



European Commission

Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry

Directorate A – Coordination for Competitiveness
Unit A.2 – International Aspects of enterprise and industrial policy

EDUCATION FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Expert group recommendations

Introduction

At the Fifth Euro-Mediterranean Conference in Caserta (Italy) on 4 October 2004, Industry Ministers approved a Work Programme on Industrial Co-operation for 2005-2006. One proposal was to exchange knowledge and experience on education for entrepreneurship. To progress in this field, an expert group was set up with participants from Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Italy, Luxembourg and Spain. Eurochambres¹, UEAPME², the European Commission and the European Training Foundation have also participated in the group.

The expert group has agreed on the following key principles and recommendations :

Key Principles

1. Entrepreneurship represents an important engine of economic growth, income and welfare generation and therefore progress for all, social inclusion and stability in a Euro-Mediterranean region aiming to become a free trade area.
2. Entrepreneurship should be considered as a mindset, which can grow throughout society at large, and therefore should not be seen as limited to a business context.
3. Entrepreneurship is about blending risk-taking, creativity or innovation with sound management, within a new or an existing organisation and can occur in any sector or type of business.
4. Building an entrepreneurial society involves everybody. An important role is played by the education system and the media in promoting positive attitudes towards entrepreneurship.
5. Since building an entrepreneurial society is both a current need of Euro-Mediterranean societies and an investment in the future, education for entrepreneurship initiatives should address both young people and adults, reaching them through the education system at all levels in a life long learning perspective (primary and secondary school, higher education, vocational training and adult education).

¹ Eurochambres is the European organisation representing the Chambers of Commerce. Mr Carlos Talamas from the Milan Chamber of Commerce and Eurochambres' nominee was appointed *rapporteur* of the Group.

² UEAPME is the European organisation representing SMEs.

6. Building an entrepreneurial society requires a major pedagogical reform with new ways of thinking and active teaching methods. This will bring the education system closer to the current and future needs.

Recommendations for building an entrepreneurial society

- 1) The development of a common strategy for an entrepreneurial society requires a coordination of ministries, and the active participation of social partners and further stakeholders. The vision for this strategy should be long term and have a perspective of at least a generation. The implementation of the strategy involves a wide range of actors who should cooperate.
- 2) The education system should incorporate active teaching methods and develop a closer relationship with society. Governments should create a framework that will allow enterprises to help schools to define, deliver, and evaluate training programmes. Representatives of business associations and business support organisations as well as NGOs should play an important role in this respect.
- 3) Starting as soon as possible and from primary school, activities should be developed to stimulate active involvement of pupils, personal initiative, creativity and risk taking.
- 4) Programmes in the secondary education should aim to promote economic awareness and introduce entrepreneurship education with simulation and mini enterprises.
- 5) In vocational schools, programmes should address labour market changes and target a population that is the most likely to be self-employed or involved in small enterprises
- 6) In universities, entrepreneurship education and enterprise creation programmes should not be limited to students in economic sciences, but should tap the entrepreneurial potential of all students to increase their employability and to promote innovation.
- 7) Significant efforts should be devoted to reaching the general public and therefore also students' parents to create awareness on entrepreneurship. Television represents a powerful media. The new media such as the internet are also crucial. Communication should aim at a broad audience. Different formats are possible (success stories, fictions, cartoons, etc).
- 8) Teachers should be supported by educational and training programmes addressing both content and delivery issues. Support programmes benefiting journalists and media people could promote a balanced view of entrepreneurship.

Conclusion

After formulating the recommendations listed above, the group of experts stresses the need to start implementing them. Interested countries are invited to cooperate and to launch pilot projects limited to 1 to 2 years. Project costs would be jointly covered by the participating countries who could ask the EU for financial support and technical assistance. Projects would be carefully planned, monitored and evaluated, making the best use of quantitative targets and indicators. Lessons drawn from projects would be disseminated widely and would feed into policy making and implementation on a broad scale.

The expert group is ready to define a number of pilot projects for submission to the Working Party on Euro-Mediterranean Industrial Cooperation.