Dear reader,

As President of the European Council for Small Business (ECSB), I am pleased to welcome you to the latest volume in the ‘Frontiers in European Entrepreneurship Research’ series. The volume contains an anthology of the papers presented at the 26th Research in Entrepreneurship and Small Business (RENT) Conference, held at Lyon, France. The RENT conference, which is jointly organized by ECSB and the European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management (EIASM), represents the most important pan-European conference for Entrepreneurship scholars and experts. The conference is also the ECSB signature event, a ‘product’ of which we are extremely proud.

ECSB is a non-profit organization whose mission is to contribute to the understanding of entrepreneurship and to the improvement of the competitiveness of European small- and medium-sized companies. With more than 450 full members and a network of 2000 ECSB friends from 38 European countries, ESCB is the largest pan-European association of researchers, educators and practitioners in entrepreneurship.

While ECSB also runs many other activities all year around, the life of our association still culminates in our annual meeting at the RENT conference, where our members have the opportunity to reach into a wonderful network of experts and friends. The RENT anthology, now at its ninth edition, is one of the means through which we acknowledge the scientific achievements of our community and leave a legacy of the conference for the years to come. Other than the official benefits deriving from ECSB membership and participation in the RENT conference, what I think is the greatest of all, is to be part of an exceptional network of people where it is so easy to find excellent scholars and make wonderful friends at the same time. To me, ECSB is not only a professional community but also an intellectual home and a group of fellows and colleagues, to some extent, a sort of enlarged professional family.

The RENT conference is widely recognized as one of the top conferences in Europe on entrepreneurship. We are particularly proud of how ECSB and EIASM have been able over the years to transform this event
into one of the best entrepreneurship conferences worldwide. The growth of the RENT conference in quantity and quality in recent years is such that I am very confident in saying that the RENT anthology offers a representative overview of the latest and most cutting-edge developments in entrepreneurship and small business studies in Europe. The chapters in this volume are selected from the best ones presented at the conference, upon nominations by the Scientific Committee and the session Chairs; they then go through two or more stages of the review process until they achieve the high-quality standard that is required to be included in the final list.

ECSB has worked hard to make the RENT conference more and more attractive. Today the conference is surrounded by several pre-conference events including the PhD and postdoctoral workshop, the policy forum, the case study workshop, special interest groups meetings and the mentoring programme, in which young scholars have the opportunity to meet their mentors and network with their peers.

The series ‘Frontiers of European Entrepreneurship Research’ aims at disseminating research results to the benefit of a larger community of stakeholders that extends well beyond the academic network. I can safely say that the anthology is now a key resource for all those who are interested in expanding what we know about entrepreneurship and how this knowledge can be exploited to create a more entrepreneurial European economy. It is only appropriate that I offer my most heartfelt thanks to all those people who have volunteered and given their precious time and expertise to the realization of this edition.

Luca Iandoli
ECSB President