



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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European Enterprise Award Winners 2013: Promising projects to kick-start new businesses

A unique Latvian initiative which aims to help micro-enterprises was announced today as the main winner of the 7th European Enterprise Promotion Awards. The *Think Small First* project promoted the creation of a special tax rate and simplified tax accounting system for microenterprises, making it cheaper and simpler for small companies to operate in Latvia. "Best in category" prizes were also won by projects from Finland, Ireland, Belgium, Portugal, Turkey and Slovakia. The Awards ceremony took place today in Vilnius, Lithuania as part of the [SME Assembly](#), the focus of [European SME Week](#).

European Commission Vice-President Antonio Tajani, Commissioner for Industry and Entrepreneurship commented: *"The latest information available shows that SMEs continue to form the backbone of the European economy, with around 21 million firms employing almost 87 million people and accounting for more than 99.8% of all enterprises. Promoting entrepreneurship and improving the business environment is therefore critical for Europe's continued growth and success. This is why we recognise the great work that the winners of the European Enterprise Promotion Awards do for micro, small and medium enterprises."*

[MEMO/13/1024](#)

For more information on the European Enterprise Promotion Awards, visit the [website](#), follow the Awards on Twitter in [English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#), [Italian](#) or [German](#) or visit the official Awards [Facebook page](#).

Listed according to category, the winners are:

Grand Jury Prize:

[Think Small First \(Latvia\)](#): The overall winning initiative, developed by the [Latvian Chamber Of Commerce and Industry](#) (LCCI), helped micro-enterprises by promoting the creation of a special tax rate and simplified tax accounting system, introducing a micro-credit programme and by making information about launching a business available in one place.

Promoting Entrepreneurial Spirit

[MyCity \(Finland\)](#): The MyCity learning entity, sponsored by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, is a miniature city, built from mobile wall elements, and includes 15 different local and regional enterprises and public services in which students can work.

Investment in Skills

Senior Enterprise (Ireland): [Senior Enterprise](#) is specifically designed to encourage a greater involvement with enterprise by those aged 50 and over and to raise awareness of their potential to start, acquire or invest in a business, or to become a volunteer mentor.

Improving the Business Environment

Starter's Agreement (Belgium): Entrepreneurs enter into an agreement with the City of Ghent to draft a business plan, appeal for professional advice and specialist guidance, and follow training and development courses.

Supporting the Internationalisation of Business

Portuguese Shoes (Portugal): The [APICCAPS](#), a national business association, with the support of the Compete Programme, has taken various measures to promote Portuguese footwear, including the development of a campaign symbol for Portuguese Shoes using the slogan *Portuguese Shoes: Designed by the Future*.

Supporting the Development of Green Markets and Resource Efficiency

The Town of Gürsu: Developing Unlimited Green Energy (Turkey): To increase the use of green energy in Gürsu, four innovative applications have been configured, tested and applied, including a photovoltaic solar energy plant and use of solar energy in all service areas.

Responsible and Inclusive Entrepreneurship

Integration of disadvantaged people (Slovakia): [AV mobilita s.r.o.](#), a sheltered workshop, specialises in integrating disabled people into all areas of life. It provides registered disabled citizens with employment and access to lifelong learning.

A full description including the impact of each initiative, as well as the full set of 19 entries that won the top prizes, were placed as runners-up or received a special mention can be found in [MEMO/13/1024](#).

Background

Since 2006, the European Enterprise Promotion Awards have rewarded public bodies and public-private partnerships who have shown excellence in promoting entrepreneurship and small businesses. Over 2 500 projects have entered during this time, and have supported the creation of well over 10 000 new companies. The Awards' objectives are to create a greater awareness of the role entrepreneurs play in European society and encourage and inspire potential entrepreneurs. This is achieved by identifying and recognising successful activities and initiatives to promote enterprise and entrepreneurship, and then showcasing and sharing examples of best entrepreneurship policies and practices.

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