



FEB-VBO
Federation of Belgian Companies



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PRESS RELEASE

EUROPEAN BUSINESS SUMMIT HELPS TO PROMOTE INNOVATIVE CULTURE

The first European Business Summit (EBS - www.ebsummit.org) kicked off in Brussels today (Friday, 9 June) with an opening session attended by more than 800 participants. The aim of the EBS is to establish a direct dialogue on innovation and creativity between European businesses and decision-makers at the European institutions. Accordingly, the EBS will play an important role in further developing the conclusions of the EU summit in Lisbon.

The European Business Summit is being organized by the Federation of Belgian Companies (VBO-FEB) in close collaboration with UNICE.

The opening session, attended by HRH Prince Philippe of Belgium, was addressed by Gui de Vaucleroy, the President of the Federation of Belgian Companies, Steve Ballmer, President and CEO of Microsoft, and European Commissioner Erkki Liikanen.

On behalf of the organizers, Mr de Vaucleroy said that the EBS wishes to create a common ground for business-leaders and policy-makers to discuss how to achieve innovation. Research shows a strong link between innovation and growth, and thus the creation of jobs. "Although Europe has seen many innovative companies we could and should do more to stimulate a more innovative culture", said Mr. de Vaucleroy.

In his speech, Mr Ballmer emphasized that innovation and creativity are essential to staying at the forefront of the digital age. He said: "This conference is a great initiative by bringing together Government and business leaders to discuss how Europe can move forward on this critical issue."

Finally, European Commissioner Erkki Liikanen underlined that "Europe requires a revolution in our culture and attitudes towards entrepreneurship and innovation. All stakeholders should be involved in the process of change that is necessary to strengthen Europe's entrepreneurial and innovative capacity. The European Commission therefore welcomes this opportunity for an intensive dialogue with the business community."

Today and tomorrow (Saturday, 10 June) the dialogue will continue in 12 workshops. The conclusions of the European Business Summit will be presented to Commission President Prodi. The EBS aims to boost European dynamism in innovation and creativity, which will not only have a positive impact on bolstering the economic structure and hence employment in Europe, but will also benefit other areas, such as health care and environmental protection.