



AER conference and Training Academy on Women Entrepreneurship in Istanbul region

Rationale

The number of women who are self-employed across Europe is much smaller than that of men and the number of women entrepreneurs with employees is even smaller. In 2005 only 8,6% of the total number of women in work were self-employed. This was only half of the proportion of men in work who were self-employed (Source: Eurostat). In Turkey, a country with a traditionally higher rate of self-employed the same ratio applies; while 27,1% of men are self-employed, only 13,1% of women run their own business (Source: European Commission).

Entrepreneurial activities are an important factor in creating and increasing employment opportunities and fuelling economic growth. Entrepreneurship plays a crucial part in the transition process in Eastern Europe being an important source of job creation, opening career opportunities for women and men.

However, men traditionally have had better opportunities for self-employment as women face more constraints than men in developing their businesses. These constraints include less access to credit and larger markets; mobility constraints; more workload in the family and household; lack of networks needed to facilitate business development; and lack of know-how concerning ICT, corporate and public sector procurement. Traditional attitudes towards the gender role and unfavourable social climate have also constrained women entrepreneurs.

The **AER Conference and Training Academy on women entrepreneurship on 25 March 2010** will give AER member regions the opportunity to

- Develop an understanding for the particularities of women entrepreneurship,
- Explore what measures can be taken to improve the climate for women entrepreneurs in their region,
- Learn how in concrete they can support women who want to develop entrepreneurial activity and
- Exchange experience with other European regions on this issue.,

The **Conference on women entrepreneurship** will have the aim of creating an understanding and building up a knowledge concerning women entrepreneurship. It will examine the particularities of women entrepreneurship from a theoretical and practical perspective by presenting relevant studies and examples of women running a business. Further more regional good practice in supporting women entrepreneurship will be presented, e.g. training courses, advisory services or awareness raising campaigns.

The **Training Academy on women entrepreneurship later in 2010** will build up on the conference with the aim to give regional politicians and officers an in depth view on support schemes from different European regions and help them to develop their own support programmes. The Training Academy will include lectures on:

- Raising awareness for female business start-ups among support institutions, banks and the business community,
- Design of vocational training for female business starters and women entrepreneurs, e.g. specific content such as negotiation skills, starting part-time, reconciliation of professional and private work,
- Consulting, advisory services and mentoring for women entrepreneurs
- Access to finance, e.g. how to negotiate with financing institution, micro financing, guarantee schemes,
- Networking as a means to link women entrepreneurs in a region and beyond.
- European funding to support women entrepreneurship in the regions and interregional cooperation in concerning women entrepreneurship
- EU and other international policy on women entrepreneurship