

Catalan universities create network to foster entrepreneurship



15.02.2011 **Training** - The universities UAB, UB, UPC, UPF, UOC, URV, UdG, UdL and UVic have created the **University Entrepreneurship Network (Xarxa d'Emprenedoria Universitària)**. The initiative aims to carry out coordinated actions to foster entrepreneurship with the objective of contributing to the detection of business talent and business vocations within the university community. On 15 February the network was presented at the Aula Magna of the historical UB building in Barcelona.

The network receives funding from the Department of Business and Employment as part of the aids destined to innovative projects for the improvement in employment quality and social cohesion in Catalonia. The selected projects are incorporated into European Social Fund Operational Programme for Catalonia for 2007-2013 and fit in strategically with the government's Pla Inicia for future entrepreneurs.

Led by the Bosch i Gimpera Foundation, the Xarxa d'Emprenedoria Universitària is made up of four strategic lines: motivate and foster entrepreneurial spirit in Catalan universities; give support and promote innovative ideas for business projects emerging from the university environment; enhance and consolidate business initiatives, and generate knowledge capable of providing resources and devices for the assessment of university entrepreneurship.

The main objectives of the network are to increase investment in human capital by improving key skills and competences among students; improving university training courses; distributing economic resources and materials through coordination among members of the network; promoting closer relations with university surroundings and interactions between universities and businesses; and multiplying knowledge in entrepreneurial skills.

Specific actions carried out by the network will include conferences at several of the member universities to foster entrepreneurship with the aim of familiarising participants with the idea of entrepreneurship as a career option and where they can discover its benefits, their potential as professionals and exchange experiences.

Workshops on entrepreneurial skills will go towards helping students discover their aptitudes and abilities, and provide them with ways to improve them. A University Entrepreneurship and Innovation Day will be celebrated and summer courses will be offered by the different universities. Over 120 workshops, conferences and seminars will be held throughout this year.

Online activities will also be offered for students to participate in innovation project simulacra. Research and dissemination activities, as well as an Observatory for University Entrepreneurship, will also form part of the network agenda.