

EBN Annual Policy Conference 2013 & Cocktail Reception

Transforming European Start-ups into International Gazelles
"A journey to the future with EC-BICs' entrepreneurs!"

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Résidence Palace
International Press Center
155, rue de la Loi
1040 Brussels



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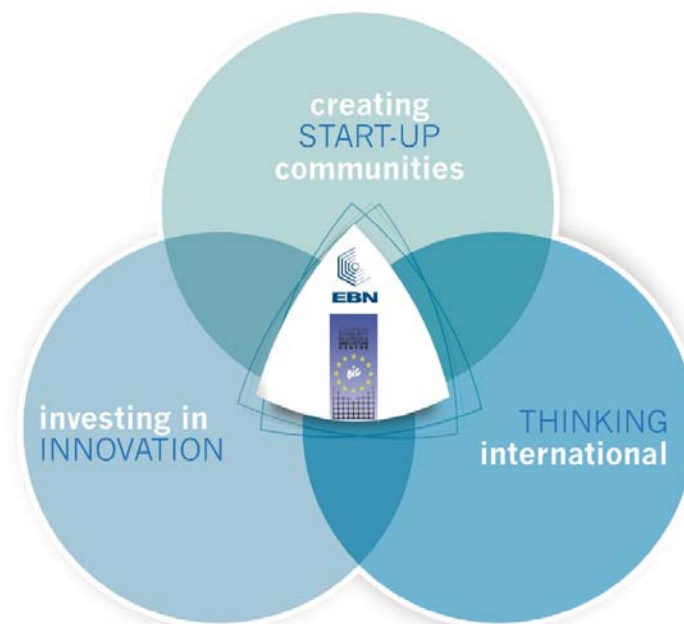
Introduction

The aim of the **2013 EBN Annual Policy Conference** is to discuss how professional networking and international collaboration can be further developed to increase the competitiveness of European SMEs and how EBN’s members – the Business & Innovation Centres (EC-BICs) – drive innovation towards start-up creation and high-growth companies.

EC-BICs are the idea-labs and business development centres for innovation-driven entrepreneurs. They are powered by “dream team” mentors and coaches, endorsed by leading stakeholders in their catchment areas, are credible with the private sector, and mandated by the public sector. An EC-BIC purpose is to develop innovative new businesses that have significant growth potential.

With structural changes taking place at the global level, the debate must now address how the EC-BICs are reinventing themselves and can strengthen their “think global - act global” approach with new dynamics and forms of collaboration. It is crucial that networks and enablers are totally open to the new world realities, their opportunities and threats.

The Policy Conference will discuss not only the challenges but also key business principles including the valorisation of the potential cooperation with neighbouring growing markets, the revitalisation of the transatlantic business corridor, the potential of EU-Russia partnerships, the pragmatic collaboration with Asia’s top-players, and a fair approach to new emerging economies, including localised smart and specialised territories.



● Creating Start-up Communities

“To bring Europe back to growth and higher levels of employment, Europe needs more entrepreneurs.” *Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan, January 2012*



European economies have a key economic challenge for 2020: how to turn innovative entrepreneurial projects into successful, globally-competitive businesses that add long-term value to regions by stimulating economic growth and creating new jobs.

To address the challenge, the European Union is delivering a number of new measures designed to enable more economic opportunities. *Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation* has the creation of innovative start-ups and entrepreneurship education at its heart; *COSME* supports the creation of favourable business environment and competitiveness, where it tackles the international framework for SMEs,

including trade facilitations. The strategic principles of this programme are administrative simplification; access to finance and market access/internationalisation.

The core mission of EC-BICs is precisely in line with those priorities: to stimulate and accelerate innovative entrepreneurship at territorial levels, through the customised delivery of a comprehensive range of professional support and incubation services addressed at innovative start-ups, spin-offs, entrepreneurs and SMEs. An EC-BIC typically “stimulates, detects, assesses, selects, incubates, mentors, clusters, accelerates, and finally internationalises” its innovative clients.

EBN, the network of EC-BICs, is therefore a fertile ecosystem where innovative start-ups can grow and expand in size and market leadership: the acceleration of the generation of “gazelles” is of course the ultimate goal of EBN. Success-stories are constantly used to drive a dynamic and selective process starting at seeds level (start-ups) and progressively leveraging the way to promote entrepreneurship in specific segments of the population as women-owned businesses in growing areas like social innovation ideas, projects and entrepreneurs.

● Investing in Innovation

“Horizon 2020 will ... bridge the gap between research and the market by helping innovative enterprises to develop their technological breakthroughs into viable products with real commercial potential.”

Economic challenges also raise extraordinary opportunities for enhancing competitiveness of organisations through innovation, cooperation and entrepreneurship. Thus, we strongly believe that bottom-up micro-economic initiatives – enterprise creation and development based on innovation and collaboration – can significantly and positively affect the macro-economic landscape.

Communities of professional enablers such as EC-BICs, Incubators, Accelerators, Technology Parks, Clusters, Innovation Centres and other specialised Agencies can all be powerful generators and catalysers of entrepreneurial innovations; the engine for building myriad micro and mezzobusinesses.

Without enhancing entrepreneurship, without more and better start-ups and spin-offs, without engaged entrepreneurs, without non-technologically based-innovators, without business and market-oriented applications developers, without a collaborating and open mindset, without



IT-aholic serial players, and without efficient early-stage support mechanisms, the fight against recession and the challenge to build a more competitive and inclusive Europe will be more difficult, and maybe impossible to achieve.

In a global economy, it is vital to incorporate innovation-based incubators, such as the EC-BICs, within the innovation system, where all core competences and stakeholders collaborate smartly along the various value chains with engagement, pragmatism, credibility and efficiency.

● Thinking International

“COSME will specifically tackle transnational issues that – thanks to economies of scale and the demonstration effect – can be more effectively addressed at European level.”



Although international markets, both private and public, offer substantial opportunities for European companies, SMEs still face particular obstacles to tapping the global market: when it comes to access to market information, locating possible customers and finding the right partners.

To pave the way for businesses to internationalise, Europe needs to boost its internationalisation process and provide the necessary support to SMEs when going international. Europe needs also to enlarge the entrepreneurial culture and create jobs by ensuring a world-class industrial base in the EU.

EC-BICs, incubators, accelerators and their stakeholders (local, regional and federal authorities; universities; industry and investors) have been deploying strategies to offer “growth

packages”, “international support services” and “cluster facilities” to their potentially growing customers/entrepreneurs. The introduction of “soft landing schemes” opens new global opportunities, since start-ups are encouraged to think globally from the very beginning.

The *EBN Soft Landing Club* is a new co-incubation service offered by EC-BICs and other innovation intermediaries, for innovation-led companies who wish to explore new markets at selected global beyond the traditional business incubation services offered to domestic companies, to accelerate foreign companies’ learning processes, to help with networking in the new country, and to provide access to the resources necessary to meet their business goals. The Club relies on trust, knowledge and positive collaboration among its members.

With a view of supporting international cooperation EBN has developed formal partnerships and/or concluded MoUs with non-European networks and international players such as NBIA (USA), ANPROTEC (Brazil), AIRR (Russia), SMEA (Taiwan), and more recently COPARMEX (Mexico) to accelerate the participation of SMEs, and where relevant microenterprises, in global markets. The EC-BIC network has also developed partnerships in countries such as Israel, South Africa, Chile, Canada and China.



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Agenda - Conference

• 17:30 – 17:45 Welcome Message & EBN Vision 2020

Álvaro Simon de Blas, EBN President and CEO of BIC Euronova Malaga (Spain)

Philippe Vanrie, EBN CEO (Belgium)

• 17:45 – 18:30 Keynote Speeches

Laurence de Richemont, Adviser Industry & Entrepreneurship, Cabinet of President Barroso, European Commission (EC)

Maria da Graça Carvalho, Committee on Industry, Research & Energy (ITRE), Member of the European Parliament (EP)

Joanna Drake, Director SMEs & Entrepreneurship DG Enterprise & Industry, European Commission (EC)

• 18:30 – 18:45 European Launch of “Make It Global” & “EuroMed@Change” Projects

Selena Bolingbroke, University of East London (UEL) Pro Vice-Chancellor & Centre of Excellence for Women’s Entrepreneurship (CEWE) Executive Leader (UK)

Emmanuel Noutary, CEO ANIMA Investment Network (France)



• 18:45 – 19:45 Stakeholders roundtable

Moderator: Philippe Vanrie, EBN, CEO

Stéphane Chemouny, President INTRASSENSE (International SME testimonial), www.intrasense.fr

Catherine Pommier, Director Montpellier Agglomération BIC “Best International Incubator” (France)

Micael Gustafsson, CEO Cluster 55° “European Cluster Manager of the Year” (Sweden)

Didier Moret, CEO iSource Venture Capital Paris (France)

Ivan Bortnik, CEO of Association of Innovative Regions of Russia (AIRR) and Chairman of FASIE Fund (Russia)

Philippe Suinen, CEO of AWEX, Walloon Export and Foreign Direct Investment Agency (Belgium)

Angela Steen, Senior Policy Analyst, Google (Belgium)

COCKTAIL RECEPTION

19:45 - 21:30



What is EBN?

The **European Business & Innovation Centre Network (EBN)** was set up in 1984 as a joint initiative of the European Commission, European industry leaders and the first pioneering Business and Innovation Centres. EBN is now the leading non-governmental pan-European network bringing together 200+ Business and Innovation Centres (BICs) and similar organisations such as incubators and entrepreneurship centres.

BICs are support organisations promoting innovation and entrepreneurship. They help enterprises to innovate and accelerate; they drive the creation of start-ups, provide integrated incubation services, support innovation-based projects and mentor growing SMEs. They promote economic development through job and enterprise creation and development.

EBN follows closely the European Union industry and entrepreneurship policies and is developing ‘hub and spoke’ networking connections with innovation platforms in Russia, China, Middle-East, North-Africa, North & South America. EBN is also deploying projects for the UNDP, the World Bank, the EIB, and the EC.

EBN is a Brussels-based team coordinating members’ activities and providing services to them ranging from EC-BIC quality support to international projects, events and networking opportunities. EBN is a community of qualified and committed intermediaries and a dynamic cluster of talents and champions entrepreneurs.

*EBN implements a certification and quality system enabling the development of a network of excellence through the integration of a quality approach. The BICs that have been granted the **BIC trademark** commit themselves to respect their obligations within the quality process of the network. The EBN quality process adds value to the BIC trademark and to the organisations that have received the licence – professionalism, performance, consistency and positioning. This label is the unique professional European standard for incubators.*



Register at: <http://www.ebn.eu/ebnpolicyevent>



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