operation and disseminates co-operation opportunities of a non-confidential nature on a wide basis.