



10 Erasmus for Young
Entrepreneurs
2009 - 2019



Supporting entrepreneurship

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs is a cross-border exchange programme which aims to help new and aspiring entrepreneurs acquire relevant skills to run and grow a small business by working with an experienced entrepreneur in another country for one to six months.

It increases their know-how and fosters cross-border transfer of knowledge and experience between entrepreneurs.

It has demonstrated a positive impact in stimulating innovative business practices, the development of new products and services and expansion into new national markets.

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs was launched in 2009 by the European Commission following an initiative of the European Parliament.

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs is one of the key actions of the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan, which aims to reignite entrepreneurial spirit in Europe, support new businesses in crucial phases of their lifecycle and help them to grow.

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10 years of supporting entrepreneurship

In 2018, we celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the Single Market. For its 500 million citizens and 24 million businesses, the Single Market is the single biggest success story of the European project.

The Single Market is especially critical for our SMEs, start-ups and entrepreneurs because it allows them to start, grow and go across borders, making them ready to compete on a global level.

Those SMEs represent 99% of businesses in Europe and contribute to 60% of European private sector employment, creating 85% of new jobs.

So enabling them to benefit even more from the Single Market is a priority for the European Commission.

One key way of doing so has been through our Competitiveness of SMEs (COSME) programme. Over the course of this long-term EU budget, we are investing €2.3 billion in supporting SMEs. This support will be continued after 2020 with the brand new Single Market Programme with a proposed budget of €4 billion.

One of these support actions celebrates its 10th birthday this year: the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme (EYE).

EYE is already highly appreciated by entrepreneurs because it helps them boost their business in a tangible way. EYE delivers jobs, helps new companies to be created and supports them on their path to growth within and outside the Single Market.

We asked those who benefited from it in 2014-2016 and learned that in this period alone, over 250 new companies and more than 2,000 jobs were created thanks to the EYE experience.

The programme is really popular: so far, we have over 20,000 applications and close to 7,000 collaborations involving around 14,000 entrepreneurs from all over Europe.

Never change a winning team and never stop a successful initiative! That is why in the new Single Market Programme we have proposed further funding to aim for another 10,000 exchanges under the EYE programme.

We are also expanding to new locations. We are already in the pilot stage of offering opportunities of going to the US, Israel and Singapore and will work hard on offering more destinations.

I am happy to recommend this programme to all who would like to receive full hands-on support at the start of their careers as entrepreneurs, and also to all those who want to extend their businesses, both nationally and internationally.

Onwards to the next ten successful years!



Commissioner
Elżbieta Bieńkowska

**Responsible for Internal Market,
Industry, Entrepreneurship
and SMEs**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elżbieta Bieńkowska".



Celebrating a decade of EYE



MEP Dr. Paul Rübig

Austria

A successful and prospering Europe is based on the entrepreneurial spirit from innovative, creative and risk-taking youth who realise their dreams and become entrepreneurs. It is important that the European Union supports this spirit as entrepreneurship is key to economic success and societal wealth. The Erasmus+ is one of the most successful EU programs and "Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs" is on its way to becoming the same. As I was one of the founding fathers of this program, I am very happy with the great progress made.



MEP Marlene Mizzi

Malta

The programme "Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs" provides a unique opportunity to blend knowledge and experience of successful entrepreneurs and their companies with the innovation and enthusiasm of new entrepreneurs. As an ex-entrepreneur myself, I believe that investing in passionate initiatives and fledgling projects is something we should always promote and encourage. 'Small' is the new 'big' and that is why this program - uniting the EU and the industry, helping start-ups and entrepreneurs to turn their ideas into a successful business and becoming drivers for job creation and growth - is one of Europe's success stories.



MEP Andrey Novakov

Bulgaria

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs is a programme thanks to which young entrepreneurs can gain innovative professional knowledge and skills needed to establish a successful business across Europe. EYE has an important role to play in improving the entrepreneurial competence of young people, encouraging start-ups and supporting Europe's future economic growth and jobs. Through EYE Global, I am happy to see the successful geographic extension of the programme beyond Europe.



MEP Martina Dlabajova

Czech Republic

In my view, focusing on the young generation and their employment is crucial for our future. We cannot speak about employment without education, and similarly we cannot contemplate education without practical experience and learning.

Of course we do not need to make everyone in Europe an entrepreneur but we need to boost entrepreneurial spirit in today's youth.

I believe that entrepreneurial learning is not only an opportunity, but rather a duty for Europe if it wants to keep its leadership position and perspective future.



Christoph Leitl

President EUROCHAMBRES

10 years Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs - what a remarkable achievement! At a time when growth, SMEs and youth are key priorities for Europe, this programme plays a crucial role in helping achieve them and in boosting entrepreneurship. Just look at the success stories - you will be convinced! EUROCHAMBRES has supported this unique entrepreneurial initiative since its inception and we will proudly continue to do so in the future!



EYE – Experiences, exchanges and entrepreneurship

EYE in numbers

Countries currently involved



Top 5 countries of origin



Top sectors in which EYE is working



- ★ Promotion and Media 15%
- ★ Education services 10%
- ★ Architecture and Construction 10%
- ★ ICT 8%
- ★ Tourism 8%

Gender composition of Entrepreneurs



New Entrepreneurs
Female 48% Male 52%

Host Entrepreneurs
Female 26% Male 74%

Type of Entrepreneurs



- New Entrepreneurs 61%
(70% aspiring – 30% newly-established)
- Host Entrepreneurs 39%



EYE results and impact



21,000+ applications



36% of the aspiring new entrepreneur participants have created their own business



7000+ established relationships



61% of New Entrepreneurs and **54%** of Host Entrepreneurs surveyed increased their turnover after participating in the programme

COSME mid-term evaluation

Impact on entrepreneurs participating in the programme between 2014-2016



1059 new jobs created or taken on by New Entrepreneurs and **1157** new jobs for Host Entrepreneur companies



Total of **208 million euros** in additional turnover from companies involved in EYE

Fun facts



100,000+ Followers across social media



Endless contacts created



Countless lives changed



Success Stories



Dilek Topkara

Host Entrepreneur

Germany

Dilekerei

<http://www.dilekerei.com>

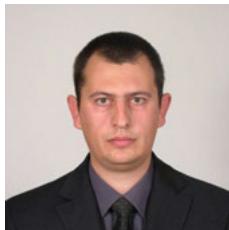
The EYE programme has been a formative part of my life since I joined as a new entrepreneur a decade ago. I was a young Muslim woman in Germany wanting to open a bakery influenced and enriched by multiple cultural traditions, and was unsure how to develop this into a thriving business. EYE provided me with much-needed space and valuable mentorship, and my experience empowered me to believe in myself and fully invest in building my business.

When I returned from my EYE exchange, I set up dilekerei, which symbolises my progress and what I have overcome, none of which would have been possible without the support, encouragement and training from my host entrepreneur.

Being a host entrepreneur now allows me to give the support I once received and help others gain skills and confidence.

This past year I hosted two wonderful new entrepreneurs, Tania from Spain and Dana from the Czech Republic. I enjoyed working with them, sharing ideas, and teaching my traditional pastry design techniques, production and marketing. They learnt about working in a real business setting, and were able to test their ideas on my customers. In doing so they enriched my company by bringing their own individual and cultural knowledge, as well as passion.

I believe that the EYE programme will continue to positively influence dilekerei and that new entrepreneurs will help sustain and expand my multicultural business. I work hard to be an active part of the EYE programme, and believe that nothing is more powerful than using our own personal experiences to support others in achieving their goals.



Todor Balabanov

New Entrepreneur

Bulgaria

Velbazhd Software LLC

<http://vitoshatrade.veldsoft.eu/> and <https://github.com/VelbazhdSoftwareLLC>

During my years as a Computer Science student I enjoyed working as a programmer but knew I wanted more. During my studies I received some business training, including a programme called Top Class organised by CEED Bulgaria, during which, the EYE programme was presented. I grabbed the opportunity and applied immediately (becoming the first Bulgarian participant) for an EYE exchange in Tartu, Estonia, and could not believe it when I was accepted for this once in a lifetime opportunity.

In Estonia I met my host entrepreneur Teet, who helped me a lot and most importantly convinced me that I could be a successful business owner. Now, almost ten years later, I have a PhD, own my own company and am CEO of another.

Through the EYE programme I was able to achieve my entrepreneurial dreams, and am now trying to participate as a host entrepreneur. The EYE program is an amazing adventure which gave me a unique chance and I believe others also deserve to benefit.



Bojan Blažica

New Entrepreneur

Slovenia

Proventus d.o.o.

<http://www.tomappo.com>

The EYE exchange was the beginning of a fruitful partnership between me and my host entrepreneur Antonio. We were lucky enough to 'click' and overall the EYE exchange experience had a big impact on me as a person, an entrepreneur and on my business. Thanks to the EYE exchange, I now have: a reliable partner in Italy to

strengthen my company's position in the foreign market, further financing, and an extended line of products and services based on our partner's IoT technology. I am sure this collaboration will continue and one day I plan to host an aspiring young entrepreneur.





Ionut Vasileoiu

Host Entrepreneur

Romania

Link Smart SLS

<http://www.scoala.link.ro>

My entrepreneurial career began when both my wife and I were laid off during the economic crisis in 2009. I decided that instead of looking for work I needed to be the one offering it. Four years later I had three companies, 15 employees and about 140 000 EUR consolidated annual turnover.

As an entrepreneur I am always looking for opportunities, like the EYE programme. I was not convinced at first, but my own

difficult and fearful entrepreneurial beginning pushed me to become a host entrepreneur to help and mentor others.

To date, I have hosted three new entrepreneurs, Marco, Silviu and Dina, and their impact has been incredible. Planning their experience forced me to improve departmental procedures and clarify the responsibilities of the colleagues they would be working with. As the host entrepreneur I also had to assign tasks according to their entrepreneurial needs, which made me realise I was not paying attention to the needs of my employees, and inspired our internal mentoring programme.

The benefit of hosting new entrepreneurs is their fresh perspective, and throughout their stay they asked many questions which produced novel solutions and ideas, as well as helping expand and grow the business.



Mads Ehrhardt

Host Entrepreneur

Denmark

Copenhagen Concept

<http://www.cphconcepts.dk>

As a host entrepreneur I have achieved numerous benefits over the course of time with my various New Entrepreneurs. I have gained valuable insights into new markets, some of which I would have not considered venturing into prior to the EYE experience, as well as specific market insights. In all cases, all my visiting New Entrepreneurs enhanced and

increased our social media presence, thus increasing our reach and awareness (the products are not sold to end-consumers) which was what we were aiming for. The New Entrepreneurs also helped establish relationships with influencers from around Europe on our behalf.

From a personal point of view, I have been challenged and stimulated, and eagerly followed the growth, development and business creation of each New Entrepreneur. If I have added just a bit of value to that – it gives me tremendous pleasure – and I am happy to give back to the start-up community across Europe in any way I can.



Maria Vlachou

Host Entrepreneur
Greece
Fereikos (Maria Vlachou LtD)
<http://www.fereikos.com>

As an EYE programme host entrepreneur being able to mentor young, aspiring entrepreneurs is a privilege and increases my passion for my work.

As one of the first Greek companies to participate in the EYE programme, I have hosted many new entrepreneurs from different countries, each of which has brought their own insight and unique values to my company. I could write a story about each entrepreneur I have hosted, but will focus on my last one, a Peruvian graphic designer wanting to open his own studio. Despite coming from an entirely

unrelated background, he helped me acquire new customers and opened my eyes to a completely new market and a tailored business idea. With his help, we launched a Spanish language webinar service for Latin America based customers interested in learning about our snails.

This new service opened an entire new market segment for us, a new source of income and a new collaboration! We have since decided to continue collaborating with the new entrepreneur who will help conduct the webinars and run the service.



Felix Gerlach

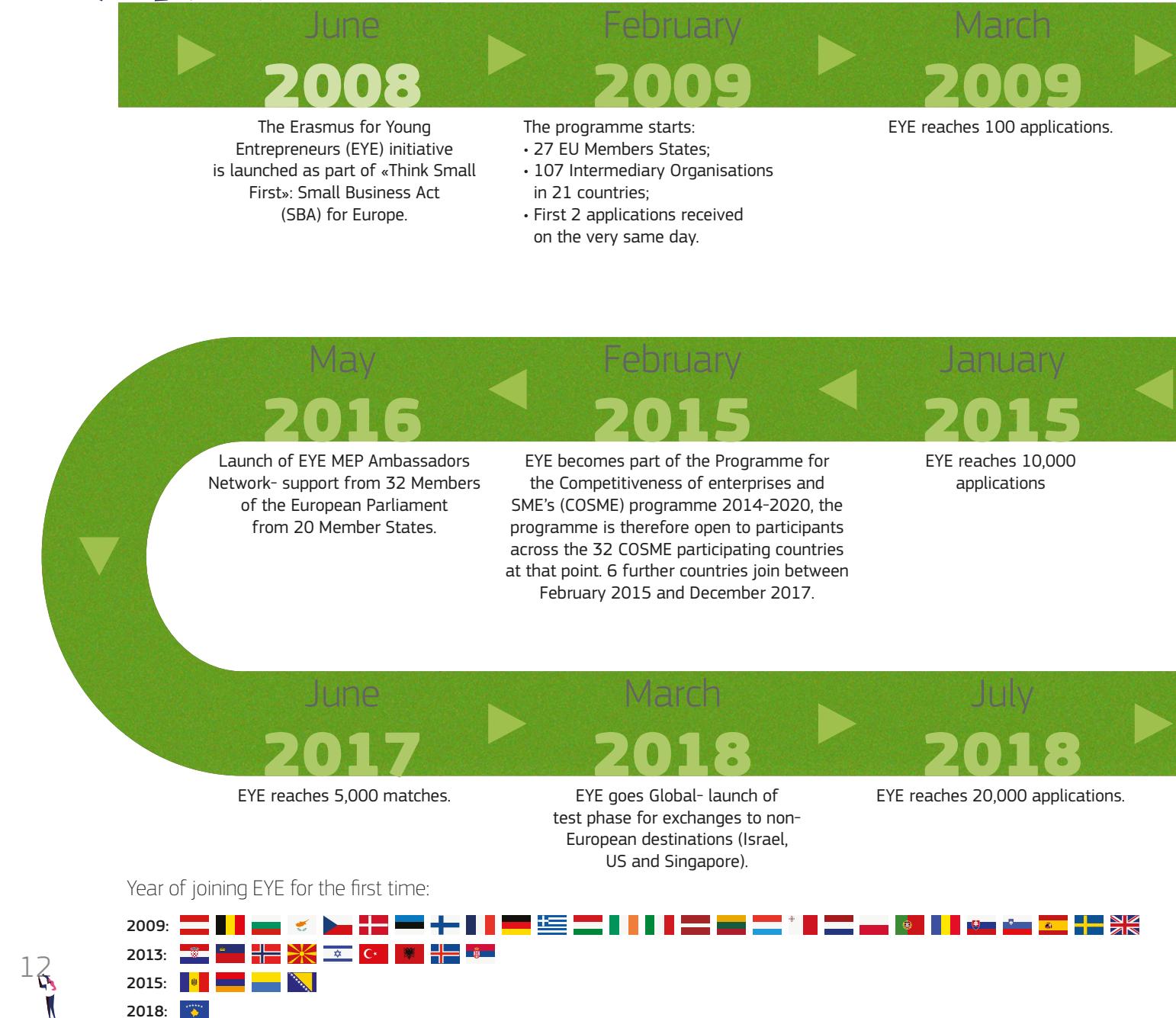
New Entrepreneur
Germany
Truepass Inc.
<http://www.truepass.me>

EYE was the first time I was truly introduced to the startup ecosystem and marked the beginning of my journey as an aspiring entrepreneur. Three years later, I am now a proud Co-Founder of the San Francisco-based VC-backed startup,

Passbase, and had the opportunity to teach product design at Stanford as a guest lecturer. Without the EYE programme I might not be where I am today.



EYE Important Dates



September
2009

The first match takes place between an Italian New Entrepreneur and a UK host entrepreneur.

November
2009

EYE reaches 100 matches and 1000 applications.

May
2012

EYE reaches 1000 matches

February
2014

The European Commission delegates the management of the programme to the Executive Agency for Small and Medium sized Enterprises (EASME).

February
2013

EYE is included in the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) allowing the participation of non-EU countries for the first time.

August
2012

EYE reaches 5000 applications.

September
2018

Kosovo joins the programme, making the programme accessible in 39 European countries.

February
2019

EYE turns 10!





James Markey

New Entrepreneur
United Kingdom
JP Mentors
<https://www.jpmentors.co.uk>

I joined the EYE programme to find the perfect business mentor, and thanks to the Intermediary Organisations involved, ended up with Arnaud Cosson, the CEO of HRV Simulation, in Laval, France.

I was given opportunities, both to work on my own business, and pick up live business experience within the host company. This ranged from supporting Arnaud with an investment pitch, demonstrating products to potential clients and getting involved in creating both the CRM system to support the growth and the marketing channels to create a future pipeline.

In my final exchange week I pitched my business after which HRV became my first client. Since then, I've launched JPMentors online, have clients in the UK and France, and am looking to hire a staff member to continue expanding. I have even invested in other small businesses to help others get started.

One year ago, I wondered how I was going to pay my rent, and this year, I ask myself why I did not join the EYE programme sooner.



Gregor Pichler

New Entrepreneur
Austria
Butleroy
<https://butleroy.com>

As a startup founder you make a lot of decisions, but going abroad alone and leaving your team behind whilst your startup is running at full speed, is not usually one of them. However, going abroad with the EYE programme to

Amsterdam was one of the best decisions I ever made, and the whole Butleroy team benefited immensely from the amazing insights from my mentor Esther Gons and her network from NEXT Amsterdam. My advice after this experience is to get out of your comfort zone, NOW!



Victoria Gosling

Host Entrepreneur
Germany
The Reader Berlin
<http://thereaderberlin.com>

When I first heard about the EYE programme, I couldn't wait to find out more! Over the past five years, I have hosted ten new entrepreneurs and started hosting my eleventh in October 2018.

The support, skill-exchange and teamwork I have shared with my new entrepreneurs has been a vital component to The Reader Berlin's success. Each new entrepreneur is unique, and each relationship has brought something new. Entrepreneurs have taught me crucial skills – from Gijs, my first, I learnt how to create and market ebooks. Emily brought in-depth knowledge of PR strategies, Dan shared his talent for creating viral content and Rachel helped me build up The

Reader's events. Tom, a visionary designer, artist and film-maker shared his unique skill-set – and when I fell off my bike and broke my collarbone, he stepped up and supported me to keep my business going during those first difficult, painful weeks. I possess abilities now that I didn't before, not to mention friends and networks across Europe.

As well as benefitting from my new entrepreneurs' experience, I shared my own, and as part of the process of mentoring, became a better teacher and businesswoman, developing insights into the exciting but risky task of establishing new entrepreneurial ventures.



Cristina Munteanu

New Entrepreneur
Romania
Terra Arte Association
<http://www.facebook.com/terraartecyprus/>

As a deaf person, I wanted to be financially independent and express my talent through creating functional ceramic pieces. I was afraid to start a business alone, and worried that people would not understand my artistic view and that being deaf would be a significant barrier.

The EYE programme changed everything and after coming back from my EYE exchange in Cyprus, I had the skills to build my own kiln, experiment with new elements and

undertake several collaborations with ceramic associations. My experience has allowed me to be a good and successful example for social inclusion of the deaf community, and my work means that I can help the community become further involved in social, cultural and economic life. I am very grateful for the opportunity to be involved in EYE and will encourage the deaf community to get involved and gain experience and development opportunities.



Michael Kokkinos

New Entrepreneur
Greece
Moptil
<http://moptil.com/>

In 2014 I found myself unemployed due to the Greek crisis, so I decided to take my chances and blend my passion for history with new Hi-Tech Augmented Reality trends, and reincarnate World Heritage monuments. Very soon after, I founded my own company and by 2015 had my first prototype, a mobile App that was a simple 3D Reconstruction of the Acropolis of Athens.

In 2017, I took part in the EYE programme- an opportunity which resulted in a marketing and sales boost of about 100 000 EUR and a cost saving of about 40 000 EUR. The programme allowed me to establish a real business, make my company sustainable and, most importantly, learn to think like an entrepreneur. It also allowed me to live abroad which expanded my horizons and enlarged both my personal and professional networks.



Nicolai Erbs

New Entrepreneur

Germany

Privalino

<http://www.privalino.de>

During my EYE exchange I took part in several investors meetings and had the chance to discuss expectations and strategy with both entrepreneurs and investors. As a result of this experience, I am now able to successfully select partners and find mutually beneficial agreements. Thanks to the programme I can also still rely on my host entrepreneur's help in difficult situations.

The technology I developed for Privalino, a software to protect children from cyber dangers, is widely applicable but requires a certain level of domain experience, meaning that future development relies on partners in other domains to provide us with their sales and business growth experience. We have already started cooperating with my host's company and adapted our technology for their use. We plan to enter the UK market with a joint venture of both companies, which requires deep-rooted trust that I have developed thanks to the EYE programme bringing us together.



David Hahn

New Entrepreneur

Germany

remberg

<https://remberg.io/>

Together with three other co-founders I started "remberg" in the field of the Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT). At this point, we have acquired roughly EUR 200 000 in national funding, were awarded by the Germany Ministry of Economic Affairs with the main prize for "Digital Innovations" and filed a global patent for our technology. In addition, we were selected for the highly competitive "TechFounders" program, through which we acquired our first customers.

None of this would have been possible without the EYE programme, which allowed me to build a valuable network of connections and formative experiences. At "remberg" we are now in the funding process for a seven-digit seed round with several well-known venture capitalists, and are convinced that we will contribute significantly to the European digital transformation which will enable the EU to remain competitive in the future.



Povilas Klimas

New Entrepreneur

Lithuania

MB Auteris; MB Kroviteksa

<http://fogosales.com> and <http://pristatykgreitai.lt>

One year ago I took part in an EYE exchange at Man – Super! in Florence, Italy, during which I learnt how to manage a company, communicate with employees, global business culture and other business skills.

After my EYE exchange I launched several companies. My first company – MB Auteris (Brand – “Fogosales”), provides B2B sales and communication services. I started with a small office and one employee, and now have a bigger

office, four employees, and continued expansion into four new countries! I also launched MB Kroviteksa, a cargo logistics service, which currently has two employees. In addition to being an entrepreneur I am an investor and business developing consultant for several startups, as well as a member of the “Klaipeda Rotaract Club”.

I still work very long hours, but I am always grateful for my experience with the EYE program which helped me on my journey.



Ilda Gribizi

New Entrepreneur

Albania

Dental studio Ilda Gribizi

Thanks to my time with my host entrepreneur in Italy, I developed a new business model to offer my services as a consultant orthodontist in cooperation with other dental studios, which is a completely new and successful approach in Albania.

In addition to recently investing in my own dental clinic, I provide orthodontic consultancy for four other dental studios. Patients now have specialised treatments and more access to orthodontic services. It has been so successful that I have hired a surgery dentist to cope with the demand to avoid having to send my patients elsewhere.



Armen Mkhitaryan

New Entrepreneur

Armenia

Ayrarat Tour

<http://www.ayrarattour.com> and <https://magelline.com/>

EYE enabled me to collaborate with a highly reputed tourism company in Florence called Made of Tuscany, which specialises in incoming tourism in Florence and Tuscany. During my six month exchange, I became involved in all aspects, including individual and group tours, development of new packages, work with local and international business partners and suppliers, and visits to over 200 top-rated hotels to present company services and become familiar with each hotel.

In several target markets of Ayrarat Tour, Italy is an attractive tourist destination, which is why we plan to offer Made of Tuscany tour services throughout our target markets via our newly created tour portal.

As a result of the partnership experience with Made of Tuscany, Ayrarat Tour has partnered with several reputable tourism portals and established business relationships with both the host entrepreneur company and several local companies, resulting in more than a 50% increase in sales.



Mertxe París

New Entrepreneur

Spain

Mosaics Llibres

<http://www.mosaicsllibres.com>

Mosaics Llibres is a small publishing house, which has grown to five co-workers and 10 freelancers. Our aim is to create books that encourage children and families to read for pleasure, and we believe in promoting quality, sustainability, social commitment (literature as a tool for social transformation), innovation and dialogue with our readers.

The EYE program represents the last and the definitive push I needed to throw myself into the entrepreneurship adventure five years ago. When I joined EYE, I was able to open the beautiful red door of my host entrepreneur's company, Barefoot Books, and begin my journey. Both EYE and Barefoot Books taught me that I could open any door! I would like to thank the EYE programme as without it we would probably not be celebrating our sweet and encouraging five year anniversary.

EYE – The next 10 years



Commissioner
Elżbieta Bieńkowska
Responsible for Internal
Market, Industry,
Entrepreneurship and SMEs

I want to see the programme grow in importance, with more and more successful entrepreneurs, creating more and more start-ups and SMEs that grow and scale-up within Europe and create the leaders of tomorrow.



MEP Dr. Paul Rübig
Austria

If I may express a wish regarding this programme: Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs should be the number one supporting program from the European Union when it comes to cross-border exchange within the young entrepreneur community. 10 years is a respectable period and I want to congratulate and thank everybody who supported and helped to make this programme so successful.



MEP Martina Dlabajova
Czech Republic

I hope that in upcoming years every young entrepreneur in Europe will know the benefits and immense added value of the program. Only then will they be ready to take this opportunity and take the first important step towards boosting their career.



MEP Andrey Novakov
Bulgaria

As an active EYE MEP Ambassador, I would be eager to see the programme's prosperous development in the future. I am convinced that the programme will continue to add value to Europe's economic growth and double its successful exchanges all over the world.



MEP Marlene Mizzi
Malta

In the 10 years since its launch, the programme has become extremely successful in helping thousands of entrepreneurs. I am convinced that it will continue developing successful practices making the entrepreneurial dream a reality for many more people. However, I would like to see the programme promoting more inclusive female entrepreneurship, as well as encouraging the participation and involvement of entrepreneurs from third countries who can bring different perspectives, skills and ideas.



Christoph Leitl
President EUROCHAMBRES

My sincere wish is to see Europe building on the achievements of this successful programme: more people and businesses benefiting, more countries to connect with, more entrepreneurs in Europe!
Let's make Europe the best place for entrepreneurs to thrive!

A network of contact points at your disposal



Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs is run locally by support organisations (e.g. Chambers of Commerce and Industry, start-up centres, incubators etc.). These local contact points are selected by the European Commission and guide entrepreneurs throughout the exchange.

To obtain more details about the programme and to get in touch with your local contact point, visit the programme website: www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu

The activities of the Intermediary Organisations are coordinated at European level by the programme Support Office.

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