

Preface

As President of the European Council for Small Business (ECSB), I am delighted to introduce the 12th volume in the *Frontiers in European Entrepreneurship Research* series. This latest volume contains chapters selected from among the 153 papers presented at the 29th Research in Entrepreneurship and Small Business (RENT) Conference held in Zagreb. The RENT Conference, jointly organized by ECSB and EIASM (The European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management), is the most significant annual gathering of entrepreneurship scholars, policy makers and experts in Europe. We are very proud of how ECSB and EIASM have been able to develop this event into one of the most influential entrepreneurship conferences worldwide. The RENT conference provides a forum for researchers and interested parties to come together, share ideas and network in a friendly environment. Whilst the ECSB also runs the 3E Conference and co-brands numerous other activities all year round, the life of our association still culminates in our annual signature event.

By way of context, the ECSB is a non-profit organization that strives to contribute to the development of understanding entrepreneurship and small businesses. The organization has around 400 full members and a growing network in excess of 2,000 friends from nearly all European countries. Thus, ECSB is the largest European association of researchers, educators and practitioners in entrepreneurship. It is this strong membership base that provides the backbone of the ECSB and helps drive forward the frontiers of research in this significant field of human endeavour. The Board of ECSB and EIASM work hard at making the RENT conference more attractive to its members. The event is supplemented by several pre-conference activities, including doctoral and post-doctoral workshops, the former assisting doctoral students in improving their research, the latter providing post-docs with an opportunity to strengthen their publications and dissemination activities. We provide professional development workshops, designed to share expertise and foster the intellectual skills of participants. We also continue to hold a policy forum around topical issues in entrepreneurship and linking up with the local organizers of the conference. In addition we offer special interest groups (SIGs) for our members and a mentoring programme to assist in career development, which links

up seasoned scholars with junior members who can benefit from the experience and advice of their peers.

Now turning to this book, the aim of the *Frontiers* series is to disseminate the latest scientific insights to a community of stakeholders that extends beyond the academic network, generating engagement, impact and shaping future academic and policy agendas. It provides a tangible legacy for our current and future members and shows what people working together, across Europe, can achieve. The chapters in this volume are selected from a long list of the best papers presented at the conference upon nomination from the Scientific Committee and the session Chairs. The selected papers then go through a developmental review process, of a minimum two stages, until they have achieved the high-quality standard required to be included in this volume. I would like to thank those authors and reviewers who have contributed to this volume.

In sum, the *Frontiers* series offers a selection of the latest, cutting-edge research in entrepreneurship and small business in Europe. It has become a key resource for all those interested in understanding entrepreneurship and how this knowledge can be exploited to create a more entrepreneurial and sustainable Europe. This volume, however, presents the tip of the iceberg in terms of the excellent work the ECSB community undertakes. Could I encourage you to visit our website for the most up-to-date developments and initiatives from the ECSB, www.ecsb.org. On behalf, of the ECSB, I look forward to your engagement with us.

Robert Blackburn
ECSB President
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