

Brussels, 6th of October 2009

## A woman to woman approach to foster entrepreneurship

***More women are needed in business. This week, 130 successful European businesswomen are kicking off a campaign to encourage more women to become entrepreneurs and start their own companies. Appointed by Commissioner Vladimír Špidla yesterday evening in Stockholm, these successful business women will act as Entrepreneurship Ambassadors.***

Vice-President Günter Verheugen, Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry, and Vladimír Špidla, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, jointly stated: *"The EU needs more entrepreneurs, more people that have innovative ideas and creative approaches to business. For too long, we have underused women's potential. This must change and we have to encourage more women-led businesses. This will not only bring fresh business ideas but it will also strengthen the role of women in our societies."*

The 2008 Small Business Act which aims to improve the overall approach to entrepreneurship called for more women in businesses. Indeed, compared with men, fewer women in the EU are self-employed and even fewer start businesses or express the ambition to do so. Today female entrepreneurs constitute only 34.4% of self-employed and only 20% in industry.

The Female Entrepreneurship Ambassadors will serve as role models and highlight the role that women can play in creating jobs and promoting competitiveness. Women generally choose to start and manage firms in industries such as retail and services to people that are often perceived as being less crucial to economic development and the knowledge economy.

The newly appointed Ambassadors will help to raise confidence in setting up and creating successful businesses in all areas. They will also be role models to inspire other women to become entrepreneurs by telling their stories.

In parallel, more than 700 Enterprise Europe Network experts will come together from 7 to 9 October to discuss how to best support small businesses in a difficult economic climate. With nearly 600 local partners the Network offers support and advice to 2.5 million European SMEs, helping them to make the most of business opportunities in the EU.

[More information on the Enterprise Europe Network](#)

[Encouraging Women Entrepreneurs](#)

[More information on the Female Entrepreneurship Ambassadors scheme](#)

Think small. Act big. [Small Business Act](#)