



Celebrating 25 Years of  
the **RENT** Conference

25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

# RENT Conference



Celebrating 25 Years of the  
RENT Conference

# Table of Contents

Welcome from the President of ECSB .....	3
Welcome from EIASM.....	5
Welcome from the President of ICSB .....	6
European Council for Small Business and Entrepreneurship .....	8
European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management .....	10
Past Presidents of ECSB .....	12
Research in Entrepreneurship and Small Business	
- The RENT Conference .....	21
RENT – Stories from the Past.....	28
ECSB Fellows .....	33
ECSB Board of Directors.....	35
ECSB Country Vice-Presidents .....	38
ECSB Secretariat .....	40
ECSB Special Interest Groups (SIGs) .....	41
European Council for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ECSB)	
Interview with Thomas Cooney for “International Innovation” .....	45

# Welcome from the President of ECSB



Dear Colleagues,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to this publication celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the RENT Conference. When the conference was originally staged in 1987, the first organisers could hardly have imagined that their exciting initiative would grow to become one of the leading conferences internationally on the topics of entrepreneurship and small business. Indeed, it is also unlikely that they would have envisaged the manner in which entrepreneurship has become such a central concern of governments across Europe at this time. We now take this opportunity to salute those people who had the vision and courage to organise the early conferences and it is only right that we recognise their entrepreneurial endeavours within this booklet.

While the early conferences were smaller in nature than those that are now hosted, the original philosophy of hosting intimate gatherings where high-quality research could be critically discussed amongst colleagues is still fervently followed. The notion of restricting the attendance to an upper limit of 250-275 delegates has been protected for many years as this enables the delicate balance between engaging learning experiences and informality to flourish. However, this focus on quality has not impeded ECSB and EIASM from continually introducing new contributions to the conference as the Doctorial Consortium, Post Doctoral Workshop, Policy Forum, Case Writing Workshop and Live Internet Streaming have demonstrated. This ability to mix new ideas with old favourites, esteemed colleagues with young researchers, and business with pleasure has been one of the constant hallmarks of the RENT Conference.

As you read through this booklet, I ask you to please remember the enormous commitment that has been given to this conference by EIASM, ECSB, various Local Organising Committees and the vast army of

people whom you will never know, but whose generosity of time and spirit has enabled the RENT Conference to become the wonderful event of which we are all now so very proud. You belong to a community which has built an excellent reputation over a relatively short period of time and we have been given a legacy which we must always seek to enhance. To those who have gone before, we humbly acknowledge your wonderful contribution to the RENT Conference and to the fantastic inheritance that you have given us.

Yours sincerely,

Thomas M. Cooney.

# Welcome from EIASM



Dear Colleagues,

Twenty five years ago, back in 1987, EIASM launched the RENT Conference. The conference, chaired by Professor Rick Donckels, attracted 47 delegates. Then, in the second year, the conference was run with the cooperation of the ECSB. Over the years, that co-operation has grown more and more intense, to a point where the partnership between both organisations has led to the development of a dynamic network. It is precisely on a series of networks and activities, managed through a set of smaller networks, that the Institute's structure is based upon. Each network has evolved, loosely tied more or less to the others.

These connections are at the foundation of the activities of the Institute:

- To develop and to sustain collaborative networks of management researchers and scholars active in scientific research in management sciences and its applications that will promote, disseminate and stimulate high quality scientific research in the field in Europe;
- To organise conferences, seminars and workshops on both state-of-the-art and path-breaking scientific research;
- To encourage and to facilitate the initiation and the co-ordination of joint scientific research in management sciences led by outstanding researchers;
- And to enhance the development and the quality of doctoral student education in the field of management within universities and institutions of higher learning in Europe.

On behalf of the EIASM, best wishes to the RENT network and to all its members. We look forward to the next 25 years.

Best Regards,

Nicole Coopman,

Administrative Director EIASM.

# Welcome from the President of ICSB



Dear Colleague,

It is an honour for me as President of the global affiliates of ICSB to have the opportunity to congratulate you on the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of your conference. The European Council for Small Business (ECSB) is one of the oldest affiliates within the ICSB network and has since its inception contributed very positively to the development of the global organisation. Indeed, over the years, we have had many ECSB members being active members of the Board of ICSB and also becoming President of the organisation.

ECSB is now the second largest affiliate within ICSB and it has consistently been a leader in terms of developing membership benefits. In recent times, it has led the way with the introduction of Webinars, live streaming of keynote speeches from its conference, building case studies materials, the development of young researchers through the Inter-RENT process (now replicated at global level through ICSB) and by reaching out to affiliates across the globe to share its learning experiences. ECSB is a significantly valuable member of the world body and it continues to enhance what is being achieved at a more global level.

But I would not like this opportunity to pass without also highlighting the benefits that ICSB brings to ECSB. Each person who becomes a Member of ECSB automatically also becomes a Member of ICSB. As part of this world network, individuals can gain free access to a database of over 2,000 people across more than 80 countries, have the opportunity to attend major international events and purchase specified journals at reduced prices and the ability to access a wide range of resources specifically designed to enhance the work of teachers and researchers. The relationship between ICSB and ECSB has proven to be extremely fruitful for all involved and we look forward to this positive interaction continuing for many years ahead.

In closing, I hope that you enjoy your celebrations and may I congratulate you in achieving such a remarkable milestone in the history of any organisation. We have enjoyed being part of the journey with you and I wish you long and continued success.

Best Wishes,

Don Bradley.

# European Council for Small Business and Entrepreneurship



The European Council for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ECSB) is a not-for-profit organisation whose main objective is to advance the understanding of entrepreneurship and to improve the competitiveness of SMEs in Europe. This volunteer organisation is designed to foster entrepreneurship and promote business growth in free enterprise systems as a means of job creation and to stimulate economic growth in Europe. ECSB facilitates the creation and distribution of new knowledge through research, education and the open exchange of ideas between professions and across national and cultural borders.

ECSB was officially inaugurated on 19 September 1988, with 162 members at that time. Professor *Josef Mugler* was its first president, heading the organisation from 1988 until 1991. Alongside him, the first board consisted of *Allan Gibb* (UK), *Dieter Ibielski* (Germany), *Jean-Jacques Obrecht* (France) and *Hans Jobst Pleitner* (Switzerland) and country vice-presidents for Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Turkey. Today, the network of ECSB's members covers nearly the entire geographic region of Europe; it has over 500 members with country vice-presidents in 38 countries. While ECSB is a European organisation, it is also an affiliate of the global International Council for Small Business (ICSB) network. Through this affiliation, since 1989, the European network is connected to the global academic and professional small business community. ECSB brings together educators, researchers, policy makers and practitioners to share knowledge and expertise in their respective fields. In particular, ECSB organises high-quality conferences (such as the Research in Entrepreneurship and Small Business (RENT) annual conference in co-operation with EIASM) in order to facilitate and enhance the exchange of knowledge within the ECSB membership.

Given that the world is experiencing challenging economic times, it is the belief of the ECSB that entrepreneurship educators and researchers must be counted amongst those who are willing to contribute to helping Europe and its individual nations finding better days. In many different ways, entrepreneurship educators and researchers are well-placed to support the renewal of economies across Europe and through their experience and expertise entrepreneurship educators can help rebuild and reshape tomorrow's exciting new world.

# European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management



**EIASM**, the **E**uropean **I**nstitute for **A**dvanced **S**tudies in **M**anagement is an international network for management research and teaching that includes more than 40,000 management scientists from all over the world. Since its foundation in 1971, the European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management (EIASM) has dedicated itself to raising the profile of European Management Research with respect to other established scientific disciplines as well as the business world. The overall mission of EIASM is to be a key actor in enhancing the role of advanced studies in management in Europe.

This means that **EIASM** has the purpose:

- To strengthen European management research in general
- To encourage and facilitate the initiation and the co-ordination of joint scientific research in management led by outstanding European researchers
- To stimulate the interaction between management scholars in Europe
- To enhance the development and the quality of doctoral student education in the field of management in Europe

In order to fulfill its mission **EIASM**:

- Develops and sustains collaborative networks of European management scholars
- Organises conferences, seminars and workshops on both state-of-the-art and path-breaking scientific research

- Offers doctoral seminars and other activities to strengthen the education of a new generation of European management scholars

EIASM - the European "Network of Networks for Researchers and Doctoral Students in Management" <http://www.eiasm.org>

# Past Presidents of ECSB



**Professor Josef Mugler,  
Austria (1988-1991)**

Josef Mugler (right) studied at the Vienna University of Economics and Business, where he finished his diploma study in 1969 and his doctoral study in 1972 (Doctorate of Commercial Sciences). From 1970-71 he filled a position in the Planning Department of the City Administration of Vienna. From 1972-1982 he was Assistant Professor at Vienna University of Economics and Business and from 1980-81 Visiting Professor at the University of Innsbruck, Austria. From 1982-2010 he was Full Professor at the Vienna University of Economics and Business and Head of the Institute of Small Business Management and Entrepreneurship. From 1988-91 he was the first President of the newly established European Affiliate (ECSB) of the International Council for Small Business (ICSB). In this position he organized the 36<sup>th</sup> ICSB World Conference in Vienna, the first one outside the American continent. He received two national awards: the “Kardinal Innitzer Foerderungspreis” in 1979, and the “Rudolf Sallinger Ehrenpreis” in 1987. Among his international awards is the membership of the Wilford White Fellows (since 1991) and the Honorary Presidency of the MER Eurocenter in Maribor, Slovenia (since 2000). He has been a member of numerous international and national organizations, and of the editorial boards of numerous international and national journals. He published more than twenty books and some hundred articles. Josef Mugler retired on 30 September 2010.



**Professor Jean-Jacques Obrecht,  
France (1991-1993)**

Jean-Jacques Obrecht was the president of ECSB between the years 1991-93. He was chairman of the ICSB 39th Annual World Conference, Strasbourg, 1994 (Small Business and its contribution to regional and international development). Presently he is Professor Emeritus at the University of Strasbourg and honorary professor at the National Institute of Business Administration of Antananarivo, Madagascar. His current field of research interest is entrepreneurial capabilities as contributors to local sustainable entrepreneurship.



**Professor Joop Vianen, Netherlands  
(1993-1995)**

Joop Vianen lecturers in Innovative Entrepreneurship and Small Business Economics/ Management and is the Coordinator of the Program for Leadership Development of Excellent Students at the Faculty of Economics and Business of Tilburg University, the Netherlands. In the past he has worked as researcher/consultant at Erasmus University in Rotterdam, United Nations and the Netherlands Economic Institute. He has extensive experience on boards of directors, including the Economic Institute for

Small and Medium sized Enterprises (Netherlands) and the Royal Tropical Institute. Moreover, he is former president of the European Council Small Business and the European Network for Small Business Research. Joop also has extensive experience in training entrepreneurs and as a policy consultant in many countries worldwide.



**Professor Mike Scott, United Kingdom  
(1995-1997)**

Professor Michael Scott was Professor of Entrepreneurship at the University of Stirling from 1987 to 1998. He was the first Professor of Entrepreneurship in Scotland. He directed the Scottish Enterprise Foundation from small beginnings in 1987 to its position in the 1990s as one of the world's leading Entrepreneurship Centres. He was President of the ECSB (1995-1997) and a pioneer of the RENT conference, now one of Europe's leading entrepreneurship research conference. His research into graduate entrepreneurship, long term entrepreneurial life cycles and habitual entrepreneurship remains influential, and several of his PhD students and colleagues hold senior academic posts internationally. Michael's untimely death was a very sad occasion for the organisation and he is still very much missed by his colleagues.



**Professor José Veciana, Spain  
(1997-1999)**

Jose founded the European Doctoral Programme (EDP) in Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management in 1989 and has been the programme's director since its inception. He was also the editor of several special issues of journals on entrepreneurship, including *Revista Económica de Catalunya*, *Revista Europea de Dirección y Economía de la Empresa*, etc. Jose organised and chaired the doctoral seminars in entrepreneurship in connection with RENT, and indeed hosted the RENT conference in Barcelona in 1992 and 2002. He also authored and co-authored several books and articles on entrepreneurship. Jose sadly passed away in 2009 and at the time of his death he was Emeritus Professor at the UAB, a Member of the Editorial Review Board of the *International Entrepreneurship and Development Journal*, the Honorary president of the Entrepreneurship Chapter of ACEDE (Spain) and a Wilford L. White Fellow of the International Council for Small Business.



**Professor Hans Landström, Sweden  
(1999-2001)**

Hans Landström attained his PhD in Industrial Management at Lund Institute of Technology in Sweden. Since 2001 he holds a Chair in Entrepreneurship at Lund University and he is Visiting Professor at Vienna University of Economics and Business in Austria. He is the founder of

Sten K. Johnson Centre for Entrepreneurship at Lund University, and responsible for programmes and courses in entrepreneurship at the university. His research interest includes entrepreneurial finance, informal and institutional venture capital, entrepreneurial learning and teaching, and the history of entrepreneurship research. He has published in journals such as *Journal of Business Venturing*, *Entrepreneurship Theory and*

*Practice, Small Business Economics, Entrepreneurship and Regional Development* and *Journal of Small Business Management*. In 1992-1997 he was chairman of the ECSB Research Committee, 1993-2003 member of the Executive Committee, 1999-2001 President of ECSB, and in 2010 he was awarded 'Fellow of ECSB'.



**Professor Hans Crijns, Belgium  
(2001-2003)**

Hans is Ernst & Young professor Entrepreneurship and Growth Management and chairman of the Center for Entrepreneurship at Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School. He is also managing director and co-founder of the 'Impulscentrum Groeimanagement voor Middelgrote Ondernemingen' (iGMO) at Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School. Hans lectures in Entrepreneurship, Business Planning and Growth Management on the MBA and advanced Master programmes in the school. Furthermore, he lectures on various Executive Programmes and works with professional services organisations. Hans is Visiting Professor at the University of Ghent (1998-2011), the National Institute for Management Pnom Phen, Cambodia (2004, 2005), Higher Institute of Business Administration, Damascus, Syria (2007) and USB Stellenbosch, South Africa (2011). He is co-founder and board member of ACE (Academie pour la Croissance des Entreprises; co-founder and board member of FID (Flanders Idea); co-founder of Vlerick BAN (the first Business Angels Network in Belgium; co-founder WOMED Award (Award Female Entrepreneurship in Belgium and the South); founder and chair of the Forum Entrepreneurs for the Developing World (2009); and co-Founder and member of the board of De Academie, the Netherlands. Hans has

authored various publications in the field of entrepreneurship, family business and growth.



**Professor Antti Paasio, Finland (2003-2005)**

Antti Paasio is Professor of Entrepreneurship and Business Administration at University of Turku, School of Economics. He is also a Director of Business and Innovation Development (BID) at University of Turku. Antti has been attached to ECSB from the beginning of its history: as one of the Founding Fathers in 1988, Country VP until 2001, President-Elect 2001-2003, President 2003-2005, Past-President 2005-2007 and again a member of the Board of Directors until November 2011. Lately his areas of responsibility in the Board of Directors have been related to corporate affairs. During his presidency the Secretariat of ECSB was established in Turku, where it still resides. His major contributions to ECSB include the creation and development of professional management and communication processes, stabilising its economic prerequisites and the establishment of a permanent Secretariat.



**Professor David Smallbone, United Kingdom (2005-2007)**

David Smallbone is Professor of Small Business and Entrepreneurship and Associate Director of the Small Business Research Centre at Kingston University. He is also Visiting Professor in Entrepreneurship at the China University of Geosciences in Wuhan, China and an Associate Editor of the Journal of Small Business

Management. He is Immediate Past President of ICSB. David has been a member of ECSB since 1994, a member of the Board of Directors 2001-9 and President from 2005-7. In 2009, David was elected a Fellow of ECSB, which brings with it lifetime membership. His contribution to ECSB has included editing four volumes of selected papers from RENT (with others); convening a policy forum in Budapest; contributing to doctoral workshops; and strengthening links with ICSB.



**Professor Friederike Welter, Germany  
(2007-2009)**

Friederike Welter is professor and Associate Dean for Research at Jönköping International Business School, Sweden, which she joined in October 2008. From 1993-2006, she worked in the Rhine-Westphalia Institute for Economic Research; from 2005-2008 at the University of Siegen, Germany. She is affiliated to the Small Business Research Centre at Kingston University, UK, and holds the TeliaSonera Professorship for Entrepreneurship at SSE Riga, Latvia. Her main research interests are entrepreneurial behaviour in different contexts, women's entrepreneurship; and support policies. Friederike is on the review board of several leading entrepreneurship journals and associate editor of *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice*.



**Dr Thomas M. Cooney, Ireland  
(2009-2011)**

Thomas Cooney is Academic Director of the Institute for Minority Entrepreneurship (DIT), and a Research Fellow at the Dublin Institute of Technology. He is the current President of the European Council for Small Business (2009-2011), a member of two European Commission Expert Groups, Visiting Professor at the University of Turku (Finland), a Board Member of IRCSET (Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology), a Board Member of INTRE (Ireland's Network of Teachers and Researchers in Entrepreneurship), and President Elect of ICSB (International Council for Small Business). He has researched, presented, and published widely on the topic of entrepreneurship, including five books. Further information is available from his website [www.thomascooney.com](http://www.thomascooney.com).



**Professor Luca Landoli, Italy,  
President Elect 2011**

Luca Landoli is an Associate Professor of Business and Economics at the School of Engineering, University of Naples Federico II (Italy) and Visiting Professor at the International Doctorate in Entrepreneurship and Management, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain). His research activities and interests span Innovation, Learning, and collaboration in organisational systems and networks of small firms. He has been a Fulbright Research Visitor at the Center for Collective

Intelligence, MIT, where he is involved in a research project about the development of online platforms able to support collaboration and distributed decision-making in virtual communities, teams and networks. He has published many papers on the analysis of collaborative dynamics and innovation generation in firms' networks and industrial districts. He is a Board member and President Elect of ECSB, the largest European academic association on entrepreneurship and small business management research.

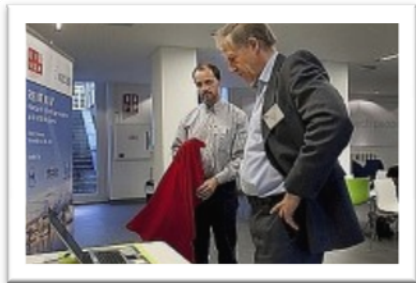
# Research in Entrepreneurship and Small Business

## The RENT Conference

The Research in Entrepreneurship and Small Business (RENT) conference is organised every year by EIASM in co-operation with ECSB. The practical arrangements are undertaken by EIASM and the local organisers, while ECSB supports the scientific organisation of the conference and promotes the conference throughout Europe. The conferences have covered a variety of topics in the field of entrepreneurship and small business. The papers have dealt with, for example, Structures in Small Enterprises, SMEs in Developing and Transition Countries, Problems of Financing in SMEs, Growth and SMEs, Women in Entrepreneurship, Teaching Entrepreneurship and Training in Management in SMEs. The 25th RENT conference will highlight the interplay between the entrepreneur, the entrepreneurial firm and the society as the theme for the conference is *“Entrepreneurial Business and Society”*. Included in this theme are topics such as entrepreneurship and regional development, entrepreneurial finance and venture capital, high tech entrepreneurship, university spin-offs, entrepreneurship and gender, social entrepreneurship, family firms, international entrepreneurship and clean technology.

The RENT conference is widely considered the premier research conference in Europe on entrepreneurship and small business. It annually brings together more than 200 leading academics in the field. The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference is being hosted by Bodo Graduate School of Business and Nordland Research Institute at the University of Nordland in Bodo, Norway. The previous 24 conferences that have been hosted in various European locations and details of some of the more recent conferences are outlined below.

#### RENT XXIV, 2010 in Maastricht, the Netherlands



The main theme for the conference was *"The Entrepreneurial Process in a Changing Economy"*. The annual Jose Maria Veciana Best Paper Award went to Mario Geissler, Stefan Jahn, Cornelia Zanger from Chemnitz University of Technology, Germany for their paper *"Entrepreneurial Opportunities and Their Interplay with Entrepreneurial Intention Creation: An Empirical Study"*.

#### RENT XXIII, 2009, in Budapest, Hungary

The main theme for the conference was *"Entrepreneurial Growth of the Firm"*. The Best Paper Award, which was named after the first Fellow of ECSB, professor José Veciana, who sadly passed away in the autumn of 2009, was jointly awarded to two papers: the awards went to Franziska Günzel and Helge Wilker for their paper *"Patterns in Business Models: A Case Survey"*, and to Faems Dries, Fleur Lamers and Klaasjan Visscher for their paper *"Exploration Patterns in Gazelle Firms: A Multiple Case Study in the Internet Technology Industry"*.

RENT XXII, 2008, in Covilhã, Portugal



The theme for the conference was *“Entrepreneurship as an Engine for Regional Development”*. The Best Paper Award went to Nicola Breugst, Tobias Kollmann and Carina Lomberg from University of Duisburg, Essen, Germany, on their paper *“Filling the situational vacuum of the trait approach – entrepreneurial intentions in experimentally manipulated situations”*.

RENT XXI, 2007, in Cardiff, UK



The theme for the conference was *“Entrepreneurship and small business development – making the difference in local, regional and national economies”*. The Best Paper Award went to Francisco Jose Saez-Martinez and Angela Gonzalez-Moreno from University of Castilla, La Mancha, Spain, on their paper *“Cooperation with Universities and Research Institutions for Corporate Entrepreneurship Activities in Low- and Medium-Technology Industries”*.

## RENT XX, 2006, in Brussels, Belgium



The main theme for the RENT XX was *“Entrepreneurship: a driver for sustainable growth in a global and knowledge-based environment”*. The winner of the Gate2Growth Best Paper was Piva Evila, Massimo Colombo and Diego D’Adda from Politecnico di Milano, Italy, on their paper *“When do university-based knowledge spillovers influence the growth of new-technology-based-firms?”*

## RENT XIX, 2005, in Naples, Italy



The main theme and slogan for RENT XIX was: *“Entrepreneurship, Competitiveness and Local Development”*. Two Best Papers were chosen in 2005. The awards went to Jonas Gabrielsson and Diamanto Polis from Lund University, Sweden on their paper *“Prediction or Control? Exploring the Influence of Career Experience and Career Motives on Entrepreneurial*

*Decision Making"* and to Frits H. Wijnbenga (Durham Business School, U.K.), Theo J.B. Postma (University of Groningen, the Netherlands) and Rebecca Stratling (Durham Business School, U.K.) on their paper *"The influence of the venture capitalist's governance activities on the entrepreneurial firm's control systems and performance"*.

RENT XVIII, 2004, in Copenhagen, Denmark



The main theme and slogan for RENT XVIII was: *"Managing Complexity and Change in SMEs"*. The winners of the special LOK Research Centre Award were Ted Fuller from Teesside Business School, University of Teesside, U.K. and Lorraine Warren from Institute of Entrepreneurship, University of Southampton, U.K. for their paper *"Complex Explanations of Order Creation, Emergence and Sustainability as Situated Entrepreneurship"*.

## RENT XVII, 2003 in Lodz, Poland



The theme for RENT XVII was focused around the development of the theory of entrepreneurship and studies of small business behaviour and economics for the European economy. 85 papers were submitted and accepted to the conference.

Prior to the conference in Lodz, the RENT I – XVI conferences took place in the following locations throughout Europe from 1987 to 2002:

RENT XVI	2002	in Barcelona, Spain
RENT XV	2001	in Turku, Finland
RENT XIV	2000	in Prague, Czech Republic
RENT XIII	1999	in London, UK
RENT XII	1998	in Lyon, France
RENT XI	1997	in Mannheim, Germany
RENT X	1996	in Brussels, Belgium
RENT IX	1995	in Piacenza, Italy
RENT VIII	1994	in Tampere, Finland
RENT VII	1993	in Budapest, Hungary
RENT VI	1992	in Barcelona, Spain
RENT V	1991	in Vaxjö, Sweden
RENT IV	1990	in Durham, UK
RENT III	1989	in Cologne, Germany
RENT II	1988	in Vienna, Austria
RENT I	1987	in Brussels, Belgium

## **Purpose of RENT Conference**

The annual RENT Conference of ECSB and EIASM brings together participants from many geographical locations, with a desire to further the effectiveness of the business owner and manager in the management and development of small business enterprises. The mix of participants for the conference is academics, researchers, practitioners, policy makers, and government personnel. The goal of each annual conference is to provide each attendee with an opportunity to participate in and share experiences about their research and practice.

## **Basic Organisational Structure**

The normal structure for the RENT conference is a two day conference with plenary and concurrent sessions. A Scientific Committee (comprising of 4 representatives from ECSB and 4 representatives from EIASM) helps with the review process in order to ensure the high level of scientific quality of RENT; a Local Organising Committee is designated to help the three institutions (ECSB, EIASM, Local Organiser) involved with all of the preparatory work for the conference. The Chairperson for the conference is a designated member of the Local Organising committee.

# RENT – Stories from the Past

**Professor Odd Jarl Borch, Bodo Graduate School of Business, University of Nordland**

In November 2011 the celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the RENT-conference takes place at the newly established University of Nordland in Bodo, Norway. The new university of Nordland was officially opened by the Norwegian Crown Prince Haakon and the Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg in the Summer 2011. It is a very symbolic event to have our colleagues from the RENT-network as our guests after this grand university opening. The ECSB and the RENT- conference has contributed significantly to our success, and their development has run in parallel with our university. All ventures have to a significant degree turned out to be entrepreneurial and successful. The entrepreneurship and small business research in Bodo started in the beginning of the eighties, and has been one of the main pillars in the creation of our new university. I think I am correct when I claim that the RENT-conference has been our most important international arena for scientific discussion. It started when the Nordland Regional College was only ten years old. As a dwarf in the field compared with our two larger counterparts; the business schools in Bergen and Oslo, we faced a lot of skepticism from the establishment on how to meet the demands for scientific quality. Facing these challenges we had to be niche oriented. Our main research theme became small business and entrepreneurship research, at that time an almost non-existing research field in Norway. This was an area of research where we, among others, could serve the many small-business based industries of Norway. To create a superior scientific environment, provide doctoral education and a benchmark for the necessary quality and dynamism we needed an international network. At first our Nordic friends was close at hand, and we were welcomed to the newly established and informal meeting place-the Nordic Small Business conference. In 1989 we were invited by Joseph Mugler to be the ECSB country representative for

Norway and under Professor Mugler's eminent leadership we had significant support for the development of the small business research field in Norway. The RENT Conference gave us the perfect arena for paper presentation and integration into the European research community. Today we are extremely glad to be a part of the ECSB community and we are dedicated to its prosperity and growth. We congratulate ECSB with the RENT 25 year anniversary!

**Professor Hans Crijns, Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School, Belgium**

I attended for the first time the RENT conference in 1994, it was in Tampere. I was overwhelmed by the variety and sometimes by the quality of presentations and research papers. I was honored by the opportunity to meet with entrepreneurship pioneers like Alan Gibb, José Veciana, Roy Thurik, Bengt Johannisson and to meet with new talents from all over Europe, I remember being blown away by Frederic Delmar's presentation on a taxonomy of growth firms. I could not believe that there were other people as enthusiastic as myself to learn about these issues. And that you could grasp all this in one event...The feeling never disappeared. I never missed a single conference since then, 16 in a row! A journey from Naples to Turku, from Budapest to Cardiff. Can you imagine how proud I was to be elected ECSB president in 2001 and to host in 2006 the RENT XX in Brussels, where it all began in 1987, as I was told by Gerry Van Dyck, Rik Donckels and Graziella Michelante. In the nineties we were glad to have 50 participants, in recent editions it was over 200! And all this because of the strong partnership between EIASM and ECSB! Most important for me is that RENT has become a meeting platform for young and old, tall and small, East and West, on a European journey in recent entrepreneurship research. A true network for people sharing the same passion!

**Asko Miettinen, Professor emeritus, Tampere University of Technology**

A letter was sent to the Board of EIASM on April 17, 1986. It was signed by Rik Donckels of UFSAL and myself of Helsinki School of Economics (then on leave and working for EIASM) with a suggestion to

organise a workshop around recent research on entrepreneurship in Europe. It was well-known that there are a number of related annual or biannual conferences and seminars in this area already established such as Rencontres de St. Gall (since 1948), ICSB World Conference (since 1956), EFMD Small Business Seminar (since 1971), the Nordic Conference on Small Business (since 1980) and the Babson College – Kauffman Foundation Entrepreneurship Research Conference (since 1981). The initiators had contacts among European researchers with positive reactions and talked in advance to Director Herman Daems and Programme Manager Gerry van Dyck of EIASM to test the idea. The letter further noted that “the idea is based on an argument that there is a need for a European network in the field, taking a purely academic standard and criteria and pursuing for very intensive interaction and co-operation.” The initiators had also raised some money to publish a book based on the workshop contributions. The suggestion was screened by the EIASM board and accepted. The workshop chaired by R. Donckels and A. Miettinen took place in Brussels a year later in the premises of EIASM (Rue de Egmont) in May 14-15, 1987 with 25 participants. The name of this first event was *Workshop on Recent Research on Entrepreneurship in Europe*. There were 17 papers presented. Among the presenters were such frequent later RENT contributors as Yvon Gasse, Stanley Cromie, Per Davidsson, Alan Gibb, Bengt Johannison, Josef Mugler and Chris Steyaert. The book “New Findings and Perspectives in Entrepreneurship” based on the selection of revised presentations edited by the two chairmen was published by Avebury in 1990.

### **Josef Mugler, Professor Emeritus, Vienna University of Economics and Business**

RENT was not yet RENT (this acronym was created for the fourth workshop in Cologne 1990 by Heinz Klandt), when after the first meeting in Brussels in May 1987 the European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management (EIASM) followed an invitation by the Institute of Small Business Management and Entrepreneurship of the Vienna University of

Economics and Business (Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien) to organize another workshop for European entrepreneurship researchers in Vienna on December 5 and 6, 1988. This was just a few months after the formal founding meeting of the European Council for Small Business (ECSB) in Brussels on September 19, with myself as the first ECSB President and Rik Donckels as Vice President. During the Vienna workshop a proposal of a European Doctoral Programme in Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management was presented by Jose M. Veciana from Barcelona and thoroughly scrutinized. Finally, the concept was approved by the majority of an informal steering group, and Jose was encouraged to prepare a detailed Programme to be offered under the auspices of the ECSB at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona in the academic year 1989/90 for a pioneer group of students from all over Europe, whereas a parallel branch of the Programme was to be offered by Allan Gibb in Durham. This Vienna Pre-RENT workshop was attended by some 25 researchers with high level presentations and intensive discussions. It opened the doors for further workshops on an annual basis, supported by the ECSB-community as a strong stakeholder since then.

### **Professor J. Hanns Pichler, University of Economics & Business Administration, Vienna**

RENT started from humble, rather cosy beginnings at EIASM in Brussels as a European scientific initiative focusing on SME research; carried on these early days (mid-80's) primarily by the good offices and contacts of Asko Miettinen, Rik Donckels with some other pioneers. The topical emphasis from the very start was on selective contributions with international reach and relevance which only later took on the acronym RENT as a nowadays well established trade mark of high quality research in the field. Myself having been, so to say in-on-the-act from the very beginning, and having attended altogether some 20 conferences, it's been truly rewarding having seen such a seminal initiative develop and grow to present dimensions both in terms of size as well as scientific substance with acknowledged international reputation. In looking back over the

years, there has been of course some memorable events and stories to tell: thus, just selectively, the 10-year anniversary celebrated in still rather modest smallish surroundings at Naples under the chair of the late – and unforgettable – Jose Veciana with, nonetheless, challenging and quite intensely discussed deliberations; or the gathering some time after in Piacencia, handled with typically Italian talent for improvisation – starting off about half a day late and some chaos with transportation, but ultimately having been resolved with irresistible grandezza to overall satisfaction.

**Professor Friederike Welter, Jonköping International Business School, Sweden**

25 years RENT conference – congratulations to ECSB and EIASM! RENT is my favourite European conference on entrepreneurship and small business. Every year I am looking forward to learning about the newest research, to explore interesting European venues and of course to meet old and new friends. For me, RENT simply is the best place to get to know who's working in the entrepreneurship research area in Europe. London 1999 was my first RENT conference; and I never missed a single conference since then. Looking back, my conference participation resembles a European journey, including some parts of Europe I would not have visited without RENT: London, Prague, Turku (where, at the conference dinner, our table was told twice to behave properly and to cut down on the noise...no need to mention who was sitting at that particular table, as I am sure that they all will remember), Barcelona, Lodz, Copenhagen, Naples, Brussels, Cardiff, Covilhã, Budapest, Maastricht and now Bodo. So here's to the next 25 years and to many more interesting places...

# ECSB Fellows

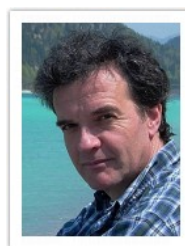
ECSB Fellows are people who are recognised for their outstanding service to the field of entrepreneurship research / education and to work of ECSB. A Fellow of ECSB shall be nominated by existing ECSB Fellows and ratified by the Board of ECSB. A person who is an ECSB Fellow is deemed to be an Honorary Life Member of the organisation. Details of the 'Roles and Responsibilities of ECSB Fellows' have been clearly defined by the Board of ECSB as a way of utilising their expertise and experience.



***Professor J  se Maria  
Veciana, R.I.P.***



***Professor  
Zolt  n Rom  n***  
Hungarian Academy of  
Sciences  
Sz  her u. 7.  
1021 Budapest  
HUNGARY  
[rom6801@mail.iif.hu](mailto:rom6801@mail.iif.hu)



***Professor  
Roy Thurik***  
Erasmus University of  
Rotterdam  
P.O. Box 1738  
Rotterdam, NL-3000  
DR  
NETHERLANDS  
[thurik@few.eur.nl](mailto:thurik@few.eur.nl)



***Professor Hans Crijns***

Vlerk Leuven Gent  
Management School  
Impulse Centre Growth  
Management  
Reep 1  
Gent, B-9000  
BELGIUM

[hans.crijns@vlerick.be](mailto:hans.crijns@vlerick.be)



***Professor David Smallbone***

Kingston University  
Small Business  
Research Centre  
Kingston Hill  
Kingston-upon-  
Thames, UK-KT2 7LB  
UNITED KINGDOM

[d.smallbone@kingston.ac.uk](mailto:d.smallbone@kingston.ac.uk)



***Professor Hans Landström***

Lund University  
School of Economics  
PO Box 7080  
Lund, S-220 07  
SWEDEN

[hans.landstrom@fek.lu.se](mailto:hans.landstrom@fek.lu.se)

# ECSB Board of Directors

The Board of Directors serves as the long-range planning and policy-making authority of ECSB, responsible to the Membership, while the Executive Committee serves as a management resource to the President in the implementation of Board policies. The Board of Directors consists of three members of the Executive Committee and six other members.

## **The President of ECSB**



**Teaching and  
Learning**

***Doctor***

***Thomas M. Cooney***

Dublin Institute of  
Technology  
Aungier Street  
Dublin 2  
IRELAND

[thomas.cooney@dit.ie](mailto:thomas.cooney@dit.ie)

## **The Past President of ECSB**



**Post-Doctoral  
Students/Publications**

***Professor***

***Friederike Welter***

Jönköping International  
Business School  
Jönköping, SE-551 11  
SWEDEN

[friederike.welter@ihh.hj.se](mailto:friederike.welter@ihh.hj.se)

## **The President-Elect of ECSB**



**Marketing and  
Country VPs**

***Associate Professor***

***Luca Iandoli***

University of Naples  
Federico II, Italy  
Piazzale Tecchio 80  
80125, Napoli  
ITALY

[luca.iandoli@unina.it](mailto:luca.iandoli@unina.it)



### **Corporate Affairs**

**Professor**  
**Antti Paasio**

Turku School of  
Economics  
Rehtorinpellonkatu 3  
FIN-20500 Turku  
FINLAND

[antti.paasio@tse.fi](mailto:antti.paasio@tse.fi)



### **Doctoral Students**

**Associate Professor**  
**Helle Neergaard**

Aarhus School of  
Business  
Haslegaardsvej 10  
DK-8210 Aarhus V  
DENMARK

[hen@asb.dk](mailto:hen@asb.dk)



### **Baltic States**

**Doctor**  
**Arnis Sauka**

Stockholm School of  
Economics in Riga  
Strelnieku street 4a, Riga,  
LV1001  
LATVIA

[arnis.sauka@sseriga.edu.lv](mailto:arnis.sauka@sseriga.edu.lv)



### **Balkan States**

**Professor**  
**Miroslav Rebernik**

Faculty of Economics and  
Business  
University of Maribor  
Razlagova  
14 2000 Maribor  
SLOVENIA

[rebernik@uni-mb.si](mailto:rebernik@uni-mb.si)



### **Policy**

**Doctor**  
**João Leitão**

University of Lisbon  
Lugar da Abadessa  
Apartado 148  
7301 – 901,  
Portalegre  
PORTUGAL

[jleitao@estgp.pt](mailto:jleitao@estgp.pt)



### **Business**

**Associate Professor**  
**Anita Van Gils**

Maastricht University  
School of Business and  
Economics  
P.O Box 616  
6200 MD Maastricht  
THE NETHERLANDS

[a.vangils@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:a.vangils@maastrichtuniversity.nl)



**Chair of the Fellows**

***Professor Hans Crijns***

Vlerk Leuven Gent  
Management School  
Impulse Centre Growth  
Management  
Reep 1  
Gent  
B-9000  
BELGIUM  
[hans.crijns@vlerick.be](mailto:hans.crijns@vlerick.be)

# ECSB Country Vice-Presidents

The role of the Country Vice-President is critical to the development of the organisation since they enable local initiatives to be undertaken, thereby encouraging greater participation in the activities of ECSB. The Country VPs are also able to identify local personnel and organisations that would benefit from ECSB's activities, while additionally informing the Board of the current needs of its membership.

<b>AUSTRIA:</b> Matthias Fink	<a href="mailto:matthias.fink@wu.ac.at">matthias.fink@wu.ac.at</a>
<b>BELGIUM:</b> Eddy Laveren	<a href="mailto:eddy.laveren@ua.ac.be">eddy.laveren@ua.ac.be</a>
<b>BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA:</b> Bahrija Umihanic	<a href="mailto:bahrijau@bih.net.ba">bahrijau@bih.net.ba</a>
<b>BULGARIA:</b> Kiril Todorov	<a href="mailto:ktodorov@unwe.acad.bg">ktodorov@unwe.acad.bg</a>
<b>CROATIA:</b> Slavica Singer	<a href="mailto:singer@efos.hr">singer@efos.hr</a>
<b>CYPRUS:</b> Mustafa Tumer	<a href="mailto:mustafa.tumer@emu.edu.tr">mustafa.tumer@emu.edu.tr</a>
<b>CZECH REPUBLIC:</b> Jarmila Šebestová	<a href="mailto:sebestova@opf.slu.cz">sebestova@opf.slu.cz</a>
<b>DENMARK:</b> Kim Klyver	<a href="mailto:kkl@sam.sdu.dk">kkl@sam.sdu.dk</a>
<b>ESTONIA:</b> Arvi Kuura	<a href="mailto:akuura@pc.ut.ee">akuura@pc.ut.ee</a>
<b>FINLAND:</b> Markku Virtanen	<a href="mailto:markku.virtanen@hse.fi">markku.virtanen@hse.fi</a>
<b>FRANCE:</b> Olivier Torres	<a href="mailto:torres@em-lyon.com">torres@em-lyon.com</a>
<b>GERMANY:</b> Andreas Kuckertz	<a href="mailto:andreas.kuckertz@uni-due.de">andreas.kuckertz@uni-due.de</a>
<b>GREECE:</b> Dimitrios Koufopoulos	<a href="mailto:dimitrios.koufopoulos@hocg.eu">dimitrios.koufopoulos@hocg.eu</a>
<b>HUNGARY:</b> Péter Szirmai	<a href="mailto:peter.szirmai@uni-corvinus.hu">peter.szirmai@uni-corvinus.hu</a>
<b>ICELAND:</b> Agust Einarsson	<a href="mailto:agust@bifrost.is">agust@bifrost.is</a>

<b>IRELAND:</b> Naomi Birdthistle	<a href="mailto:naomi.birdthistle@ul.ie">naomi.birdthistle@ul.ie</a>
<b>ITALY:</b> Paola Demartini	<a href="mailto:paola.demartini@uniurb.it">paola.demartini@uniurb.it</a>
<b>KOSOVO:</b> Besnik A. Krasniqi	<a href="mailto:krasnigibesnik@hotmail.com">krasnigibesnik@hotmail.com</a>
<b>LATVIA:</b> Arnis Sauka	<a href="mailto:asauka@sseriga.edu.lv">asauka@sseriga.edu.lv</a>
<b>LIECHTENSTEIN:</b> Sascha Kraus	<a href="mailto:sascha.kraus@wu-wien.ac.at">sascha.kraus@wu-wien.ac.at</a>
<b>MACEDONIA:</b> Radmil Polenakovik	<a href="mailto:radmil.polenakovik@ncdeil.mk">radmil.polenakovik@ncdeil.mk</a>
<b>NETHERLANDS:</b> Sander Wennekers	<a href="mailto:AWE@eim.nl">AWE@eim.nl</a>
<b>NORWAY:</b> Einar Rasmussen	<a href="mailto:einar.rasmussen@hibo.no">einar.rasmussen@hibo.no</a>
<b>POLAND:</b> Wojciech Dyduch	<a href="mailto:dyduch@ae.katowice.pl">dyduch@ae.katowice.pl</a>
<b>PORTUGAL:</b> Mario Raposo	<a href="mailto:mraposo@ubi.pt">mraposo@ubi.pt</a>
<b>ROMANIA:</b> Ovidi Nicolescu	<a href="mailto:officec@nipmmr.ro">officec@nipmmr.ro</a>
<b>RUSSIA:</b> Alexander Chepureenko	<a href="mailto:chepurenko@mail.ru">chepurenko@mail.ru</a>
<b>SERBIA:</b> Radmila Grozdanic	<a href="mailto:radmila.grozdanic@gmail.com">radmila.grozdanic@gmail.com</a>
<b>SLOVENIA:</b> Karin Sirec	<a href="mailto:karin.sirec@uni-mb.si">karin.sirec@uni-mb.si</a>
<b>SPAIN:</b> Ricardo Hernandez Mogollon	<a href="mailto:ricardohernandezmogollon@gmail.com">ricardohernandezmogollon@gmail.com</a>
<b>SWEDEN:</b> Anders Broström	<a href="mailto:anders.brostrom@abe.kth.se">anders.brostrom@abe.kth.se</a>
<b>UK:</b> Christos Kalantaridis	<a href="mailto:C.Kalantaridis@salford.ac.uk">C.Kalantaridis@salford.ac.uk</a>

# ECSB Secretariat



The traditional approach to the ECSB Secretariat was that the President would host the responsibility of all ECSB administration affairs within their own institution. However, during the Presidency of Prof Antti Paasio, the ECSB Secretariat was established on a more consistent basis and permanently located in the University of Turku. Professor Paasio, together with the first ECSB Executive Secretary Paula Kuopusjärvi, created processes and accounting procedures for a modern, transparent structure. Since late 2005 Kaisu Paasio has been working as Executive Secretary of ECSB and her primary responsibilities are content, communications, legal administration, accounts, and issues raised by the Board. She is supported by Nina Ellfolk who takes care of membership invoices and database. In 2010, ECSB became a legal entity and now operates fully under Finnish law. If you have any questions or enquiries regarding ECSB, please do not hesitate to contact the ECSB Secretariat through one of the following channels:

## POST

ECSB Secretariat  
University of Turku,  
Rehtorinpellonkatu 3  
FIN-20500 Turku,  
FINLAND

TELEPHONE +358 2 333 9511

FAX +358 2 333 8900

EMAIL [info@ecsb.org](mailto:info@ecsb.org)

INTERNET [www.ecsb.org](http://www.ecsb.org)

# ECSB Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

The ECSB Special Interest Groups are forums for ECSB members who share an interest in the same topic (**Doctoral Students, Entrepreneurship Education, Female Entrepreneurship, Policy and Social Entrepreneurship**). The SIG memberships are free and each of them is actively seeking new members. The ECSB SIGs can also be found at Linked In ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)) – join now one or each of the special groups for interesting discussions with other ECSB members.

## **Doctoral Students SIG**

The **Doctoral Students SIG** has been one of the most active groups within ECSB for many years. Its primary activity is the Doctoral Consortium which takes place each year at the RENT Conference. The Consortium is organized with a morning and an afternoon session.

Participants in the Doctoral Consortium are the finalists in the ECSB Doctoral Competition for a place on USASBE's doctoral consortium which takes place each January. The award is worth \$1,000 and is based on the best doctoral thesis proposal submitted to the RENT doctoral consortium. The Doctoral Students SIG also has active Linked In page activities and organises a range of supports throughout the year.

The leader of the DS SIG is Associate Professor Helle Neergaard ([hen@asb.dk](mailto:hen@asb.dk)) from Denmark.

## **Entrepreneurship Education SIG**

The **Entrepreneurship Education SIG** is relatively new group within ECSB. The objectives of the EE SIG are:

- We aim to generate discussions;

- We provide content and useful links for this SIG to be put onto the website and encourage others to do the same;
- We build relationships with other organisations who are also working in these areas;
- We are working to have a team composed of people who are ALL busy building the content on the website and creating relationships for themselves which allows everyone to benefit.

The leader of the EE SIG is Doctor Cristina Bettinelli (cristina.bettinelli@unibg.it) from Italy.

### **Female Entrepreneurship SIG**

The **Female Entrepreneurship SIG** was launched on March 2010. The FE SIG's highest priority is developing a research community on female entrepreneurship, whose members share interest in debating common topics. The objectives of the FE SIG are:

- Discussion of issues and interesting future developments in female entrepreneurship research with Ph.D. students, Post-Doctoral students, junior and senior faculty.
- Recognizing the unique contexts in which female entrepreneurship is embedded within different regions.
- Celebrating research which contributes to advancement of both theory and practice with a variety of methods and rationales.
- Meeting researchers on female entrepreneurship in an international environment and building bridges around Europe, and eventually other parts of the world, for networking, knowledge exchange and project promoting.

The leader of the FE SIG is Cristina Diaz (Cristina.Diaz@uclm.es) from Spain.

## **Policy SIG**

The **Policy SIG** has been a relatively recent development arising from the first Policy Forum to be held in conjunction with the RENT Conference. This event offers participants an opportunity to interact with policy makers and enterprise support agents in an environment of positive discussion and collaboration. A second forum also takes place approximately 6 months removed from the Conference so that there is a regular opportunity to contribute to research in the area of entrepreneurship policy. More recently, ECSB has developed a strong relationship with the IPREG multi-national study led by colleagues in Sweden.

The leader of the Policy SIG is from Joao Leitao (jleitao71@gmail.com) from Portugal.

## **Social Entrepreneurship SIG**

The **Social Entrepreneurship SIG** was launched in 2010 with the aim of developing research on social entrepreneurship among the community of European entrepreneurship and small business scholars. The objectives of the SE SIG are:

- Discuss interesting future research avenues on social entrepreneurship with scholars at all levels (PhD candidates, post-doc, junior and senior faculty)
- Recognize particular issues to which the unique context of social entrepreneurship can bring innovative insights
- Foster research that contributes to advancement of both theory and practice of social entrepreneurship with a variety of methods and rationales

- Share relevant resources including latest published research, working papers, and information on forthcoming conferences on the topic
- Serve as a place of gathering for social entrepreneurship scholars eager to learn more about their peers' research
- Build a strong research core within the European community to finally bridge and exchange with scholars from other parts of the world

The leader of the SE SIG is Sophie Bacq ([sophie.bacq@uclouvain.be](mailto:sophie.bacq@uclouvain.be)) from Belgium.

# European Council for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ECSB)

Interview with Thomas Cooney for 'International Innovation'

---

## **1. What led to the formation of the European Council for Small Business and Entrepreneurship (ECSB) and what are its core objectives?**

ECSB was officially inaugurated on 19 September 1988, with 162 members, as an attempt to bring together the various strands of entrepreneurship research and teaching that were beginning to emanate across Europe at that time. Professor *Josef Mugler* was its first president, heading the organisation from 1988 until 1991. Alongside him, the first board consisted of *Allan Gibb* (UK), *Dieter Ibielski* (Germany), *Jean-Jacques Obrecht* (France) and *Hans Jobst Pleitner* (Switzerland) and country vice presidents for Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Turkey. The first flyer for ECSB stated that the organisation was established as 'a membership organisation committed to a free exchange of ideas within a network of researchers, teachers, trainers, consultants, entrepreneurs, small business representatives and politicians'.

ECSB is a non-profit organization whose main objective is to advance the understanding of entrepreneurship and to improve the competitiveness of SMEs in Europe. The primary objective of ECSB is to facilitate the creation and distribution of new knowledge through research, education and the open exchange of ideas between professions across national and cultural borders.

## **2. Could you provide examples of how ECSB strives to implement these objectives?**

ECSB seeks to achieve its objectives by providing a wide range of products and services that can enhance quality of output delivered by its Members in their own particular arenas. While the annual RENT Conference is the flagship event for the organisation, earlier this year ECSB launched a new initiative for the organization – the ECSB Summer School. This event took place in Colviha (Portugal) from July 25th – 29th and was titled ‘Entrepreneurship in High-Tech Industries’. The organisation also delivers a regular Webinar Series which offers an opportunity for people who cannot travel to events to still interact with researchers who are at the cutting-edge of entrepreneurship research and teaching.

Increasingly, ECSB is using social media to communicate with its Members with Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to be found on Linked In (search for ECSB). ECSB can also be found on Facebook (ECSB) and on Twitter (ECSB1) where a person can follow all of our activities. Of course the easiest way to stay in touch with ECSB is to look at our website which is updated regularly with new events and initiatives. ECSB continues to expand the range of benefits (including quarterly edition of JSBM, discounts to books, etc) that it provides its Members but we are always happy to learn about how we could further improve our offering to you.

In addition to these activities, ECSB also provides its Members with:

- Access to small business and entrepreneurship experts all over the Europe through the internet platform ([www.ecsb.org](http://www.ecsb.org)) and the database at the member’s area,
- Access to the ICSB website members directory ([www.icsb.org](http://www.icsb.org)), plus the full benefits that ICSB membership offers,
- Free publications including ECSB electronic Newsletter with up-to-date information on research, education and policy activities; the

Journal of Small Business Management every quarter; annual InterRENT publication, access to case studies and teaching notes available in membership area; the ICSB Bulletin with information about members, special themes, conference programmes, and affiliates from around the world,

- Free access to our Webinars,
- A 35% discount onto entrepreneurship books published by Edward Elgar, including ECSB's own anthology "Frontiers of European Entrepreneurship Research" (see instructions on member's area),
- Reduced rates for several entrepreneurship and small business journals (e.g. ISBJ),
- Reduced registration fees to international conferences (ICSB World Conference, etc.), Regular competitions for ECSB members only
- For younger researchers - participation in the ECSB Doctoral Consortium and the RENT Conference at a reduced rate.

**3. As President, what are your main duties within ECSB and what have been some of the highlights of your presidency?**

The role of ECSB President is symptomatic of what is found in many voluntary organisations in that there is the constant balancing of pursuing strategic preferences while simultaneously undertaking much work regarding the administration of the organisation. Given that the composition of ECSB stretches across 38 countries and involves representing its members globally through the Board of ICSB, the challenges of maintaining significantly diverse interests necessitates a requirement to continually prioritise what is best for the majority (rather than all) of those involved in the network. One of the early lessons that I discovered was that change can only happen by evolution rather than by revolution.

The two biggest achievements by the Board and the Secretariat over the past two years have been: (1) formalising the administrative affairs of the organisation by legally registering the organisation and ensuring that all of its affairs met with the stringent requirements laid down by Finnish law, and (2) bringing much more of its activities to its members through the use of social media (webinars, Facebook, Linked In, etc), by co-hosting events across many of its countries, and by making many useful resources available to its members via the website. It was based on a simple customer-orientated philosophy that is the hallmark of many business practices across Europe.

**4. In light of the ongoing global economic turmoil, how do you see entrepreneurship and SMEs contributing to a brighter future for Europe?**

It is being increasingly being recognised that entrepreneurship is one of the most effective means by which economies can be regenerated. Many large companies are struggling economically and the introduction of foreign direct investment is only a partial solution for many countries, so the development of indigenous industries (particularly SMEs) offers a stronger long-term outcome. It is the belief of ECSB that entrepreneurship educators and researchers must be counted amongst those who are willing to contribute to helping Europe and its individual nations finding better days. In many different ways, entrepreneurship educators and researchers are well-placed to support the renewal of economies across Europe and through their experience and expertise entrepreneurship educators can help rebuild and reshape tomorrow's exciting new world.

## **5. Business (ICSB)? How do your members benefit from this partnership?**

ECSB has been an affiliate of ICSB since 1988 and represents ICSB's interests within the region of Europe. Through this relationship, ECSB has been able to tap into expertise and developments in other affiliates across the globe, while also showcasing its own success stories for use in other regions in which ICSB is represented. Additionally, our Members also receive the following benefits through our relationship with ICSB:

- Access to the Membership Section of the ICSB Web Site
- Subscription to "THE BULLETIN" newsletter
- Subscription to the Journal for Small Business Management (the world's oldest and most widely distributed professional/academic quarterly publication featuring refereed research papers on topics related to entrepreneurship and small business)
- Reduced Fees to the Annual ICSB World Conference
- Free access to the:
  - ICSB Membership Directory
  - E-Alerts on Latest News
  - Global Research Series
  - Global Dialogue Series
  - Knowledge Center
  - International Doctoral Exchange
  - Knowledge Links
  - Job Postings
  - ICSB SME Global Calendar

**6. The ECSB's 25<sup>th</sup> RENT Conference is to be held in Bodø, Norway in November. What is the driving factor behind these conferences what do you hope to achieve in the next session?**

While the early conferences were smaller in nature than those that are now hosted, the original philosophy of hosting intimate gatherings where high-quality research could be critically discussed amongst colleagues is still fervently followed. The notion of restricting the attendance to an upper limit of 250-275 delegates has been protected for many years as this enables the delicate balance between engaging learning experiences and informality to flourish. However, this focus on quality has not impeded ECSB and EIASM from continually introducing new contributions to the conference as the Doctorial Consortium, Post Doctoral Workshop, Policy Forum, Case Writing Workshop and Live Internet Streaming have demonstrated. This ability to mix new ideas with old favourites, esteemed colleagues with young researchers, and business with pleasure has been one of the constant hallmarks of the RENT Conference. This year's conference is being held in Norway for the first time and it offers further proof of the desire and ability of ECSB to be inclusive of all of its constituents.

**7. Are there opportunities that SMEs can offer to researchers and innovators that perhaps would not be available in larger-scale enterprises?**

One of the greatest challenges that continues to exist is the divide between academia and industry, with both parties arguing that the other side does not understand them. Entrepreneurs will frequently state that academics do not live in 'the real world' (which suggests that academics live in some other universe), while academics will claim that this perception is certainly untrue and while we might live in another

environment, it is most certainly located in the 'real world'. This issue must be addressed by both sides simultaneously so that there is greater appreciation of the support that can be offered across this partition. For example, entrepreneurs can utilise the services of academics to undertake research, to support them in developing applications for EU funded projects, and to determine strategic opportunities that might exist for the firm, while academics can invite entrepreneurs to become a mentor or advisor to their programmes so that the students can receive an education that entrepreneurs might feel is more pertinent to the world of today. Some of these examples are already taking place but we need to build more bridges so that all parties can benefit and enhance their outputs or goals.

**8. Who do you recruit to participate in your mentoring programme? What makes the programme mutually beneficial for participants?**

The ECSB Career Mentoring programme is the brainchild of Prof Friederike Welter and it is aimed at junior researchers. For six months, experienced researchers and professors will advise mentees with their personal career development. A mentor supports the young researcher by listening to them, discussing their personal goals, and providing encouragement, information and contacts. Mentoring can assist the young researcher with assessing their experiences and achievements and considering their future career options and choices. The programme also offers the mentor the opportunity to give back something to the environment that helped nurture their own career and thereby ensuring that entrepreneurship education and research continues to grow based on the experiences of past activities and lessons. It is one of the most exciting programmes that ECSB has introduced in recent years and the demand for places on the initial programme has exceeded all expectations.

**9. Could you offer insight into your webinar series? What is the focus of these sessions and how has taking advantage of this 21<sup>st</sup> Century resource improved your services?**

Traditionally the activities of ECSB were centred on the annual conference, but unfortunately people who were unable to attend the conference were left with limited access to the wonderful expertise that is available within the ECSB network. The webinar series was introduced as a way of allowing our members from all regions to tap into this resource by simply registering to participate in an event that they could attend from their office or home. The people delivering the webinars are ECSB experts from specific fields of entrepreneurship and they give their time for free to enable us to deliver the webinar free of charge. It has also been a very effective way of allowing people from institutions and regions that are less well resourced to build their knowledge through our support. Being part of ICSB was a hugely important part of the success of this initiative as ICSB have provided and administered the technical expertise and platform to enable us to provide this service. Last year we extended this initiative by providing live streaming on the internet of the keynote speeches from our annual conference and more recently we have experimented with the delivery of the webinars in different languages.

**10. What are some of present-day challenges facing SMEs and how do you propose to overcome them?**

There are many challenges currently facing SMEs across Europe and the majority are beyond the intervention of ECSB. However, I believe that there are two things that can be achieved by our network. The first is that we need to start 'translating' cutting-edge research into a language that the owner-manager can more easily understand and we should package it in a format that allows them to digest it quickly. While ECSB has a Twitter account, it is not yet an active contributor (due to constraints of

resources and time) but this is certainly one avenue where ECSB might provide benefit to the SME community since owner-managers are hardly ever likely to read an academic journal. The second possibility is with regard to the European Commission's current goal of ensuring that 15% of all EU funded projects is taken-up by SMEs and so academia (with its expertise in writing research funding proposals) could offer its services on a mutually-beneficial basis.

**11. ECSB is run on a volunteer basis. Has this served as an advantage or disadvantage? From where do you receive your funding?**

All of ECSB's funding comes from member subscriptions and this continues to place significant boundaries on what the organisation can achieve since it has very limited resources. ECSB now has over 500 members and it has built very strong foundations over the past 25 years but the organisation is now at a critical phase of its development since its size requires a full-time Secretariat if it is to reach its full potential but we cannot afford one based on its current business model. To develop a completely new business model would require an enormous investment of time, people and resources but being a volunteer organisation, these are very difficult to mobilise. Over the past quarter of a century, a large number of people have given huge amounts of their time for free and have helped to build a flourishing organisation, but being a voluntary organisation has limited the organisation from being a central player in the world of European SMEs.

**12. Please feel free to mention any other aspects of the ECSB you feel are relevant to this issue.**

It is my view that entrepreneurship educators and researchers get to work with two very exciting (and frustrating) groups of people –

students and entrepreneurs. This means that every day is different and stimulating, which makes us very fortunate people. However, there is an increasing demand for academics to focus their work on getting articles published in highly ranked journals and career advancement (such as getting tenure or a position of Professorship) is becoming ever more closely associated with one's publication record. However, this movement towards journal articles is taking us further away from the language and understanding of entrepreneurs, plus they are less likely to appreciate the value of the research that we undertake on their operations and environments. Therefore, there is a critical need for university management to recognise the wonderful value of the work that is being carried out by entrepreneurship academics in conjunction with owner-managers that will never reach a journal article but which has real value to SMEs. This critical issue needs the support of entrepreneurs in saying 'Stop' and in seeking a future academic environment in which multiple paths can lead one to career advancement and satisfaction.

To view the digital version of *International Innovation* publications please subscribe for free at:

[www.research-europe.com/index.php/international-innovation](http://www.research-europe.com/index.php/international-innovation)

