



**Nacionalno  
Vijeće za  
Konkurentnost**

**National  
Competitiveness  
Council**

## **COMPETITIVENESS DIGEST**

**Issued:** 27<sup>th</sup> April 2009

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## **I. EU Competitiveness**

### **1. 'Simplicity' key for innovation institute, says chairman**

*In short:*

**Applications to host the first Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) chosen by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) will be rejected if they exceed 40 pages, according to Martin Schuurmans, who chairs the institute's board.**

The move is part of Schuurmans's efforts to inject speed and a businesslike approach into the EIT which, he also revealed, may look to focus on healthcare and other key societal issues as part of the EIT's next batch of KICs in "three or four years' time".

Speaking at an 'Interfacing Innovation' event in Brussels hosted by the European Journalism Centre, he said the EIT should be a dynamic organisation and would seek "to cut through bureaucracy". He said it had taken "five years of talking" to establish the institute, but just six months to produce the first call for proposals. It will have selected the first KICs by the end of the year, he added.

More on: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/innovation/simplicity-key-innovation-institute-chairman/article-181423>

### **2. Entrepreneurship report calls for transformation of Education Systems to stimulate economic growth during global crisis**

*In short:*

**The World Economic Forum's Global Education Initiative (GEI) today launched its report, Educating the Next Wave of Entrepreneurs. Building on the GEI's mission to help countries implement education systems that are sustainable, scalable and relevant, the report provides specific recommendations for the academic, public, private and non-profit sectors to collaborate in supporting the development of entrepreneurship ecosystems, in which education is a key driver.**

The report highlights the importance of entrepreneurship education for developing the skills, attitudes and behaviours necessary to create jobs, generate economic growth, advance human welfare and stimulate innovation to address global challenges.

"With over US\$ 100 million in resources mobilized and over 1.8 million students and teachers impacted to date in our country initiatives, the GEI has demonstrated the power of collaboration and partnerships. In today's critical economic times, we hope that the release of this report will catalyse further action to create the entrepreneurial ecosystems necessary to drive the next wave of innovation and growth," said Alex Wong, Senior Director and Head of the Global Education Initiative at the World Economic Forum.

More on: [http://www.weforum.org/en/media/Latest%20Press%20Releases/PR\\_EEreport](http://www.weforum.org/en/media/Latest%20Press%20Releases/PR_EEreport)

### **3. Enhancing employability is crucial to meet future challenges**

*In short:*

**On 22 April, Marcus Schwenke, Social Affairs Adviser, spoke in a hearing organised by the European Economic and Social Committee in Brussels concerning the Commission's communication "New Skills for New Jobs".**

He emphasised the necessity to upgrade skills and explained that the new skills for new jobs initiative must be seen as part of the wider flexicurity approach. Modern education and

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training systems, flanked by effective mobility and immigration policies are needed to upgrade skills and better match skills with labour market needs.

More on: <http://www.businesseurope.eu/Content/Default.asp?PageID=524&articleid=698>

### 4. Finding the key to competitiveness

*In short:*

**The latest European Competitiveness Report examines the factors which help or hinder firms' economic growth. Amongst its key messages is that companies which trade across borders are more productive than those which do all their business in their home country. A second message is that high-growth firms are found in all EU Member States and in all sectors of the economy.**

Now in its 11th annual edition, the 2008 [European Competitiveness Report](#) aims to assess the state of European economies, relative to each other and to the United States of America, and identify issues on which efforts could be focused to improve the overall competitiveness of European firms. At macroeconomic level, the 2008 report shows that the gaps in labour productivity between EU Member States have been decreasing, i.e. the less productive economies are improving faster than the more productive. However, labour productivity in the EU has grown less strongly than in the USA in the past decade. These macroeconomic findings in the 2008 report, it should be noted, are based on data which do not yet reflect the recent economic downturn.

More on: [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/e\\_i/news/article\\_8898\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/e_i/news/article_8898_en.htm)

### 5. BUSINESSEUROPE involved in preparation for employment summit

*In short:*

**BUSINESSEUROPE participated in the first two of three thematic workshops organised by the European Commission in the run-up to the employment summit on 7 May in Prague. On 15 April in Madrid, BUSINESSEUROPE highlighted the need to improve the employability of workers and to better match skills and labour market needs.**

On 20 April in Stockholm, BUSINESSEUROPE discussed how to increase access to employment. The results of the workshops will feed into the employment summit on 7 May in Prague.

More on: <http://www.businesseurope.eu/Content/Default.asp?PageID=524&articleid=697>

### 6. Busek: Western Balkans should join EU as a block

*In short:*

**As it continues to enlarge, the European Union needs to review its current vote weighting and abandon the veto system, Erhard Busek, special enlargement advisor to the Czech EU Presidency, told EurActiv in an interview.**

Pressure is mounting to change decision-making systems in the European Union, said Busek, who until recently was special coordinator for the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe. He said fears that decision-making is becoming more and more difficult were behind the reluctance of a number of countries to proceed with further enlargement.

"Personally, I'm convinced that the current voting weight repartition, as well as the lack of qualified majority vote in most of the situations, is the real background of these hesitations. It has nothing to do with region, because it's completely clear for all member states that all the Western Balkan countries should become members of the EU," Busek said.

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He also expressed his personal view that in order to avoid infighting between neighbours, Western Balkan countries could more easily join the EU as a bloc. As an example, he referred to the Croatia-Slovenia border dispute, which he said should be solved by negotiations.

*More on:* <http://www.euractiv.com/en/enlargement/busek-western-balkans-join-eu-block/article-181370>

## **II. Other**

### **1. Forfás - Our Cities: Drivers of National Competitiveness**

*In short:*

**Cities are increasingly seen as the drivers of national competitiveness and of economic and social development. This paper examines the core elements that make Irish cities competitive and highlights actions that can improve their performance and ultimately enhance our national competitiveness.**

With the rise in globalisation, cities across the world are becoming less concerned with national rankings of competitiveness and are focusing instead on improving their positions in a global league table of cities. Cities play an increasingly crucial role in the development of national competitiveness in modern knowledge-based economies. As people become more mobile and firms more selective about where they locate, competitive cities have emerged as magnets for talent and investment.

More on: <http://www.forfas.ie/newsevents/news/title,3948,en.php>

More on: <http://www.forfas.ie/publications/2009/title,3951,en.php>