



European
Commission

2018 European Enterprise Promotion Awards

Connect. Share. Innovate.

19th - 21st November 2018

Internal Market,
Industry,
Entrepreneurship
and SMEs

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Foreword

The European Enterprise Promotion Awards (EEPAs) continue to demonstrate and celebrate the pinnacle of innovation and entrepreneurship in the EU after 12 successful annual editions. Every year I look forward to discovering the participating projects, and to learn about their contributions to the European economy and sustained SME growth. The work of these projects, and the dedicated teams behind them, never cease to inspire me, and with every edition I get to read about and meet the Europeans pioneering the latest innovative enterprise concepts.



This year the EEPA Jury had to choose from 56 national projects competing at European level, and created a shortlist of 19 projects representing the strongest ideas from across the EU and COSME countries. This year at the 2018 SME Assembly in Graz, 7 winners (including the Grand Jury Prize), 12 runners-up and 4 special mentions were awarded during the EEPA 2018 final prize giving ceremony. I would like to personally congratulate all of the projects that were awarded and hope that you will take the time to learn about them from this compendium. I would also like to acknowledge the projects that won at national level, all of which were of a high standard and deserve to be recognised for their efforts.

The Awards themselves would not be possible without the hard work of many, but most importantly that of the EEPA National Coordinators. Once again the Coordinators have found the 'best of the best' through the well organised national competitions and ensured a continued high standard of projects and competition for 2018. I extend my thanks to each and every one of you, who continue to work tirelessly to bring to light the projects making a real difference for SMEs and entrepreneurship across Europe. I would also like to thank our esteemed EEPA Jury who invested a lot of time over the summer to thoroughly evaluate the projects.

I now invite you to learn more about the awards and the 2018 participants from this compendium, and hope you will be inspired to connect, share and innovate for a stronger Europe, and a European ecosystem in which our entrepreneurs and SMEs can innovate and thrive.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elzbieta Bienkowska'.

Elżbieta Bieńkowska

Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs

Small businesses driving European growth

SMEs are independent companies with fewer than 250 employees. They provide two out of three private sector jobs and are responsible for 85% of new jobs created. SMEs account for 66.6% of total employment and 56.8% of gross value added (GVA).

Latest research shows that SMEs continue to form the bedrock of the European economy, with some 23.85 million companies employing 93 million people; and accounting for slightly more than 99.8% of all enterprises.

The biggest share of enterprise is represented by micro companies with fewer than ten employees – 93.1%.

The Small Business Act for Europe

Adopted in June 2008, the Small Business Act for Europe (SBA) reflects the Commission's recognition of the central role that SMEs play in the EU economy. It sets out a comprehensive SME policy framework for the EU and its Member States.

The aim of the Act is to improve the overall approach to entrepreneurship and permanently embed the 'Think Small First' principle in policy-making – from regulation to public service. The Act promotes SME growth by helping them tackle problems which hamper their development, particularly focusing on initiatives that help small businesses by:

- Cutting red tape
- Providing access to finance
- Increasing access to markets

Finally, the Act aims to deliver a longer-term shift in attitudes – creating a greater awareness of the role entrepreneurs play in society and encouraging and inspiring potential new entrepreneurs.

These four key areas of the SBA continue to be priorities for the coming years. In addition, the need to address the shortage of skilled workers has become a fifth priority.

A Spin-Off: The European Enterprise Promotion Awards

The European Enterprise Promotion Awards support the aims of the Small Business Act by recognising innovation and rewarding the success of public bodies and public-private partnerships in promoting enterprise and entrepreneurship at a national, regional and local level.

SME Envoys

As part of the review of the SBA, the Commission invited Member States to nominate a national SME Envoy to complement the role of the European Commission's SME Envoy. The current EU SME Envoy is Ms Elżbieta Bieńkowska, Member of the European Commission for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, who chairs the network. The group of SME Envoys makes up an advisory group that promotes SME friendly regulation and policy making in all EU countries.

To find out more about SME Envoys, visit:

http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/small-business-act/sme-envoys_en

What does it mean to become an EEPA Winner?

What does it mean to become an EEPA Winner?

Winning a European Enterprise promotion Award is the result of lots of hard work and dedication, but winning an award is only the beginning. The 2017 EEPA winners below share the impact that winning an award had on them and their projects, and what happens after the ceremony.

Winning had a big impact on Innofest. The media coverage was great, both locally and internationally. But the impact on our network was more important. Our funders were recognised for supporting Innofest, and many new partners wanted to connect to Innofest. At our festival, Eurosonic Noorderslag in January, a delegation from Finland came to learn from Innofest and is aiming to set up their own Innofest model. We have also been contacted by other festivals and regions to join the Innofest program. The number of applicants has also increased in comparison to previous years, so it is possible that the award may have helped with that as well.

Innofest, The Netherlands

Winner: Grand Jury Prize 2017



When we became National Winners there were big articles in our local newspapers, but the national papers wrote nothing. This is a shame because our region of Värmland is classified as one of the poorer growth regions in Sweden, meaning it needs some praise and attention in the Swedish media.

When we won EEPA, social media exploded. It was shared and there was so much gratitude and so many congratulatory messages that we were unable to follow all the threads! In addition, all co-financing municipalities and banks wrote about the win on their websites and social media. Wherever we were, there was always someone telling us how proud they were of our achievement. Even though the Swedish media did not pick up on it as much as we would have hoped, at least people in our sphere seem to really like it and appreciate our efforts.

Business Generator, Sweden

Winner: Investing in Entrepreneurial Skills 2017



ADIE's victory in the 'Responsible and Inclusive Entrepreneurship' category had two main impacts. Firstly, it created a great sense of pride for all of the involved teams as the large amount of work that we all put in is not always recognised, so it felt good to receive recognition for it.

Secondly, our win had an impact in terms of communication as we shared our win all over social media. This led to a good presence on social media and helped contribute to raising awareness of what we do. However the communication on other platforms, for example those run by French media, was a little limited and we would have liked to have a bit more.

ADIE (Association for Economic Rights Initiatives), France

Winner: Responsible and Inclusive Entrepreneurship 2017



The Jury

Each year, an independent high-level European Jury takes on the difficult task of selecting the best entries in each category. This year's Jury includes representatives from government, business and academia as well as representatives from Bulgaria and Austria, as part of their EU presidencies during 2018. There are also two permanent representatives, one from DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs and one from the Committee of the Regions. The winner of the previous year's Grand Jury Prize is also invited to sit on the Jury. The 2018 Jury is composed of:



Jesús Casado Navarro-Rubio
Secretary General of European Family Businesses

Jesús Casado is currently the Secretary General of European Family Businesses, a federation of 14 National Family Businesses associations based in Brussels. Since May 2014, he is also Deputy Director General of Instituto de la Empresa Familiar, the Spanish Family Business Association. Having taken active roles on several association boards and advisory groups on both European and national level, he has cultivated extensive sectorial experience,

which led to his appointment as a member of the European Commission Expert Group on Family Business and of the High Level Group of Administrative Burdens reporting directly to the President of the European Commission.

"In my opinion, the most important characteristic for a project to be special is that it is innovative. It has to bring something new and show creativity. In order to make it onto the 2018 shortlist a project needs to be: effective; transferable to other countries and situations; contribute to a better and stronger economy."



Dr. Matthias Tschirf
Austrian SME Envoy and Head of the Directorate General for Enterprise Policy in the Austrian Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs

Dr. Matthias Tschirf is currently the Austrian SME Envoy and heads the Directorate General for Enterprise Policy in the Austrian Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs. As SME Envoy of Austria, Matthias Tschirf is focused on the SMEs which form the backbone of the Austrian economy. His field of activity embraces the quality of Vocational Education and Training, as well as technical standardisation and the development of the Trade Act.

He is also a published author of numerous publications concerning political and constitutional administrative law, and has a long and distinguished career in both politics and law.

"An outstanding project combines innovation and cooperation and supports enterprises throughout their life cycle. It has visible and presentable results and helps to improve the role of entrepreneurs in society or to start up a business. A top project is oriented towards results and solutions and provides inspiration to companies, authorities and stakeholders."



Anna van Nunen
Director of the Innofest project from the Netherlands

Anna van Nunen is the Director of the Innofest project from the Netherlands, which won the Grand Jury Prize at the European Enterprise Promotion Awards in 2017. Innofest uses festivals as living labs for innovation testing, providing entrepreneurs with a safe and contained environment to test their prototypes enabling them to work quicker and more effectively from the prototype phase towards a ready-to-market product.

Anna van Nunen is actively involved in the startup ecosystem, and music festival scene, including project development with Lab Vlieland, and management and organisation for Into the Great Wide Open music festival.

“An EEPA project stands out when it has a clear vision on how entrepreneurs are being supported and has an effective way of taking that vision and translating it into actions. I will specifically look at the way the projects answer the needs of local entrepreneurs.”



Alexander Manolev
Bulgarian Deputy Minister of Economy

Alexander Manolev was appointed as Bulgaria's Deputy Minister of Economy in May 2017, and was also elected as a Member of the national Parliament in the same year. Mr Manolev commenced his professional career in the National Association of the Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria, where he was responsible for the development of projects for European financing. He was in the sphere of marketing and worked extensively in the telecommunication and finance sectors.

He was then appointed Deputy Minister of Tourism 2015 and in 2016 undertook the management of the State Agency for Metrological and Technical Surveillance.

“Internationalisation is very important especially for EU SMEs. I believe that integration of digital technologies by enterprises will further increase their potential. The EEPA process identifies initiatives which maximize opportunities offered by markets both within and outside Europe. We will be glad to see more European SMEs to operate on a global stage”



Prof. Thomas M. Cooney
Professor in Entrepreneurship, Dublin Institute of Technology

Thomas Cooney is a Professor of Entrepreneurship at the Dublin Institute of Technology (Ireland) and Visiting Professor at the University of Turku (Finland). He is also Academic Director of the Institute for Minority Entrepreneurship, a Board Member of Startup Ireland and works in a supportive capacity with a number of businesses. As an Expert in Entrepreneurship Policy, he has worked with the Irish Government, the European

Commission, OECD, the European Training Foundation and other international organisations. He has published widely on the topic of entrepreneurship and full details of his career can be found on his personal website: www.thomascooney.com.

“To be shortlisted, a project must demonstrate: a well-written proposal that answers all of the questions asked; a track-record of achievement; and the ability for the project to be replicated in other locations. My favourite category is ‘Responsible and Inclusive Entrepreneurship’ as I have long believed that entrepreneurship offers people from minority and disadvantaged communities the opportunity to maximise their economic and social potential.”

The Jury - continued



Thomas Wobben
Committee of the Regions

After studying Economics and Politics, Thomas Wobben worked for voluntary sector organisations. In 1993 he joined the European policy services of the Land Saxony-Anhalt and in 1995 he began working in the Liaison Office of Saxony-Anhalt in Brussels taking over as Director in 2000.

Since March 2012 he has been Director for Horizontal Policies and Networks and later on for legislative works at the Committee of the Regions. His responsibilities include monitoring the Europe 2020 strategy, relations with the OECD and Eurostat, and prospective works of the Committee of the Regions.

"The most convincing EIPA applications are those driven by a strong partnership - involving business, public authorities, research and educational institutions - that can act both as a guarantor for the project's continued sustainability and as a vehicle for sharing good practices and lessons learnt."



Ms Kristin Schreiber
DG for Internal Market,
Industry, Entrepreneurship
& SMEs

Kristin Schreiber joined the European Commission in 1990 where she has held a variety of positions. She was appointed Director of the COSME Programme and SME policy in 2015 having served as Director for Governance of the Single Market and International Affairs, first in DG MARKT and then in DG GROW since February 2014.

Previously, she was Head of Cabinet of Employment Commissioner, Vladimir Špidla, Deputy Head of Cabinet of Internal Market Commissioner, Michel Barnier and a member of the Cabinets of Enlargement Commissioner, Günter Verheugen. She also served as Head of Unit for International Affairs in DG Employment and as an administrator in different Directorates General.

"The projects selected to compete at European level are a testimony to the passion and innovation that puts ideas into practice. These are examples that can inspire the creation of an ecosystem that helps entrepreneurial spirits, nurtures enterprises and helps them grow. All these projects have tangible results: they help to create new companies and new jobs. I hope they will be an inspiration to authorities, organisations and individuals across Europe to do more for entrepreneurs and small businesses."



Lisa Steigertahl
Independent
Entrepreneurship
Consultant

Lisa Steigertahl, an independent Entrepreneurship Consultant, has worked as Head of Research & International Strategy at the German Startups Association, where she covered business processes and strategy setting, as well as representation of German interests for startups, and CEO of the European Startup Network (ESN). She graduated from ESCP-Europe with a Master of Science in European Management.

Lisa has lived, worked and studied in Berlin, Cambridge and New York and has long term experience in the consulting and governmental sectors.

She monitors the development of European startup ecosystems and innovation related events and the European Commission in Brussels

"For me a project that creates a new solution for a demand that we did not know we had yet, or has found an innovative way of solving a problem will stand out. I am also interested in European applicability and projects that could be transferred to other markets."

Understanding the judging process

Individual countries were invited to conduct national competitions to determine the best projects to represent their nation. Hundreds of projects competed in these national competitions in 2018 for a chance to enter the European Enterprise Promotion Awards.

Countries were allowed to nominate a maximum of two entries (in different categories) to the European competition. Each Jury member reads and assesses every entry against defined criteria covering: originality and feasibility, impact on the economy, improvement of stakeholder relations and transferability.

The Jury then meets to discuss their top entries in each category, before agreeing on winners, runners up and any special mentions. The shortlist is published shortly after the jury meeting and the winners are announced during the Awards Ceremony at the SME Assembly.



Grand Jury Prize - Winner

A special prize awarded to the entrepreneurial initiative considered the most creative and inspiring in Europe.

Interreg 
North Sea Region
Lean Landing
Leading Europe's Entrepreneurial Spirit

Lean Landing, Denmark

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Lean Landing is designed to get small businesses into new European markets quickly and efficiently, and helps them acquire profit-enhancing partnerships abroad. The main objective behind this initiative is for small businesses to be able to test whether their products or services can be sold in foreign markets.

Through an active project with many partners, this initiative is inspired by the philosophy that SMEs should market-validate their products and services via direct dialogue with potential customers and partners abroad. When this option is available to SMEs, it is much more engaging and rewarding than traditional market analysis, or desk work, which would normally be carried out in isolation within the SME home territories.

The project is unique for several reasons, including its design being inspired by the 'lean start-up' model. The main aspects taken from this 'lean model' are the 'trial and error' nature of entrepreneurship, which has been applied to Lean Landing and allows entrepreneurs to learn from experience, and if necessary failure, and to do so quickly. Other unique factors of Lean Landing are its focus points. In comparison with similar

schemes, Lean Landing does not have a specific focus on export, but rather on partner-based internationalisation via knowledge collaboration. The project also focuses on micro SMEs and early internationalisation, as opposed to similar projects which tend to focus only on middle-sized SMEs.

The Lean Landing network consists of a total of 19 partners, accelerators and incubators. The network has members from Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Holland and the United Kingdom. Members of the Lean Landing network open up their facilities to the 190 participating SMEs, giving them bases in their target countries, as well as a local business support system. These local bases allow SMEs to gather first impressions of the foreign market, establish contacts, and learn important local business etiquette and practices.

So far, of the 190 SMEs involved, 80 have successfully been abroad with the Lean Landing project.

The project is run by Væksthus Sjælland, a non-profit organisation established in 2007 that provides services for entrepreneurs and micro SMEs with scalability and growth potential. The organisation is also responsible for providing business support to the Zealand Region of Denmark and is one of five national units.

"Being shortlisted for the EEPA 2018 made me very proud. Through dedicated work from all our 19 partners in six countries, the Lean Landing project has developed a unique and much needed soft-landing program to support local micro SME's in starting up in new markets abroad. So being recognised for this work is truly amazing. Thank you!"

Promoting the Entrepreneurial Spirit - Winner

Recognises initiatives at national, regional or local level that promote an entrepreneurial mindset especially among young people and women.



Piraeus Blue Entrepreneurship, Greece

Contact: Niki Katsi
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This project highlights blue entrepreneurship and economy, which cover the sustainable use of the sea and its resources for economic development. The Municipality of Piraeus has implemented several blue entrepreneurship actions including the BlueGrowth innovation competition, the BLUACT network, the Blue Development Strategy, two European programs and the Entrepreneurial and Innovation Centre for Blue Development. The goal is to create new sustainable businesses and jobs in the Blue Economy and to promote a new innovative business ecosystem. So far the project has produced 20 new startups, 45 new jobs and 55 networking events.



“What an honour to be shortlisted, we are ready to share our experience!!”

Runners-up



Superheroes, Estonia



Superheroes is an entrepreneurship and leadership accelerator dedicated to unlocking the potential of 13-17 year old girls. Over the course of four months and 10 workshops, participating girls test their strengths, boost their life skills and develop bonds with each other. Most importantly, they turn their dreams into reality by running projects they are passionate about in teams of five, supported by mentors. A unique methodology combined with a daring and engaging set of activities empowers girls to become more independent and entrepreneurial, and to be inspired by diverse role models across the globe.

“This recognition encourages Superheroes to take a leap in preparing future leaders not just in Estonia but across Europe!”

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DE MAKERS
REPUBLIC TURBO



De Makersrepubliek: Handmade in Brugge, The Box en Turbo, Belgium



The Makersrepubliek brings together three initiatives, Handmade in Brugge, TURBO and The Box Brugge. With a shared physical space, the initiatives reinforce each other and encourage cross-fertilisation of ideas to achieve the overall objective of stimulating entrepreneurship in Brugge. The project specifically targets young people and women and has become a pioneering springboard for the city's economy. Brugge is known for pioneering craftsmanship and through this initiative wants to bring traditional and innovative practices together to encourage businesses to consider the city as an attractive location, with innovative facilities like the 'plug&play' business premises offered in the inner city.

“The City of Bruges and De Republiek are delighted to have received a nomination for 'De Makersrepubliek'. We consider this an important recognition of the actions we take to support creative and young entrepreneurship in Bruges, our use of an innovative cross-sectoral model and our work to bring together various sectors and objectives”

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Investing in Entrepreneurial Skills - Winner

Recognises initiatives at national, regional or local level to improve entrepreneurial and managerial skills.



**i2c STARTAcademy,
Austria**

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The i2c STARTAcademy is an innovative research commercialisation format for TUW scientists who want to transfer their technology and research results into successful products or services. It provides them with a personalised framework to plan their market entry by bringing them together with domain-specific national and international mentors, coaches, investors and industry representatives to work together on the commercial potential of their conducted research. Three years after it was launched the project has provided training and coaching to 91 researchers (40 teams), which has resulted in the generation of 23 start-ups and 85 jobs.

“Being shortlisted is a great honour as well as a strong confirmation of our successful work during the past years at TU Wien”



Runners-up



ACORNS – Accelerating the Creation of Rural Nascent Start-ups, Ireland



ACORNS is a peer to peer support programme in which successful business women (Lead Entrepreneurs) voluntarily facilitate groups of early stage female entrepreneurs. The groups serve to establish good foundations in the new early stage businesses and equip the entrepreneurs with necessary skills to develop and grow sustainable businesses. Both Lead Entrepreneurs and participants are located in rural Ireland and the aim of the programme is to create sustainable businesses throughout rural Ireland to create more jobs over time. To date over 150 early stage female entrepreneurs have been supported with a range of demonstrable results including new jobs created.

“I was absolutely delighted as I know the very real difference the initiative is making to early stage female entrepreneurs in rural Ireland and I believe that this spotlighting will encourage policy makers in other European countries to consider doing something similar in their rural areas”

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Entrepreneurship Academy, Lithuania



Entrepreneurship Academy is a tool and education platform for the development of entrepreneurial competences and skills based on active experiential methods. It brings together a network of over 70 partners including youth groups, education institutions, business and city authorities, and other partners. Participating youth have a year to learn about local businesses and entities, and to utilise the three academy modules: Development of entrepreneurial competences, Entrepreneurship labs and Personal development programmes. Since 2015 more than 800 students and 300 schoolchildren have participated and over 260 creative workshops, seven public events and seven experiential camps have been organised within the project.

“It is a great honour for our project to be shortlisted in the top 3 in Europe in our category. It is not only a great joy to be recognised but also a huge responsibility to exceed all expectations. Our projects aim to help young people to reveal their strengths, liberate their creative thinking and thus enable them to overcome their fears”

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Improving the Business Environment - Winner

Recognises innovative policies at national, regional or local level which promote enterprise startup and growth, simplified legislative and administrative procedures for businesses and implementing the "Think Small First" principle in favour of small and medium-sized enterprises.



Open Innovation 4.0, Spain

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This public-private cooperation programme aims to improve the business environment of Asturias by: strengthening business leadership through technology; acceleration and growth of start-ups; reinforcement of business cooperation; encouraging the open innovation concept; and attracting investment. Selected start-ups join a 4.0 acceleration programme featuring both group and individual tutorials with sector experts. As well as obtaining initial funding to prepare joint proposals, they have access to specific funding for Open Innovation to implement collaborative projects. To date, 123 ideas and solutions have been presented with 14 going on to form companies that implement technical solutions.



"Designing and testing an innovative yet structured methodology for the development of Open Innovation is our goal and we are excited to be able to share this with Europe"

Runners-up

innovate TEES VALLEY

Anchoring economic growth in the Tees Valley, UK



This project has achieved significant results in helping the Tees Valley region overcome the loss of key industries. Working closely with public and private partners, particularly Tees Valley Combined Authority, the project, coordinated by Teesside University, has delivered targeted support that has seeded new enterprises and helped existing businesses in the Tees Valley to tackle the barriers to economic growth. The targeted support has been supplemented by University-provided expertise and talent, particularly in the areas of adopting digital technologies and innovation. Project results include 1446 university-business projects, growth of a technology business cluster and a stronger entrepreneurial culture.

"We were amazed and delighted to hear we had been shortlisted for this award – to get recognition at European level for Teesside University's work with business is an honour for the institution and all its staff, and a testament to the positive impact of European funding on our business agenda"

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StartUP Nation

Start up Nation Romania, Romania



This programme encourages the establishment and development of SMEs, and seeks to improve their economic performances, create new jobs and insert into the labour market disadvantaged persons, the long term unemployed and graduates. The programme has overseen increased investment in new innovative technologies, and as a result 21,000 new jobs have been created, of which more than 16,000 were for disadvantaged people. The programme has also facilitated SME access to finance and introduced electronic automation systems for business plan registration and company founding. The project activities also stimulated new trade register registrations, which increased by 28.98% in 2017.

"Start-Up Nation has unleashed the entrepreneurial spirit of young Romanians, so THIS is the right time for us to loudly and proudly announce our successful program to the rest of Europe"

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Supporting the Internationalisation of Business – Winner

Recognises policies and initiatives at national, regional or local level that encourage enterprises, particularly small and medium-sized businesses, to benefit more from the opportunities offered by markets both inside and outside the European Union.

Kasvu Open

Kasvu Open – company growth sparring programme, Finland

Contact: Mr Uljas Valkeinen
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Kasvu Open offers sparring to companies interested in growth, free of charge. The goal is to promote company growth and business development, thus improving the SMEs' chances of achieving international growth. Through sparring the companies' growth plans are challenged, adapted and supported by experts representing several different fields. The selected companies come from all industry sectors across Finland and receive access to expert networks. The experience also includes a tailored growth path, run by several partners who facilitate free participation at events, provide funded support for the participating SME and ultimately guide the enterprise in the right direction.

"We are deeply grateful and very excited about being shortlisted. Our team could not help sharing the good news and as a result we were given positive and encouraging feedback which culminated in two of our valued sponsors announcing a new category for Kasvu Open growth competition 2019: Investors' Choice with a whopping 1 million Euro funding for the selected growth company in 2019"



Runners-up



Development of the Estonian timber sector as the biggest exporter of wooden houses in the European Union, Estonia



The Estonian Wooden House Cluster has been working to become the largest wooden house exporter in the European Union, and aims to increase both the international competitiveness and exports of Estonian wooden house producers. Actions have included target market mapping, coordinated activities to support entry into the market, organised activities to promote producer products and competence building seminars and conferences. Results have included stable growth in sector turnover and exports, as well as raised awareness and preservation of traditional Estonian building practices. The initiative has also sustained many jobs and increased the value of products produced by the sector.

"The nomination of our project for the EEPA Awards shows that the on-going hard work in building up export markets of the Estonian timber building industry is also recognised on an international level and certainly motivates cluster members to continue their cooperation in the future and give their best in any field"

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Supporting the internationalisation and digitalisation of SMEs in Bulgaria and Europe, Bulgaria



This project facilitates both the internationalisation and digitisation of Bulgarian SMEs through the organisation of high profile events like a National Business Forum, a Balkan Conference and an International SME Summit, each of which typically involves over 200 SMEs from Bulgaria. The initiative also enables the participation of Bulgarian SMEs in international exhibitions and specially organised B2B matchmaking meetings, through which SMEs can meet and find clients, partners, investors and market opportunities. The project also proactively promotes the benefits of business digitisation through skills training and access to information and good practice examples.

"Wow, great! Thank you EEPA for your appreciation of our efforts, progress and success!"

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Supporting the Development of Green Markets and Resource Efficiency - Winner

Recognises policies and initiatives that support SME access to green markets and help to improve their resource efficiency



Matosinhos Carbon-zero Living Lab enhanced by local carbon market, Portugal

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The Matosinhos Carbon-zero Living Lab tests sustainable and innovative solutions, products and services to foster a local carbon market in an industrial coastal municipality. Local residents and businesses are encouraged to develop and propose projects, which are then implemented and made available for municipal use. The local carbon market uses CO2 emissions credits gained through the adoption of sustainable solutions such as bike sharing, sustainable lighting or artificial intelligence applied to building management. The credits can be exchanged for goods and green services and are an incentive for sustainability in the municipality, which previously had a high carbon footprint.

"It is an honour for our work on low carbon solutions for both businesses and citizens to be recognised on a European level, and we hope to keep spreading our ecological message"



Runners-up



HAS Food Experience, Netherlands



The HAS Food Experience, run by the HAS University of Applied Sciences, acts as launch platform for innovative projects in the food sector. This includes promising food concepts with social impact, and the further development of socially relevant projects in the food sector. The HAS Food Experience also works to stimulate innovation in food and profile start-ups and businesses established by HAS students. During the past 10 years, over 499 food projects have been presented at the HAS University College, and more than 40 promising concepts have become start-ups or entered the market, of which 80% are still successful.

"We are very happy with the EEPA 2018 nomination, because it is not only an international recognition for the HAS Food Experience project, but also for our students at HAS University of Applied Sciences and their projects that strive to create a healthier and more sustainable food system and that make a difference for the future of food"

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www.has.nl



Green bicycle, Slovakia



The Zelený bicykel project is a bicycle sharing system focusing on smaller cities in Slovakia that are uninteresting for large bike-sharing companies. The main objective is to provide citizens with an environmentally friendly, healthy and economical transportation alternative for shorter distances across their cities. The project also aims to educate citizens on leading a healthy active lifestyle and improve their overall quality of life and environmental consciousness. The initiative has also resulted in numerous partnerships with several institutions including secondary schools and businesses, ensuring extensive involvement across different demographics of the city communities.

"Amazing! We never expected our small regional project to be recognised at EU level"

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www.zelenybicykel.sk

Responsible and Inclusive Entrepreneurship - Winner

Recognises national, regional or local initiatives by authorities or public/private partnerships which promote corporate social responsibility among small and medium-sized enterprises, including efforts to promote entrepreneurship among disadvantaged groups such as the unemployed, especially long term unemployed, legal migrants, disabled people or people from ethnic minorities, considered the most creative and inspiring in Europe.



**ProjectTogether,
Germany**

Contact: Mr Ivo Degn
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Further information: www.projecttogether.org

ProjectTogether is a leading digital incubator for social start-ups. As the first contact for young founders of social projects, ProjectTogether identifies functioning approaches and builds bridges between the active young generation and social institutions in order to actively shape social development. The incubator empowers young founders by supporting and training them, but also by obliging them to play a decisive role in shaping our society. Project leaders receive digital coaching through webinars and an active online community of founders and experts, as well as access to networks to connect with government bodies, companies and foundations.



“Being recognised by EEPA means that ProjectTogether can continue with the important task of supporting and training young people to help them occupy prominent roles in our society”

Runners-up



**Laois Start Your Own
Business Programmes,
Ireland**



Laois Start Your Own Business Programmes cover the adaptation of mainstream training and mentoring programmes into pilot programmes to meet the needs of groups traditionally excluded from enterprise opportunities. Identified groups include older people, ex-prisoners, migrants and asylum seekers. The programme includes the first of its kind delivered in an asylum seeker provision centre, as well as similar programmes delivered in several prisons. Each programme is adapted to the audience and addresses the different challenges and circumstances faced by each group. Trainers are also specifically selected and trained so as to be relatable for participants.

“Our submission was based on the development of experimental pilot projects and being shortlisted for the EEPA was not only a huge boost but also an endorsement from Europe that we were taking the right approach with our work”

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www.localenterprise.ie/laois



**Initiative remarquable,
France**



The Remarkable Initiative operates within the ‘Initiative France’ network and specialises in loans that are interest-free and without a guarantee. These are granted in addition to local loans received by the entrepreneurs from the local ‘Initiative France’ platform. The interest-free loan increases the enterprise funds, facilitates access to bank funding and is repaid over a maximum of five years. It also comes with a mentoring and sponsorship plan established jointly between the entrepreneur and the local platform. The loan favours enterprises that combine job creation, economic success, innovation and responsible commitments to their local communities and environment.

“We were so happy at the announcement of the shortlist and felt very honoured to get this great European entrepreneurship recognition from the EEPA Jury!”

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initiative remarquable.com

Special Mentions

The EEPA Jury felt that this year a special mention should also be awarded to the following projects which have demonstrated best practices in the promotion of enterprise

Promoting the Entrepreneurial Spirit



Youth services cooperatives, France



Youth Services Cooperatives enable teenagers to find out about the world of business and learn the principles of cooperative entrepreneurship through maintaining their own enterprise over the course of a summer. By working within these real enterprises, these teenagers develop their skills and sense of initiative, learn to work together, find out about their local area and earn a small income. The programme also reinforces communal links, by offering services to residents and other enterprises, and intergenerational diversity. Since 2013 the project has involved 1500 young people across 60 geographical areas (12 regions) with the support of 600 mobilised partners.

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www.cooperer.coop/les-cooperatives-jeunesse-de-services

Investing in Entrepreneurial Skills



Succession in Germany, Germany



"Succession in Germany" (NiD) is a freely accessible, independent online platform on the subject of corporate succession. The platform makes knowledge and innovative tools on this topic available in a digital format, for direct practical use by those handing over and succeeding companies. Through increasing overall knowledge on SME succession, the initiative protects both existing jobs and companies. The platform also provides a common platform for those interested in succeeding or transferring a business. The site receives over 1,500 unique visits per week and is aimed equally at both potential transferors within a family or external parties.

Contact: Dr Birgit Felden
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Further information: www.emf-institut.org

Improving the Business Environment



Industry-Startup.Net, Austria



This initiative is a matchmaking service which pairs start-ups with corporates. It supports start-ups in their search for distribution channels, accelerated market access or access to strategic partners. Established companies offer what the startups seek - and in turn need innovation and momentum from the young entrepreneurs. So far 66 corporates and 111 start-ups have participated in this matching initiative, 931 cooperation offers have been prepared, and 118 letters of intent have resulted in 10 formal cooperations. The programme also has an international network, in which access to the programme is open to foreign participants and thus facilitates internationalisation of start-ups.

Contact: Mr Kurt Leutgeb
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Further information: www.aws.at

Responsible and Inclusive Entrepreneurship



Social Impact Award Serbia, Serbia



The Social Impact Award promotes the knowledge and practice of social entrepreneurship among youth. This is done by raising awareness through an educational program that guides students through the social venture process. The program gives them access to networks of peers and professionals and directly supports the most promising ideas. Through the program young people learn about social entrepreneurship as a career, develop the necessary skills to run a social enterprise, build a professional network and receive both funding and mentoring support. To date over 1200 young people have participated in workshops and 33 ventures have gone through the incubation process.

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Further information: www.razlivaliste.org

2018 National Winners

Promoting the Entrepreneurial Spirit

COUNTRY	PROJECT NAME	ORGANISATION NAME	PROJECT WEBSITE
BELGIUM	De Makersrepubliek: Handmade in Brugge, The Box en Turbo	Stad Brugge i.s.m. vzw De Korrelatie/ De Makersrepubliek	http://www.republiekbrugge.be
BULGARIA	Gabrovo Innovation Camp	Gabrovo municipality	www.gabrovo.bg
CROATIA	Sisak-Moslavina County – Center of The Gaming Industry	Development Agency of Sisak-Moslavina County SI-MO-RA d.o.o. in cooperation with Sisak-Moslavina County	www.simora.hr
CYPRUS	IDEA	Incubator Accelerator & Innovation Center	http://ideacy.net
ESTONIA	Superheroes	Metropolis MTÜ	http://superheroes.ee
FRANCE	Youth services cooperatives	Coopérer pour Entreprendre	https://www.cooperer.coop/les-cooperatives-jeunesse-de-services
GREECE	Piraeus Blue Entrepreneurship	Municipality of Piraeus	http://www.pireasnet.gr
LATVIA	Support for self-employment and business start-ups	Nodarbinātības valsts aģentūra ES fondu projekts „Jauniešu garantijas”	http://www.nva.gov.lv
LITHUANIA	Futurepreneurs	Sunrise Valley Science and Technology Park	http://ssmtp.lt
NETHERLANDS	Day for Change Actie	Stichting Day for Change	http://dayforchange.nl
POLAND	The "Małopolska" program - technology is becoming a business here	Małopolska Region Marshal's Office	http://www.businessinmalopolska.pl https://www.malopolska.pl
ROMANIA	Rubik Hub	ADR Nord-Est	www.adrnordest.ro
SWEDEN	JA Sweden – an entrepreneurial youth	JA Sweden	https://ungforetagsamhet.se
UK	Supporting Fife's Enterprise Journey	Fife Council	http://www.fifeconomypartnership.com

Investing in Entrepreneurial Skills

COUNTRY	PROJECT NAME	ORGANISATION NAME	PROJECT WEBSITE
AUSTRIA	i2c STARTacademy	TU Wien Innovation Incubation Center (i ² c)	https://i2c.ec.tuwien.ac.at
CROATIA	Budi Uzor®/Be The Role Model™	TERA Tehnopolis d.o.o.	www.tera.hr
CYPRUS	Bi-Communal Innovation Camp	Junior Achievement Cyprus	https://jacyprus.org
GERMANY	Succession in Germany (NiD)	Institute for Entrepreneurship, Medium-sized Businesses and Family Businesses (EMF) of the Berlin University of Economics and Law	https://emf-institut.org
HUNGARY	Team Academy Budapest	Budapest Business School University of Applied Sciences	https://uni-bge.hu
IRELAND	ACORNS – Accelerating the Creation of Rural Nascent Start-ups	Fitzsimons Consulting in association with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	www.acorns.ie
LITHUANIA	VERSLUMO AKADEMIJA	Vytautas Magnus University Centre For Enterprise Practices	http://www.verslopraktikos.lt
SLOVENIA	Practical entrepreneurial education in high schools	Institute for promoting the entrepreneurship of young people	www.jaslovenija.si
SWEDEN	Timbanken	Region Halland	www.regionhalland.se

2018 National Winners

Improving the Business Environment

COUNTRY	PROJECT NAME	ORGANISATION NAME	PROJECT WEBSITE
AUSTRIA	Industry-Startup.Net	Austria Wirtschaftsservice	www.aws.at
FINLAND	Kakola - from a Prison to an Entrepreneurial Base	Turku University of Applied Sciences and Kakola Group	www.turkuamk.fi
ICELAND	Electronic Company Register	Ríkisskattstjóri (Directorate of Internal Revenue)	www.rsk.is
ITALY	PLL – Local Plans for Employment	Regione Calabria	www.regione.calabria.it/webseite/organizzazione/dipartimento7
MALTA	Setting of a one-stop-shop customer care service to facilitate simplification for SMEs	Business 1st	www.businessfirst.com.mt
POLAND	Entrepreneur Package	Sosnowiec Commune	www.sosnowiec.pl
ROMANIA	Start-up Nation Romania	Ministerul pentru Mediul de Afaceri, Comerț și Antreprenoriat (MMACA)	www.aippimm.ro
SLOVAKIA	Better Regulation Center	Slovak Business Agency	www.lepsiezakony.sk
SPAIN	Open Innovation 4.0	IDEPA- Instituto de Desarrollo Económico del Principado de Asturias & Centro Europeo de Empresas e Innovación del Principado de Asturias – CEEI Asturias	https://www.idepa.es
UK	Anchoring economic growth in the Tees Valley	Teesside University	https://www.tees.ac.uk/sections/business

Supporting the Internationalisation of Business

COUNTRY	PROJECT NAME	ORGANISATION NAME	PROJECT WEBSITE
BULGARIA	Supporting the internationalization and digitalization of SMEs in Bulgaria and Europe	Association to support small and medium businesses - United Business Clubs	https://ubclubs.eu
DENMARK	Lean Landing	Væksthus Sjælland	www.vhsj.dk
ESTONIA	Development of the Estonian timber sector as the biggest exporter of wooden houses in the European Union	Estonian Woodhouse Association	www.puitmajaliit.ee
FINLAND	Kasvu Open – company growth sparring programme	Kasvu Open Oy	http://www.kasvuopen.fi
HUNGARY	Startup Budapest Programme	Budapest Foundation for Enterprise Promotion	www.bvk.hu
MALTA	Enabling the digital transformation of Maltese SMEs	GRTU – Malta Chamber of SMEs	www.grtu.eu
SLOVENIA	Innovative business model 2COUNTRY	2DOM, d.o.o.	http://www.2country.eu
SPAIN	Misión Inversa del Vino y la Alimentación	Federación De Empresas De La Rioja	www.fer.es
TURKEY	Cyberpark Accelerator Program (CAP): An Internationalization Pathway Business	Bilkent CYBERPARK	www.cyberpark.com.tr

2018 National Winners

Supporting the Development of Green Markets and Resource Efficiency

COUNTRY	PROJECT NAME	ORGANISATION NAME	PROJECT WEBSITE
NETHERLANDS	HAS Food Experience	HAS University College	www.has.nl
PORTUGAL	Matosinhos Carbon-zero Living Lab enhanced by local carbon market	Matosinhos Municipality in partnership with CEiiA - Centre of Engineering and Product Development	http://www.cm-matosinhos.pt
SERBIA	Rural HUB	Centre for Socially Responsible Entrepreneurship	www.ruralhub.rs
SLOVAKIA	Green bicycle	Zbrothers s.r.o. and Green Bicycle o.z.	https://www.zelenybicykel.sk
TURKEY	Izmir Eco-efficiency Program (IEP)	Izmir Development Agency	www.investinizmir.com

Investing in Entrepreneurial Skills

COUNTRY	PROJECT NAME	ORGANISATION NAME	PROJECT WEBSITE
BELGIUM	Z ² O, zelfsturend en zelfstandig ondernemen	GTB vzw	www.gtb.be
FRANCE	Initiative Remarquable	Initiative France	http://initiativeremarquable.com
GERMANY	ProjectTogether	ProjectTogether gUG	www.projecttogether.org
GREECE	Loutraki PLUS	Municipality of Loutraki, Perahora, Aghioi Theodoroi	http://www.loutraki-agioitheodoroi.gr
IRELAND	Laois Start Your Own Business Programmes	Local Enterprise Office, Laois	www.localenterprise.ie/laois
ITALY	Premio ER.RSI Innovatori responsabili. Le imprese dell'Emilia-Romagna per l'Agenda 2030	Regione Emilia-Romagna - Direzione Economia della Conoscenza, del Lavoro, dell'Impresa	http://imprese.regione.emilia-romagna.it
MONTENEGRO	Smart Start Montenegro – Hub for social entrepreneurship of civil society organizations (CSOs)	Institute for Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (IPER)	www.iper.org.me
PORTUGAL	The Re-food Movement	Re-food 4 Good – Associação in partnership with the Junta de Freguesia de Belém	hunter.halder@re-food.org
SERBIA	Social Impact Award Serbia	Razlivaliste	www.razlivaliste.org

Past Grand Jury Prize Winners

The European Enterprise Promotion Awards were launched in 2006. Since that time, there have been 93 category winners including one Grand Jury Prize Winner in each annual competition. Past Grand Jury Prize winners include:

2017 Innofest, Stichting Innofest, Netherlands

Innofest works with eight summer festivals in northern Netherlands as living labs for innovation, and provides a safe environment for entrepreneurs to test their prototypes before bringing them onto the market.

Innofest sees festivals as temporary mini societies, with their own set of challenges in the areas of water, food, logistics, energy and waste, among others. As contained environments, festivals offer a safe space where product testing results are measurable.

During the festivals, entrepreneurs are offered on-site support along with networking opportunities and follow-up guidance plus all the necessary support to successfully launch their ideas on to the market.



www.innofest.co

2015 Lisbon Micro-Entrepreneurship Lisbon Municipal Council, Portugal

Lisbon Micro-Entrepreneurship works to support responsible and inclusive entrepreneurship by providing a number of services including helping to develop business plans and advising on how to obtain funding. It was set up in 2013 with the aim of stimulating the city's economy and supporting company and job creation. The initiative is part of Lisbon Municipal Council's (LMC) global strategy to support entrepreneurship, bringing together public, private and local and national bodies with a local focus, enabling anyone to get support for projects in a range of fields, from the planning phase through to the first years of activity.



www.cm-lisboa.pt

2016 Entrepreneurial West Hisingen City of Gothenburg, district West Hisingen

Entrepreneurial West Hisingen supports the city district's reputation as a hub of opportunities and entrepreneurship. The project is divided into three parts:

- 1) Entrepreneurship in education, in which 20,000 pupils got to come up with an idea for their own book, write it, design, publish, market and display, and sell it at the largest book fair for children in Sweden.
- 2) Start your business, working with the University of Gothenburg and the Red Cross to pilot a startup course for newly arrived refugees with a business background in their home country.
- 3) Develop your business, a training programme covering areas including online marketing, sales and trade, business negotiations, branding, etc.



www.foretagsammavastrahisingen.se/

2014 Encouraging Business Start-ups by Mothers with Young Children Gazdagmami K. Gy.I, Hungary

Encouraging Business Start-ups by Mothers with Young Children helps mothers to acquire the entrepreneurial skills and mindset to start a business and make it profitable. The project delivers online resources including a blog, Facebook page, e-learning training programmes and a weekly newsletter, as well as the Entrepreneurial Women's Roundtable meeting to help mothers navigate the world of business and network with each other. The project also hosts the annual Mother Company of the Year competition and the Business Mums' Conference.



www.gazdagmami.hu

The Promoters of the European Enterprise Promotion Awards



The Assembly of European Regions (AER.eu) is the largest independent network of regions in wider Europe. Bringing together more than 270 regions from 33 countries and 16 inter-regional organisations, AER is the political voice of its members and a forum for inter-regional co-operation.

www.aer.eu

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions

The Committee of the Regions (CoR) in Brussels was established by the Maastricht Treaty in 1994 as a consultative body to provide representatives of local and regional government with a voice at the heart of the European Union.

<http://cor.europa.eu/Pages/welcome.html>



The European Association of Economic Development Agencies (EURADA) is a Europe-wide network of people working on economic development. EURADA has given a lead on a policy agenda including, amongst others, regional policy, small business finance (EURADA set up the European Business Angels Network), entrepreneurship and innovation.

www.eurada.org



EUROCITIES is the political platform for major European cities towards the EU institutions. We network the local governments of over 130 of Europe's largest cities and 40 partner cities that between them govern some 130 million citizens across 35 countries.

www.eurocities.eu



EUROCHAMBRES

EUROCHAMBRES is the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry. It represents over 20 million enterprises in Europe and a European network of 1,700 regional and local Chambers in 43 countries. More than 98% of these enterprises are small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

www.eurochambres.eu



SMEunited is the association of Crafts and SMEs in Europe with around 70 member organisations from over 30 European countries. SMEunited represents national cross-sectoral Craft and SME federations, European SME branch organisations and associate members. Combined, it represents more than 12 million enterprises with around 55 million employees across Europe. SMEunited is also a recognised employers' organisation and European Social Partner. They are a not-for-profit and non-partisan organisation.

<https://smeunited.eu/en>

The European Commission DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW)

Within the European Commission, the Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, works to provide a more favourable environment for European Business. It ensures that European Union policies contribute to the competitiveness of EU enterprises by encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation, maintaining and reinforcing a strong and high-performing industrial base, by stimulating investment in new technologies and easing access to markets and to finance. At the core of these policies are small and medium sized enterprises, as they are the principal providers of jobs and growth in Europe. DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs works with the business community to help develop innovative, competitive and responsible enterprise and with Member States to implement the Small Business Act for Europe.

http://ec.europa.eu/growth/index_en.htm

Your Europe Business Portal

Want to find out what the EU does to boost small businesses in Europe and on the global market, and what it can do for your business?

Your Europe Business is a multilingual single gateway to practical information on how to do business in the Single Market. It offers help to businesses and entrepreneurs who want to expand their activities to other EU or EEA countries. It provides practical information and links to national rules, authorities, helpdesks, and support services.

http://europa.eu/youreurope/business/index_en.htm

European Enterprise Promotion Awards

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http://europa.eu/youreurope/business/index_en.htm

<http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/support/enterprise-promotion-awards>



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