

WORKGROUP ON WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP FINAL DOCUMENT

Durres, 12 May 2015

Introduction

Meeting of the Workgroup on women's entrepreneurship was held as part of the 15th Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce on the 12th of May 2015 in Durres, Albania.

35 business women, women entrepreneurs and representatives of institutions from Italy, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania and Belgium participated in its work.

The Workgroup was coordinated by the new president of the CCE County Chamber Split, Katija Buličić, who invited everyone present for a minute of silence in order to pay tribute to her predecessor, the late Jadranka Radovanić, coordinator of this Workgroup since its beginning, the initiator of the Forum and its president for the last four mandates.

The theme of this year's Workgroup was "Clusters and networking in women entrepreneurship. Best practices and new opportunities in the new Adriatic Ionian Region context", and the key speaker was Mary Ann Rukavina Cipetić, director of GTF – Initiative for sustainable growth, Croatia.

Strategic guidelines

After the official recognition of the Adriatic and Ionian region in October 2014, the 15th Forum was dedicated to the subject of doing business in the new Adriatic and Ionian region, in particular the new development policies, strategies and tools for the development of SME's as well as clusters as a support mechanism for the regional SME's.

As a continuation to the Forum theme, the Workgroup for women's entrepreneurship worked on clusters in the women's entrepreneurship. After the introduction by Katija Buličić, the president of the CCE County Chamber Split and Brizida Hoxha, secretary general of the Chamber of Commerce Durres, **Tefta Demeti**, from the Albanian Ministry of Economic Development, Trade, Tourism and Entrepreneurship discussed in more detail the situation of women's entrepreneurship in Albania. 99% of companies in Albania are small and medium sized companies, and 28% of the total number of companies are managed or owned by women. Most women owned companies are in services – trade, tourism, professional services, while an insignificantly small number of them are in industry. In regards to the entrepreneurial climate, Albania has climbed from the 138th place in 2008 to the 68th place in 2015; therefore the aim is in creating an even more favourable climate for entrepreneurship activity. Cluster experiences are insufficient, poor and at the very beginning of their development, therefore this issue is extremely important for the work ahead.

Mary Ann Rukavina Cipetić has introduced all the participants to the first women's cluster of the Republic of Croatia named *Kolo* (each letter representing a Croatian word which in translation means: *How to strengthen the local environment*), bringing together 12 women owned companies, crafts and associations with a single goal of better marketing their products. It involves women entrepreneurs from the entire Croatia, and they do not have to be exclusively national but can also be regional. Rukavina Cipetić suggested a creation of a similar cluster on a regional level through which women entrepreneurs could launch their products easier through a common brand.

The participants were introduced to the functioning of a cluster through a presentation of **Marie-Noëlle Dick**, the ICT cluster manager of software.brussels, with 150 participating software companies, private and government supporting organisations, professionals and institutions.

Katija Buličić has announced the establishment of a women's incubator in the CCE County Chamber Split. This is a CCE initiative through which the County Chamber Split will ensure equipped offices for couple of start up women entrepreneurs, also training, and mentoring to help them start up and develop their entrepreneurial activity.



Claudia Samarelli from the Italian Unioncamere informed the participants of the situation in Italy, where since 1999 exists a Board for women's entrepreneurship at the Chambers of Commerce. Also Unioncamere has a register of companies owned or managed by women entrepreneurs and they have the possibility to track women entrepreneurs according to multiple criteria.

Reporting the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, **Željana Bevanda** stated there are three clusters in Bosnia and Herzegovina and none are women's, also that there is a legal framework for their establishment.

Nina Drakić stated that there are four clusters functioning successfully in Montenegro, also that there is a legal framework for their establishment, but the problem seems to be in the lack of trust among the subjects, potential cluster members. In Montenegro women entrepreneurs represent only 10% of the total number of entrepreneurs, and the Strategy for the development of the women's entrepreneurship 2015-2020 is being prepared. This should stimulate faster and easier economic empowerment of women; it should be adopted by the end of June this year.

During the second part of the meeting the president of the CCE County Chamber Pula **Jasna Jaklin Majetić** spoke of the Chamber's activities regarding strengthening of women in entrepreneurship, emphasizing the importance of including this, through various activities, into the priorities of the Chamber and other similar networks. She has also, same as the year before, invited women entrepreneurs from the region to participate at the HISTRIA exhibition of food and beverages, which is traditionally held in February each year in Pula and organized by the County Chamber Pula.

Albana Laknori from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Tirana spoke of various incentives for women entrepreneurs, especially start ups, by the Chamber of Tirana, **Satber Drishti** spoke in the name of the Association of business and professional women in crafts of Albania SHGPAZ, and **Klodiana Dragoshi** represented a young Association of women entrepreneurs from Tirana. **Maria Lucia Pilutti**, secretary general of the Chamber of Commerce Udine officially suggested the candidacy of the Chamber of commerce Udine as a host for the next, 9th Congress of women entrepreneurs.

After the presentations and a quality debate during which a clear desire was expressed to work together towards raising awareness regarding women's entrepreneurship and creating conditions for its development and growth, the following conclusions were adopted:

Conclusions

- Italian city of Udine was chosen to host the upcoming 9th Congress of women entrepreneurs of the Adriatic and Ionian area.
- Through the exchange of experience regarding clusters in different countries of the region a need was emphasized for collaboration with the local community with the aim of supporting the establishment of clusters. The development of clusters encounters numerous bureaucratic and administrative problems, both emphasized also in the area of women's entrepreneurship.
- As the necessity for mutual projects has been repeatedly emphasized, a need has been detected to create transnational clusters next to local ones. Therefore the Workgroup suggests that the Forum supports the next project on clustering at the Adriatic and Ionian level in regards to women's entrepreneurship. The Workgroup has shown that women in entrepreneurship lack knowledge, training and good practice; therefore specific proposals should be identified until the 9th Congress of women entrepreneurs where they should be presented and discussed further.
- Workgroup on women's entrepreneurship and the Chamber of Commerce network can and should give professional support to women in entrepreneurship through special training programs, innovation protection, organisation of business to business meetings, the search for new markets – fairs, as well as through their collaboration with other Associations of the Chamber network such as Ascame and Eurochambers.



FORUM

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Women's entrepreneurship
of Adriatic and Ionian Area

- An exchange of know-how has been arranged between the Italian Unioncamere and the countries with no continuous or reliable monitoring of data in regards to women's entrepreneurship. Namely, developing activities can only be planned based on reliable and accurate data.