



This Project is co-funded by the European Union  
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**NEWSLETTER #7 | MAY 2020**

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*Dear Colleagues and Stakeholders of TEBD,*

*Although it looks in Europe like we are starting to get at least some grip on the COVID-19 pandemic, it is definitely not behind us. There is still a long way to go, and it also becomes more and more clear that the world after COVID-19 will not be the same as before.*

*During this challenging time, innovative digital solutions allow businesses, citizens and public administrations to continue their activities. Innovative chambers address the digitalization needs of SMEs, and innovative SMEs offer digital solutions to help people stay connected and facilitate smart working.*

*We are pleased to present our innovative Chamber Partnership 'Twinning for Digitalization' (T4D) Project which has been implemented by two notable chambers: Istanbul Chamber of Commerce (ICoC) and Paris Ile-de-France Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Paris CCI).*

*As the European and Turkish Chambers, we work together and win together - even in these challenging times. We have achieved so much in our TEBD Project, let's keep on strengthening mutual understanding and cooperation between the Turkish and European Business Communities! We wish all TEBD stakeholders a Happy Europe Day on the 9th of May!*

*We hope you will enjoy this latest edition of our newsletter and we wish you continued strength. Stay safe and take care of each other!*

*Oya ERSÖZ - TEBD Project Director*

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## **SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

### **Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

**All TEBD events postponed until further notice**

The TEBD team is closely following ongoing developments regarding travel restrictions and other measures that are being applied in Turkey and in the European Union, in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Nothing is more important to us than protecting the health and safety of our partners and stakeholders. Therefore, as from 18 March 2020, we have decided to postpone all of the public events which were due to take place in the framework of the TEBD project until further notice.

In case you have any questions regarding specific events or activities, you may contact the TEBD team ([tebd@eurochambres.eu](mailto:tebd@eurochambres.eu)).

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

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## CHAMBER PARTNERSHIP Success Story

### Chambers in Istanbul and Paris join forces to help companies go digital

'Twinning for Digitalization' (T4D) is a project that has been developed and implemented by Istanbul Chamber of Commerce (Turkey) in partnership with the Paris Ile-de-France Chamber of Commerce and Industry (France). It is one of 19 partnership projects which is being supported by the European Union in the framework of TEBD.

Digitalization can be considered as both an opportunity and a challenge for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). While the benefits of digitalization can be very significant, companies are often deterred by a lack of resources, or by not having access to the necessary knowledge. Addressing the digitalization needs of SMEs is the main objective of

the T4D project, which was launched on 1 April 2019 and is due to end in the summer of 2020.



The T4D project aims to strengthen the capacity of Istanbul CoC to provide advice and support to companies, in order help them access the benefits of digital technologies - including online marketing and e-commerce. In particular, the project partners have shared knowledge and expertise that Paris CCI has gained through the development of its own digital support service network under the label of “Les Digiteurs”.

During the first 12 months of the project, the partners have carried out research on the digital needs of SMEs in the city and province of Istanbul. Paris CCI has produced a Guidebook of Methodology Transfer and Partnership Building, and has also provided training to five members of staff from Istanbul CoC. Meanwhile, Istanbul CoC has developed a web platform for SMEs supported by a diagnostic tool to assess the needs of each business, and has also started to set up a digital transformation academy.



During the last few weeks, it has become even more evident that digitalization is vital for businesses to succeed in the 21st Century. The context of the COVID-19 pandemic has forced many companies to move faster in the direction of digitalization. At the end of this period, we can expect to find that those companies which have already embraced digitalization will have suffered less damage than others. One can even say that digital transformation could act as a 'lifesaver' for many companies - especially SMEs.

In the long term, the positive impacts of the T4D project are expected to spread beyond Istanbul to other parts of Turkey, as knowledge and best practices are disseminated. Moreover, the T4D partners hope that their project will make a crucial contribution not only to the digitalization of companies but also to the strengthening of mutual knowledge and understanding between the Turkish and EU business communities.

In the framework of TEBD, the European Union is supporting 19 partnership projects involving Chambers in Turkey and Chambers in the EU Member States.

For more information about **Chamber Partnerships**, please see the [TEBD website](#).

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## OTHER NEWS

### Latest developments in the European Union's response to the social and economic impacts of COVID-19

The institutions of the European Union are continuing to work with the EU Member States in order to share information and coordinate national efforts to manage the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as taking the necessary actions at EU level in order to mitigate the negative social and economic impacts of the crisis.

On 15 April, the European Commission, in cooperation with the President of the European Council, put forward a [Joint European Roadmap](#) that sets out common principles for phasing-out the measures that have been put in place to contain the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 23 April, the leaders of the EU Member States (members of the European Council) [agreed to work towards establishing](#) a **European Recovery Fund**, which will be targeted towards the sectors and regions most affected by the current crisis. The European Commission was asked to analyse the exact needs and to present a detailed proposal.

Also on 23 April, the European Commission proposed a series of [exceptional measures](#) to support the agricultural sector and food markets including grants to support the storage of dairy and meat products, and temporary derogations from EU competition rules.

On 24 April, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) [issued guidance](#) on how to ensure the **health and safety of employees** as they return to their workplaces,

when the coronavirus containment measures are being phased out.

Also on 24 April, the President of the European Commission [announced that the EU](#) was joining forces with global partners to launch the **Coronavirus Global Response**, with the aim of ensuring that all countries around the world will be able to deploy vaccines and treatments, as these become available. On 4 May, the Commission registered [€7.4 billion in pledges](#) from donors worldwide (including €1.4 billion from the EU).

On 28 April, the European Commission adopted a [banking package](#) to help facilitate bank lending to households and businesses throughout the European Union.

On 6 May, the European Commission published its [Spring 2020 Economic Forecast](#). The EU economy is forecast to shrink in size by 7.5% this year, as a result of the economic damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures put in place to contain it, which have led to reduced levels of demand for many goods and services.

For more information about how the EU is responding to the **COVID-19** pandemic, see the [Coronavirus response](#) section of the European Commission website.

For information about **EUROCHAMBRES** actions and positions in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, its economic impacts and measures which should be taken at EU level, please see the dedicated web page: <https://chambers4eu.eu>

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**TESTIMONIAL**



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*"The TEBD Study Visit to Latvia and Estonia [27 to 31 January 2020] was useful for developing bilateral relations as well as for sharing experience and knowledge. The parts of the programme that related to the concept of 'clustering' and the experts who were introduced to us brought benefits in terms of gaining new ideas for our chamber's future projects!"*

**Mahmut İNALI**  
Şanlıurfa Chamber of Commerce and Industry

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# EU and Turkish Business Communities Working together!

The TEBD Team wishes you a Happy Europe Day on May 9th!



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