Foreword

Dear reader,

As President of the European Council for Small Business, I am delighted to welcome you to the latest volume in the ‘Frontiers in European Entrepreneurship Research’ series. This publication is based upon papers presented at the annual RENT Conference and once again it highlights the exciting breadth, depth and sophistication of the research that is currently being undertaken by entrepreneurship researchers across Europe. The book also offers a stimulating array of topics and interests that propose important insights for entrepreneurs, policy makers, enterprise support agents and fellow academics into the current and future worlds of entrepreneurship.

Every November, academics from around the globe gather in Europe for the annual RENT Conference. Since its early days in 1987, the conference has been an energizing collaboration between ECSB and EIASM, and it is now recognized as being one of the premier conferences internationally on the topic of entrepreneurship. Over the years a substantial investment has been made towards ensuring that the quality of the papers presented is of a very high standard, and this commitment has led directly to the current position whereby only a minority of submitted papers now get accepted for the conference. Interestingly, while the percentage of papers accepted is being continuously lowered, the number of people wishing to attend the conference without presenting a paper is increasing annually as a growing number of academics are recognizing the many benefits of participating in such a high-quality conference. The philosophy of the conference is focused upon maintaining its intimate nature which allows for thought-provoking discussions to evolve, and this opportunity to engage positively with the authors is very much seen as part of its appeal.

There have been a number of exciting developments to the conference over the years as it now incorporates a Policy Forum, a Doctoral Consortium, a Post-Doc Roundtable and a Case Writing Workshop. Additionally, some of the keynote speeches are now streamed live via the Internet, and initiatives such as Inter-RENT help less experienced
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researchers to develop their papers to the standard required for publication by top-quality academic journals. The conference has steadily and progressively enhanced the benefits that it offers to its audience, which explains in some way the reasoning for its continued success.

The series ‘Frontiers of European Entrepreneurship Research’ was born from a desire to promote to a much broader audience the high-quality papers being presented at the RENT Conference, and to communicate its cutting-edge research to stakeholders across the full spectrum of the entrepreneurship community. This series of publications has quickly established itself as a key resource for all who are seeking to identify where the boundaries of research and thinking are now being expanded, and what opportunities might be arising from this new knowledge. This work is an exciting and valuable addition to the canon of knowledge already at our disposal, and I thank most sincerely all of those people who have given their time freely to ensure its success.

Yours sincerely,
Thommas M. Cooney
President, ECSB