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Five Pillars News

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The monthly Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) newsletter covers internal issues, member news, relevant updates on female entrepreneurship in Europe, and information on upcoming events.



Welcome to our new members: FEDEPE and Selena



FEDEPE is a Spanish organisation of women entrepreneurs based in Madrid, which goals are: to improve women's quality of life and achieve a more equal social environment; to raise awareness on female entrepreneurship; to exchange information, knowledge and experience; to promote and strengthen the access of women to high positions in businesses; to develop innovative strategies, and to overcome the remaining barriers to a fulfilled female entrepreneurship.

FEDEPE provide training and exchange of knowledge and experience to develop women's leadership. It collaborates with national and local institutions as well as with private organizations aiming at promoting the professional development and the presence of women in positions of responsibility and decision.

FEDEPE's [website](#).



Selena is an organisation created in order to consolidate the relationship between Italian and Bulgarian professionals. It organises roundtables involving Bulgarian and Italian professionals to transfer Italian expertise and know-how about entrepreneurship to Bulgaria. It guarantees to women entrepreneurs support for their business development through access to information and the animation of networks

Selena offers: training; management and enterprise strategy; consultancy; communication and marketing activities; access to European financing, and project coordination for territory promotion

Selena' [website](#)

Save The Date!

The next event of the WEP will take place on the 19th of March 2014. The event will be a lunch debate on the topic of education to entrepreneurship, and will be preceded by a meeting of the WEP. I invite you to mark this date in your calendars. We look forward to seeing you then!

Thank you to our new Champions for their support

The following five MEPs have committed to support the Women Entrepreneurship Platform as "Champions", we are very honoured to count them among the WEP's supporters



Alexandra Thein, Germany

Alexandra Thein is a member of the ALDE group of the European Parliament and of the Freie Demokratische Partei in Germany. She is a member of the JURI committee and a substitute for the AFCO committee. As she was self-employed herself, **Alexandra Thein** strongly supports female entrepreneurship. [Profile on the EP website](#) - [Personal website](#)



Seán Kelly, Ireland

Sean Kelly is a member of the EPP group of the European Parliament and of the Fine Gael Party in Ireland. He is a member of the REGI committee and a substitute for committees ITRE and CULT. Sean Kelly is involved in topics such as education as well as competitiveness in SMEs. He is strongly involved in the promotion of female entrepreneurship. **Sean Kelly** has been elected MEP of the Year for Research & Innovation in 2012. [Profile on the EP website](#) - [Personal website](#)



Maria Da Graça Carvalho, Portugal

Maria Da Graça Carvalho is a member of the EPP and of the Social Democrat Party in Portugal. She is a member of the ITRE committee and a substitute in BUDG. **Maria Carvalho** is involved in topics such as research and Innovation, children's rights, and female entrepreneurship. She participated to the lunch debate of the WEP on the 25th of September, adding her point of view on the challenges of women entrepreneurs in Portugal. [Profile on the EP website](#) - [Personal website](#)



Marc Tarabella, Belgium

Marc Tarabella is a member of the S&D and the Parti Socialiste in Belgium. He is an active member of the committees AGRI and FEMM and is a substitute for the IMCO committee. **Marc Tarabella** was the rapporteur for the 2009 [report on Equality between Men and Women in the EU](#) and the shadow rapporteur for the 2012 report on Eliminating Gender Stereotypes in the EU. He is very much involved in women's rights and women's entrepreneurship and acts to tackle their challenges. [Profile on the EP website](#), [Personal website](#)

Best practice in... Finland

Every month, Five Pillars News focuses on a best practice in the field of female entrepreneurship. This month: Finland



To promote and improve female entrepreneurship in the country, Finland developed the programme **Valtava**, a national development project for the period 2007-2013 supported by the European Social Fund. It has been designed to develop the integration and evaluation of gender mainstreaming in the fields of employment and female entrepreneurship.

Valtava develops, among others, the following projects: “Entre Akademi”, support for entrepreneurship; “Lapin Letka”, promotion of gender equality in education and employment in Lapland; “Empowering women as leaders”, “Pätkät pitkiksi”, from temporary to long-term work, and “TASSU”, gender equality and equal pay. The project’s targets are regional authorities, educational institutions, third sector stakeholders, consulting agencies, training organizations, and companies willing to promote gender equality.

The **Valtava** programme produced a manual on gender mainstreaming compiling the best practices in projects for gender equality, an evaluation of the structural implications and a training package on gendermainstreaming in the context of economy and education. The manual can be found [here](#).

Review of the V MEDA forum

The fifth edition of the “**Mediterranean Women Entrepreneurs Forum**”, organised by **AFAEMME** (Association of Organisations of Mediterranean Businesswomen) together with ASCAME (Association of Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry) and the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Navigation, took place on November 22nd, 2013.

The event offered to Mediterranean women entrepreneurs an exceptional business networking occasion and enabled them to learn more about the opportunities in the region. Female entrepreneurship in Albania, Algeria, Egypt, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Monaco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey is actually developing and the forum’s goal was to give its actors a voice.



Mr. Fathallah Sijilmassi, Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean, pictured with the several presidents of Mediterranean businesswomen organisations, among which our member Afaemme.

According to this [Sbwire press release](#), “in the Euro-Mediterranean countries, the financial crisis has had a strong impact on everyone, but it has especially affected women in the promotion and growth of their businesses. It is noteworthy that in Albania, 70% of small businesses are led by women. In contrast to that, statistics from Greece show that 42% of the female labor force believes that starting a business would pose a risk to the stability of their families. In Italy, only 30% of companies are led by women. Malta has the lowest percentage of women entrepreneurs among European countries. In Turkey, women-owned businesses represent only 7% of the total, and about half of the female population does not consider owning a business to be a realistic career option.”

The key conclusions of the Forum were that women entrepreneurs need a more women-friendly access to finance and that gender policies eradicating stereotypes need to be encouraged. Moreover, it has been discussed that women should be encouraged to play a more active role in the labour market through the establishment of a common economic front enabled by the economic and political crisis in the Mediterranean.

Why women's entrepreneurship is so dynamic in Poland?

Female entrepreneurship in Poland is one of the most dynamic in Europe. What are the social, economic and cultural reasons for this?

Poland is a paradox as far as gender equality is concerned: on one hand, indexes show that many improvements still need to be done (there are 15% of women in the Polish Parliament, women in high-level positions are underrepresented, work/life balance is still a struggle), and on the other hand, there are many women entrepreneurs: 53% of women are active in the labour market, and the proportion of women entrepreneurs is 35%, one of the highest in Europe.

After fifty years of communist domination, everything had to be rebuilt, recreated and renewed. People benefited from the collapse of the soviet bloc, as many opportunities of business creation came up. As people were used to state socialism, they were well-trained for the new market economy, more flexible. This was a chance for the Poles to be entrepreneurs, and this is also why women came to the market with self-confidence. Moreover, as there was no credit, they didn't suffer from discrimination regarding access to finance.



Female entrepreneurship in Poland developed and grew these past decades, but there are still challenges to tackle: unemployment and the crisis as well as the weight of the Church and patriarchal traditions, which demand from women to be fulltime housewives and make them feel guilty whenever they choose to develop a career or a business.



However, women are offered help and assistance to set up their business through two fundamental elements: micro loans and networks. Fundusz Mikro is a \$20 million micro-credit program created in 1994 by the Polish-American Entrepreneurship Fund which helps women starting their own business. They actually account for 40 percent of the Mikro borrowers. As women's entrepreneurship went on developing, so did the networks of women entrepreneurs, gathering to share information, contacts and business advice. Poland counts numerous active women entrepreneurs associations, among which the Women Entrepreneurship Ambassadors.

Three exceptional Polish women entrepreneurs:



Wanda Rapaczynska: Agora SA is the most successful media company in Central Europe, owning 4 web platforms, 29 radio stations and 20 newspapers, among which Gazeta Wyborcza. Agora SA is run by Wanda Rapaczynska. Born in 1947 in Poland, she moved to Sweden in 1968 and then to Yale University where she graduated and became vice-president of Citibank. In 1990, she was asked for help to develop *Gazeta Wyborcza*, one of the most important newspapers of the country, of which she became chairwoman in 1998. She resigned in 2007 and came back at the head of Agora SA in 2013. Wanda Rapaczynska was nominated one of the 50 most influential businesswomen by the magazine Fortune, and one of the 8th more powerful businesswomen in Europe.



Irena Eris: Irena Eris is the 68th out of the 100 wealthiest people in Poland according to the Wprost 2013 ranking. Irena founded her cosmetic brand and employed only one person for the first two years, mixing the ingredients of her products by hand and delivering the products with her own car. She now employs 300 people and expanded to beauty institutes and a brand of hotels and spas.



Zofia Drohomirecka: In 1992, Zofia Drohomirecka opened the “Out of Africa” coffee house near the historic Old Market Square in Krakow with her husband, at a time when coffee wasn’t very accessible. The brand quickly expanded and became a franchise of 30 coffee shops of high quality coffee. Zofia mostly makes business with young, dynamic female franchises who are willing to be their own boss and get involved in the community.

Inspired by [this article](#).

Focus on... Féminin PME’s « Accélérateur de croissance »

Our Belgian member Féminin PME is launching its growth accelerator in January



On 24th of January 2014, 2014, Féminin PME will become the first growth accelerator for women entrepreneurs in French-speaking Belgium. Féminin PME is a programme of training and support to business creation dedicated to women. In ten years, 25% of the women who benefited from the programme gave life to their project in a sustainable way.

In 2013, the study on female entrepreneurship in Walloon Brabant showed that 26% of the entrepreneurs in the region are women. Three years after the creation of their business, their enterprise has gained an added value of more than €130 000 against €75 000 for men. After three years, a women entrepreneur in the region employs, in average, three people full time, against 1.1 employee for men. If the Walloon Brabant counted as many women entrepreneurs as men entrepreneurs, 6400 new businesses would have been created these last ten years, and not 3800, as it is the case. These balance would have also created 7000 more jobs.

Féminin PME wishes to answer to the needs of female entrepreneurs by becoming a growth accelerator. The process involves a long-term support enabling to women entrepreneurs to develop her activity, from its creation to its management.

The European Enterprise Promotion Awards winners

The seven winners of the European Enterprise Promotion Awards 2013 are:

The Latvian Chamber Of Commerce and Industry (LCCI)- Think Small First: Think Small First is an initiative developed by the Latvian Chamber Of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) with the aim to help micro enterprises by promoting the creation of a special tax rate. As a result of this initiative, a total of 28,000 enterprises have used the simplified tax accounting system and the number of micro-enterprises in Latvia is growing.



The Finnish Economic Information Office - MyCity: Me & MyCity is a study module on society, working life and entrepreneurship, which offers to six graders information and positive experiences of enterprises and different professions. So far, 27 000 sixth

graders and over 1 000 teachers have visited MyCity learning environments around Finland. During the 2013–2014 school year 30 000 pupils, a half of Finland’s sixth-graders, will visit MyCity learning environments around the country.

The Mid East Regional Authority, Ireland - Senior Enterprise: Senior Enterprise is specifically designed to encourage a greater involvement with enterprise by people aged 50 and over and to raise awareness of their potential to start a business, acquire or invest in a business started by someone else, or to become a volunteer mentor. To date, almost 1,000 individuals over 50 years of age who have received support from Senior Enterprise in Ireland, the UK and France, have set up new businesses.



City of Ghent, Department of Economics, Belgium - Starters' Agreement for Entrepreneurs: The Belgium



Starters' Agreement aims at helping entrepreneurs to draft a business plan. They can ask for professional advice and specialist guidance, they follow training and development courses and are accompanied for three years by the City of Ghent to continue their business activity. With this contract,

entrepreneurs can receive support of a maximum of €5,000 and one of the most important objectives is to increase the success rate of starting companies during their first years and to prevent failures. To date, a total of 171 starters' agreements have received a positive recommendation.

Portuguese Association of Footwear Industries, Components, Leather Goods and their Substitutes, Portugal - Portuguese Shoes: The Sexiest Industry in Europe: The Portuguese footwear industry exports more than 95% of its production to the most demanding international markets. In order to allow the sector to continue to take firm steps in a competitive international environment, the APICCAPS, a national business association, with the support of the Compete Programme, has taken various measures to promote Portuguese footwear. As a result of this strategy, footwear exports have grown more than 20% in the past two years.



entrepreneurs can receive support of a maximum of €5,000 and one of the most important objectives is to increase the success rate of starting companies during their first years and to prevent failures. To date, a total of 171 starters' agreements have received a positive recommendation.

Municipality of Gürsu, Turkey - Developing with Unlimited Clean Energy: Key aims of the Town of Gürsu project are to increase the use of green energy to prevent environmental pollution caused by the use of fossil fuels, to save energy used for municipal services and to help socio-economic development of the town. The long-term goal is to enable Turkey to take a leading role in renewable energy investments at both regional and national levels. Since the project began, Gürsu has obtained 40% of its electricity needs from a photovoltaic solar energy plant in the 5 months of winter and 100% in the 7 summer months.

AV Mobilita s.r.o., Slovakia - Integration of disadvantaged people



AV Mobilita s.r.o. is a sheltered workshop specialising in integrating disabled people into all areas of life. As a pilot organisation, it focused on car repairs and it now co-ordinates other sheltered workshops forming part of the Škoda Handy Disabled Persons Project in Bratislava, Prešov, Banska Bystrica and Žilina.

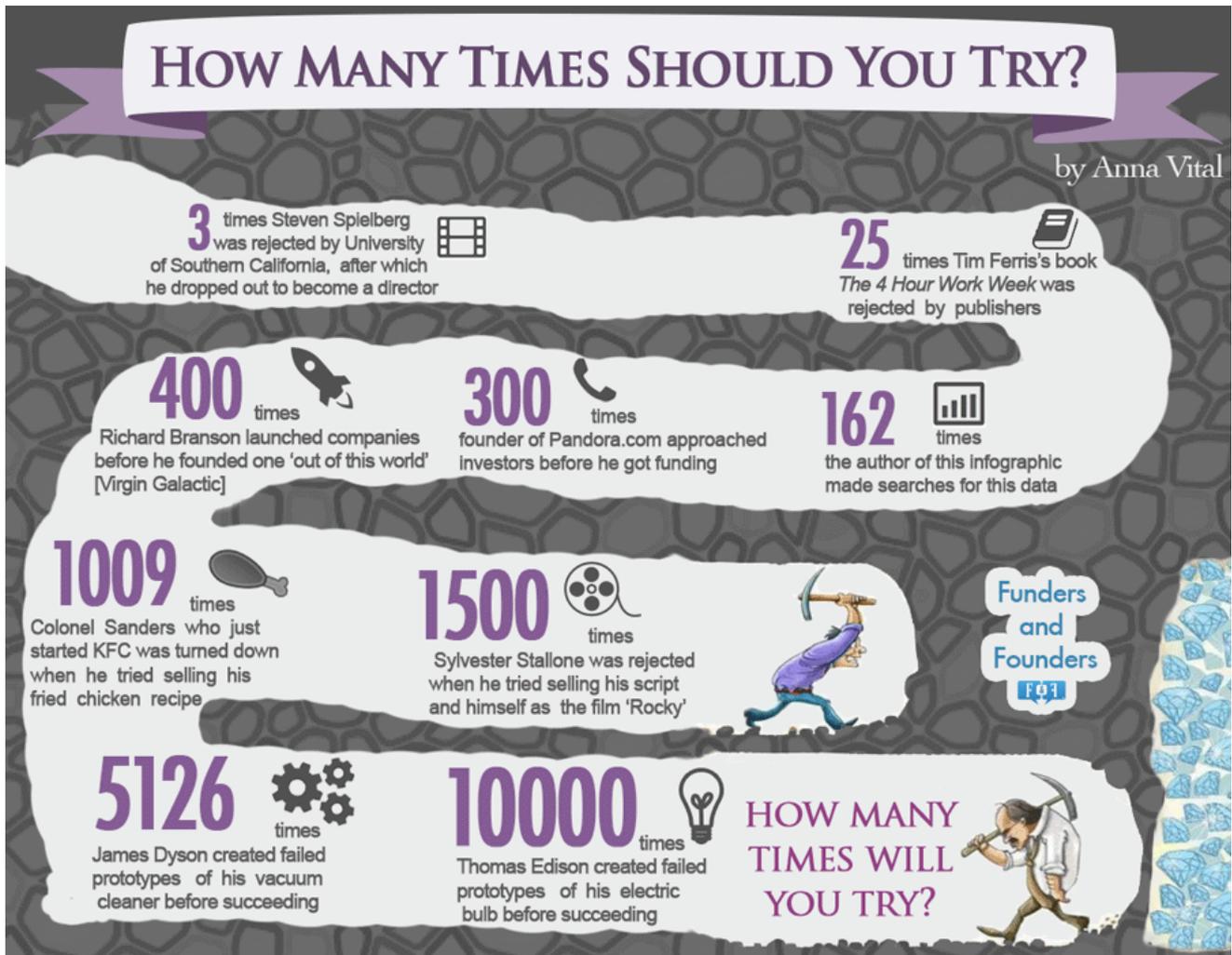
The **Association of Business Women in Serbia** received the special mentions of the jury. It aims at promoting and provides support to female entrepreneurs, while advocating for the improvement of the business climate and fostering local, regional and international networking. The initiative connects female entrepreneurs throughout Serbia, strengthening local associations and establishing and building the capacity of newly formed local associations. In the past year, three new Associations of Business Women have been created in Novi Pazar, Subotica and Zajecar.



[Source](#)

The figures of the month

For the fifth edition of Five Pillars News, we are presenting "One billion Entrepreneurs by year 2020"



[source](#)

News in Brief... News in Brief... News in Brief... News in

This month, the section News in Brief is dealing with the economic crisis in Italy and draws the results of the Global Entrepreneurship Week

Global Entrepreneurship Week: the growing opportunities

This year's edition of the Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) has once again been a great success, bringing together over 7.5 million people in 130 countries. The GEW proposed and to convert more aspiring entrepreneurs to take the leap and create their own business, and to help and support the entrepreneurs who already created their business in its development. You will find more [here](#).

The economic crisis affects women entrepreneurs in Italy

In the past five years, the number of Italian women entrepreneurs dropped by 6.7% (123 000 people). This figure is significant but less than the decrease observed by the male counterpart: - 9.1% (388 000 people). According to the figures provided by Confartigianato and which can be seen more in detail in the table below, there are 1.7 million self-employed women in Italy, which corresponds to 30.8 of the independent workers and to 18.4% of the total female employment. More info [here](#).

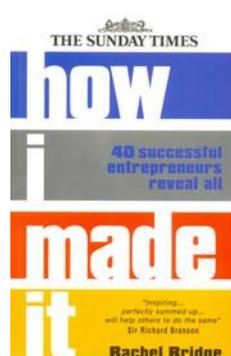
La forza femminile del 'fare impresa': la dinamica dell'occupazione per profilo professionale e genere
Il trimestre 2008 e il trimestre 2013; valori assoluti in migliaia, var. ass. e relative. Oltre 15 anni

		Imprenditori, lavoratori in proprio con dipendenti e professionisti con dipendenti	Altri indipendenti	Totale indipendenti	Dipendenti	TOTALE
Donne	Il trimestre 2008	360,1	1.482,1	1.842,2	7.558,9	9.401,0
	Il trimestre 2013	389,0	1.330,0	1.719,0	7.646,2	9.365,2
	Var. ass.	28,9	-152,1	-123,1	87,3	-35,8
	Var. %	8,0	-10,3	-6,7	1,2	-0,4
Uomini	Il trimestre 2008	1.290,4	2.952,8	4.243,2	9.936,8	14.180,0
	Il trimestre 2013	1.190,0	2.665,3	3.855,3	9.240,0	13.095,3
	Var. ass.	-100,4	-287,5	-387,9	-696,9	-1.084,7
	Var. %	-7,8	-9,7	-9,1	-7,0	-7,6
TOTALE	Il trimestre 2008	1.650,5	4.434,8	6.085,3	17.495,7	23.581,0
	Il trimestre 2013	1.579,1	3.995,3	5.574,3	16.886,1	22.460,5
	Var. ass.	-71,4	-439,6	-511,0	-609,6	-1.120,6
	Var. %	-4,3	-9,9	-8,4	-3,5	-4,8

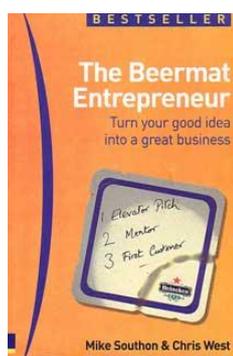
Elaborazione Ufficio Studi Confartigianato su dati Istat

6 inspiring bestsellers on successful entrepreneurship.

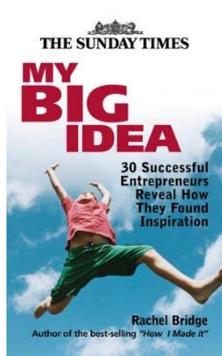
Here are six bestsellers on how to succeed in entrepreneurship you can read during the long winter evenings and which will help you find inspiration.



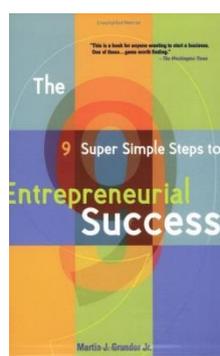
“How I Made It”,
R. Bridge, 2004



“The Beermat Entrepreneur – Turn your good idea into a great Business”, M. Southon & C. West, 2005



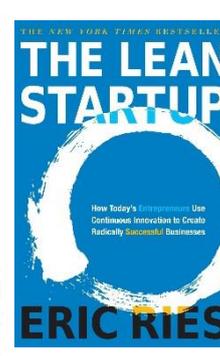
“My big Idea”
R. Bridge, 2006



“The 9 super Simple Steps to Entrepreneurial Success “
M.J. Grunder Jr, 2003



“How to Make a Million Before Lunch”
R. Bridge, 2010



“The Lean Startup”
E. Ries, 2011

Publications

Every month, we present three recent publications about entrepreneurship policies and women's entrepreneurship in Europe. Happy reading!



National and Cross-national Policies on Women's Entrepreneurship in the Baltic Sea Region- A Comparative Perspective, Baltic Development Fund, 2011.

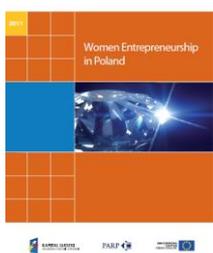
The report finds that the countries around the Baltic Sea as well as Norway and Iceland are using very different policy instruments and projects in order to increase the number of women entrepreneurs. Few countries have adopted a clear policy to encourage and facilitate women to start their own business or to become more ambitious. The report finds that the conditions for exchange of best practice are perfect, since there is room for improvement through cross-border cooperation. The report

can be found under the following [link](#).



OECD Week 2012- Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship: final report of the MCM 2012, OECD 2012.

In 2010 the OECD launched a gender initiative to examine existing barriers to gender equality in education, employment and entrepreneurship (the 'three Es') with the aim to improve policies and to promote gender equality in the economy in both OECD and non-OECD countries alike. This report from the initiative was presented at the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting (MCM) held in Paris on 23-24 May 2012. It is designed to inform, share policy experiences and good practices, and help governments promote gender equality in education, employment and entrepreneurship. It looks at the state of play from a gender perspective across all three issues, whether inequalities exist, how and why they have developed, and which obstacles need to be overcome to move towards greater equality. It offers policy advice to governments as to how they can create a more level playing field. You can find the report by clicking [here](#).



Women Entrepreneurship in Poland, Polish Agency for Enterprise Development, 2011.

Women entrepreneurship is an important challenge in modern societies, and at the same time it's a complex phenomenon. On the one hand, a distinctive economic context is noticeable as far as women entrepreneurship is concerned; on the other hand, starting own business activity by women and becoming owners of their companies is strongly determined by culture. The main objective of this project was to broaden the knowledge on women entrepreneurship in Poland and prepare recommendations regarding ways of support and limiting the barriers disallowing them to increase their business activity. The report can be found by clicking on this [link](#).

Role Models

This month, we are happy to present Carrie Green



Carrie Green started her own business in 2005, a mobile phone unlocking system. She was 20 years old and was about to go into her second year of studying Law in Birmingham. Within a few years, the business went global, selling throughout the UK, USA, Canada, Australia and Europe and receiving over 100,000 hits on the website every month.

While the business was growing, Carrie felt very lonely as a young female entrepreneur. She was working from home and didn't have much interaction with other women in business, so she decided to create an association: the Female Entrepreneur Association.

The Female Entrepreneur is a website looking to bring together like-minded women entrepreneurs who went through or are going through similar experiences. They have the possibility to use the website as a platform in order share their experiences, information and connect. Today, over 13 000 women are involved in the Female Entrepreneur Association. In June 2012, Carrie launched a digital magazine for women entrepreneurs, you can find [here](#).

Events

Every month, we are presenting a non-exhaustive list of events on entrepreneurship and women's entrepreneurship throughout Europe. If you attended one of them, send us a review! We will be happy to publish it in Five Pillars News! If your organisation is planning an event in the coming weeks: let us know!

January 2014

- [Working Group 'Family and Social policies' on "Societal changes impacting the lives of families"](#), COFACE, 11th of January, Brussels, Belgium.
- [Social Entrepreneurs : Have Your Say !](#) 16-17 January 2014, Strasbourg, France.
- [La Clause de l'Européenne la plus favorisée – Travail](#) (indépendance économique, taux d'emploi, emploi partiel, écart salarial). 27 January 2014, Brussels, Belgium.
- [Atelier de la Compétitivité](#), AmCham France, 22nd of January, Paris, France

February 2014

- [Bruxelles Pionnières workshop on Mindmapping](#), 3rd of February, Brussels, Belgium

March 2014

- [500 entrepreneurs](#), networking event, 12th March 2014, Ljubljana, Slovenia.
- [Bruxelles Pionnières Workshop "Enterprise, from the idea to the project"](#), 24th of March, Brussels, Belgium.

April

- [Ja-Ye Trade Fair 2014](#), 2-4 April 2014, Haifa, Israel.
- [National Women Entrepreneurs Day](#), 6th of April, Porvoo, Finland.
- [Ja-Ye International Student Company Festival 2014](#), 7-9 April, Riga, Latvia.
- [FCEM World Committee](#), April 2014 Dubrovnik, Croatia.

May

- [Bruxelles Pionnières Workshop "How to create your website in one day"](#), 9th of March, Brussels, Belgium.

