


Monthly news and analysis for Luxembourg

# business review

A photograph of four men in business suits standing in a modern office hallway. The man on the far left is wearing a dark pinstriped suit and glasses. The man in the back center is wearing a light-colored patterned suit and glasses. The man in the front center is wearing a dark double-breasted suit, glasses, and a red tie. The man on the far right is wearing a dark brown suit. They are all looking towards the camera.

Bringing people together  
Contact: Luxembourg's new  
all-purpose B2B event



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# Contact the right people

By Stephen Evans

*The full range of Luxembourg's economic promotion bodies have come together to support a new multi-faceted business-to-business event Contact. The aim is to encourage start ups and help boost existing SMEs by making contacts and gaining experience. The desired outcome is for business decision makers to meet the highest number of potential partners, and to achieve critical mass a varied range of events have been organised. Invitations have gone out across Luxembourg and the neighbouring regions with the hope of creating a flagship, cross-border, multi-event fair with broad appeal.*

All the new technology in the world cannot replicate the real value of meeting a potential partner face-to-face. This is why the backers of Contact are confident prospective and existing small-business people will be attracted to Luxexpo from 20th - 22nd November to engage with a unique networking opportunity. Led by the Chamber of Commerce, the Chambre des Métiers and Luxexpo, this endeavour is also supported by three government ministries, a range of state agencies and private sponsors such as Fortis and Property Partners. So far more than 100 businesses will be participating, so what will be going on?

SME Forum ("Forum de l'Entreprise"). This will be the second of these events which was organised last year by the Chamber of Commerce's Euro Info Centre, which consists of targeted bilateral "b2fair" meetings, seminars, workshops... Around 300 managers from the Greater Region and beyond participated in 2006, of whom around half took part in the "matchmaking event" leading to some 700 meetings. B2fair



is organised around a database which allows participants to pinpoint the people they would most like to meet. It has been used on trade missions abroad

for a number of years and it is hoped this will become a regular event in the Grand Duchy. The SME Forum 2007 is being organised and promoted by a network

## What's on at Contact 20th-22nd November?

### Every day

13:00 - 19:00 B2B fair / Workshops / Matchmaking / Business Lounge / Business Office

### Tuesday 20th November

From 16:00: inaugural conference with Jeannot Krecké, minister of the economy and foreign trade and then a presentation by Maximilien Rouer on "Le nouveau contexte professionnel, une révolution à ne pas laisser passer".

### Wednesday 21st November

09:30 - 12:30 "L'immobilier d'entreprise, un choix

stratégique déterminant" followed by a buffet lunch

10:30 - 19:00: SME Forum / Matchmaking

15:00 - 18:00: INFPC conference "le code génétique d'une entreprise performante: quel rôle pour le facteur humain?" with Mady Delvaux-Stehres, education minister

18:00 onwards: "b2fair" Business Award et dinner reception by the Chamber of Commerce, its Euro Info Centre and partners

### Thursday 22nd November

09:00 - 12:00 "Business creation and takeover days" conference introduced by Fernand Boden, minister of the middle

classes followed by a round table discussion with case on the topic of "La transmission d'entreprise" organised by Deloitte and Fiduciaire Générale  
10:30 - 19:00: SME Forum / Matchmaking  
16:00 - 19:00 MarkCom conference with the presentation of the new "Vademecum MarkCom"

### Workshop subjects:

Aide au financement de la formation professionnelle continue  
Produits salle des marchés et/ou ses couvertures  
La gestion du risque crédit: la croissance sans les risques  
Le process Communication: un

outil au service de la performance  
Financement de la croissance - des solutions pour financer le fonds de roulement  
L'affacturage, la solution pour votre business au quotidien  
L'outsourcing de votre gestion des paiements clients:  
Payments & Cash Management opportunities  
Energy hedging: protection contre les prix flambants de l'énergie  
Accès à l'indépendance  
Financement de l'indépendance  
Mutualités  
Critères d'un business plan  
Innovation et indépendance

[www.contact-ene.lu](http://www.contact-ene.lu)

of Euro Info Centres from nine regions and seven countries, that is the Greater region plus Poland, Turkey and Italy.

**B2fair Business Award:** This will be presented to three companies which have had a particular success story following their participation in the 2006 Forum. Paul Ensch, director of the Chambre des Métiers explains: "The aim to put the spotlight on SMEs by underlining their capacity to cooperate with transnational partners, enabling them to be more effective and competitive."

**Business creation and takeover days:** Luxembourg lacks entrepreneurs – both in terms of a relative reluctance to start new enterprises but also unwillingness of children to take over the family business. It is estimated that around 10,000 businesses will need to be taken over in Luxembourg in the next decade, with as many as half of these having no natural successor. This subject will be tackled on 22nd November with a conference, round-table discussion and four workshops. Stands will be dedicated to providing answers to a wide range of issues (including finance and innovation) with input from the likes of SNCL.

Luxinnovation, the Chambre des Métiers' "Contact Entreprise" and the ministries.

**Conferences and workshops:** Contact will address several important themes such as HR, ICT, office space, PR, marketing/sales, finance, accounting, facility management... Conferences, seminars and discussion groups will flesh-out these ideas and more. The event will be kicked off with a presentation from Maximilien Rouer who will speak (in French) about the opportunities posed by issues which can be perceived as threats, such as climate change and globalisation. Rouer addresses over one hundred conferences a year as well as being a teacher at the Haute Ecole de Commerce in Paris, a member of the National Council for Sustainable Development, a columnist with La Tribune and the author of several books. Also airing their views will be the ministers of economy and education Jeannot Krecké and Mady Delvaux-Stehres.

**Trade fair:** Alongside these innovative events will be the more traditional style trade fair with a range of businesses on hand to explain their products.

## The need for B2B

Jean-Michel Collignon the general manager of Luxexpo said the inspiration for Contact came



from feedback from businesses requesting a full blown B2B fair. They had tried to resuscitate the IT-based Bureautec B2B fair but with little success. "All IT fairs are having difficulty," Collignon notes "as producers do not wait two years any longer to showcase their products. Fairs have a life cycle like any other product and they must evolve. Contact has an IT element to it, but is now more general."

So what are their hopes for Contact? Collignon says the focus will be on quality of contacts made rather than quantity. Pierre Gramegna director

of the Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce is cautious about making predictions as to how the event will be received and admits that launching any venture of this nature carries a risk. However, he feels it is a risk worth taking as the goal of encouraging greater networking and regional business awareness is so important to the development of competitiveness. There are as yet no firm plans to repeat Contact on an annual basis, but Gramegna is confident that the event will leverage the success of last year's SME Forum, particularly given the wide level of support being received on a national and regional level.