



UNION EUROPEENNE DE L'ARTISANAT ET DES PETITES ET MOYENNES ENTREPRISES  
EUROPÄISCHE UNION DES HANDWERKS UND DER KLEIN- UND MITTELBETRIEBE  
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF CRAFT, SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES  
UNIONE EUROPEA DELL' ARTIGIANATO E DELLE PICCOLE E MEDIE IMPRESE

**UEAPME position paper on the Commission's Communication on Implementing  
the Community Lisbon Programme:  
Fostering entrepreneurial mindsets through education and learning**

UEAPME welcomes the publication of the Commission's Communication on *Fostering entrepreneurial mindsets through education and learning*. This issue is very important and UEAPME fully support the initiative to promote entrepreneurship at school. European crafts, small and medium enterprise organisations have been asking for education for entrepreneurship and promoting several initiatives already for a long time. Therefore, UEAPME is slightly disappointed that there is nothing really new in this proposal except the follow-up process for reviewing progress in policy development in this field.

An essential element to fostering entrepreneurial mindsets and releasing Europe's entrepreneurial potential culture is through appropriate education and learning, but this is not sufficient. Developing an entrepreneurial culture and an entrepreneurship spirit should be extended to the whole lifecycle and in particular should be not limited to the sole creation of businesses. Entrepreneurial mindset in general is essential to have a more pro-active attitude at work, to bring more innovation and to foster creativity.

In that sense, it is clear that we have to start from the school, but not to limit it to the actions in the education field. More should be done outside of the education field. Nevertheless, in order to promote entrepreneurship and to make the future generation aware of an orientation towards self-employment, it is of utmost importance to teach about entrepreneurship already in the primary schools. So far, education is not very creative on this issue. Contact with entrepreneurship comes at a too late stage, if it comes at all.

The whole educational system should support the development of awareness and skills necessary for developing an entrepreneurial mindset and skills. Entrepreneurship training (in the broad sense) should be part of a school's curriculum, by e.g. getting entrepreneurs into the classroom. Also the image that is given of entrepreneurs, when they are represented, in the school manuals is rarely positive and often caricatural. This should be changed urgently.

The image of entrepreneurs should appear more often in the school manuals, and running of business should be illustrated as a possible pathway for many young people.

UEAPME appreciates that the Commission finally recognises that more entrepreneurial spirit is needed in the European education and training systems. This recognition is also reflected in the European Commission's proposal for a

*recommendation for key competences in lifelong learning proposed*<sup>1</sup>, where “entrepreneurship” has been defined as one of the key competences for lifelong learning.

Another shortcoming of this communication is that it fails to recognize the strong role of business organisations in developing an entrepreneurial mindset and skills. Many of the initiatives mentioned as good practices by the Commission, are indeed best practices undertaken at national level as a result essentially of the UEAPME’s member organisations work, which is not sufficiently recognised in the Commission communication.

Furthermore, the Commission agrees that all these initiatives need financial support, however at the same time there is no EU programme which could support those measures and the Commission fails to present concrete new initiatives here.

Finally, it is very disappointing that the representative of crafts, small and medium sized enterprises in Europe, has not been consulted by the Commission at an earlier stage to give its input in drafting this communication. This ignores the Commissions promise to consult the representative SME organisations and social partners before publishing new documents on topics affecting businesses.

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<sup>1</sup> COM(2005)548 final