



“SMEs: INNOVATION AND KNOWLEDGE”

”SMALL CITY COMMERCE, AN EXAMPLE OF TRAINING FOR BUSINESSES”

24th September 2010

Committee of the Regions,
Rue Belliard 101
Room JDE 51

Aims of the conference:

The global economic changes that have taken place these last decades and particularly the economic crisis that Europe is currently going through have affected business, especially the small and medium-sized enterprises, and therefore employment. Following the objectives of the Lisbon strategy and the EU 2020 Agenda, it is crucial to invest in education and training if we want to make progress and become an advanced knowledge-based society, with sustainable economic growth as well as more and better jobs.

The aim of this conference is to **provide information on the aid, resources and financial opportunities that the European Union offers to Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in order to boost their growth, creativity and innovative capacity through knowledge and training.** It will also serve as a forum to exchange best practices and project ideas. The results of the European project “**Small City Commerce**” will be presented as an example of best practice. This project, co-financed by the Leonardo Da Vinci programme, has developed a training plan for small trades in small towns.

small city commerce FINAL CONFERENCE

09h30 **Registration**

10h00 **Welcome and opening of the seminar by the Local and Regional Authorities**

- Mr. **Gerhard Stahl**, Secretary General Committee of the Regions
- Mr. **Juan José Rubert Nebot**, Mayor of Vila-real City Council
- Mr. **Rafael Ripoll Navarro**, Regional Vice-minister for European Affairs, Valencian Regional Government

10h30 **Panel Discussion 1**

“Innovation to improve EU SMEs competitiveness: overcoming the global crisis”

- The European Small Business Portal - a tool to foster SME's knowledge:
Ms. Alison Imrie, Policy Officer, Unit E/4 - SME policy development, DG Enterprise & Industry, European Commission
- Bridging partnership and going international by Enterprise Europe Network (EEN):
Mr. Daniel Gassmann, Head of Sector, Unit 3, Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EACI)

Moderator

Dr. Manuel Irún, Head of Competitiveness, Innovation and Sustainability
Fundación Comunidad Valenciana - Región Europea

11h15 **Coffee Break**

11h30 **Main results of the SMALL CITY COMMERCE Project**

Mr. Esteban Bellés Girona, Project officer, Vila-real City Council – Project Coordinator

12h15 **Panel discussion 2:**

“Improving skills in the SMEs: financing opportunities”

- Learning how to effectively manage the EU SMEs: Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs Programme
Mr. Marko Curavic, Head of Unit Entrepreneurship, DG Enterprise and Industry, European Commission
- The role of SMEs in the Vocational Education and Training Policies: Leonardo da Vinci Programme
Ms. Joana Basztura, Programme Manager Leonardo Da Vinci, DG Education and Culture European Commission

Moderator: Fundación Comunidad Valenciana - Región Europea

13h00 **Forum Corner: Exchange of good practices and project ideas**

13h30 **Closing remarks**

Mr. Jose Pascual Serrano Rovira, Secretary General of the Vila-real Trade Federation of small and medium-sized businesses (PYMEC)

13h40 **Lunch** Atrium 5

Information and registration

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