

## PRESS RELEASE



### **Larger mid-size companies contribute to growth in Europe 14% annual growth and 130.000 jobs**

**Brussels, Belgium, 20 October 2005** - Five hundred of Europe's fastest growing mid-size companies have created some 130.000 jobs across all industry sectors over the last three years. Not only have these 'champions of growth' grown employment by an impressive 14% annually but they have also increased their turnover by the same amount. These are amongst the key findings of the 2005 edition of the annual Europe's 500 pan-European ranking of high-growth, job-creating companies, published by Europe's 500 Entrepreneurs for Growth and supported by Microsoft and KPMG.

In the European Commission's recent review of the Lisbon Strategy and the publication of its Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs in April it is noted that the "average annual growth in some Member States remained below 1% over the period 2001-2003." In that same period the 2004 Europe's 500 companies maintained an average annual growth of 15%.

"European politicians focus on growth and jobs – this is a declared goal of the reviewed Lisbon agenda," points out Martin Schoeller, President of the association Europe's 500 Entrepreneurs for Growth. "We believe that competition between the European nations helps to push reforms and learning from each other. However, policies need to be improved in the areas of growth financing, part time jobs and international trade policy to support more mid sized companies that can grow fast but also manage to sustain their growth.

A typical Europe's 500 company grows quickly and way beyond the classic definition of an SME. For example, the French company Gameloft, developers and publishers of games for mobile phones, ranked # 4 in this year's Europe's 500, increased employment from 58 to 722 in just three years. Two thirds of the companies listed this year have a similar profile and fall into the mid-size category (more than 100 and less than 1.000 employees).

It is not only the ability to grow fast that makes these Europe's 500 companies excellent role models for Europe's future. It is also the fact that these 'champions of growth' can be successful in any business sector, whether young or old industry. IT services once again dominate this year's ranking with 111 companies (22% which is up from 15% and second place last year) but manufacturing also remains consistently high – industrial goods account for 18% and, if combined with industrial services, actually outweigh IT with a total of 25% of the five hundred companies. Whereas employment growth is highest in the transport and logistics sector with an outstanding annual average of 23%.

Every year since its foundation in 1996, Europe's 500 has shown that growth is not industry or sector specific. Companies that qualify for the Europe's 500 manifest entrepreneurial leadership, innovation, job creation, vision and market expertise. Essential qualities that support the European Council's strategy for sustainable growth.

## A snapshot of the 2005 Europe's 500 companies – the top 20 companies

Rank	Company	Country	Sector	Employment			Annual Growth	Birch Index
				Year End 2001	Year End 2004	Creation		
1	AssystemBrime	France	IT Services	1724	6571	4847	56%	18,474
2	Avion Group	Iceland	Transport and Logistics	500	3200	2700	86%	17,280
3	Cpl Resources Plc	Ireland	Management Services	272	2000	1728	94%	12,706
4	Gameloft S. A.	France	IT Services	58	722	664	132%	8,266
5	Sebeco Nv	Belgium	Management Services	56	704	648	133%	8,146
6	C1 Group	Germany	IT Services	46	566	520	131%	6,398
7	Dcc Plc	Ireland	IT Services	2048	4700	2652	32%	6,086
8	iSOFT Group plc Q-Cells	UK	IT Services	252	1338	1086	74%	5,766
9	Aktiengesellschaft	Germany	Industrial Goods	39	484	445	132%	5,523
10	Pharmexx Gmbh Brose Fahrzeugteile Gmbh & Co. KG,	Germany	Management Services	305	1446	1141	68%	5,409
11	Coburg	Germany	Industrial Goods	4910	8150	3240	18%	5,378
12	Lastminute.Com Plc Intec Telecom		Consumer Services	656	2220	1564	50%	5,293
13	Systems PLC The Best Connection	UK	IT Services	257	1292	1035	71%	5,203
14	Group Limited	UK	Management Services	4504	7552	3048	19%	5,111
15	Mears Group PLC	UK	Other	825	2500	1675	45%	5,076
16	Nuova Pansac Spa	Italy	Industrial Goods	600	2000	1400	49%	4,667
17	R P S Group Plc PUMA AG Rudolf	UK	Management Services	1362	3065	1703	31%	3,832
18	Dassler Sport	Germany	Consumer Goods	2012	3910	1898	25%	3,688
19	freenet.de AG	Germany	IT Services	269	1127	858	61%	3,595
20	Caffe Nero Group Plc	UK	Consumer Services	900	2300	1400	37%	3,578

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### Notes to Editors:

- 1) *Europe's 500* was first published in 1996 as an initiative of the association Europe's 500 Europe's Entrepreneurs for Growth and has been published on annual basis ever since. During this time, more than 4.000 of Europe's high growth companies have received the accolade of being one of *Europe's 500* champions of growth.
- 2) The annual *Europe's 500* is supported by **Microsoft** and **KPMG**.
- 3) The listing is intended to focus attention on entrepreneurial achievement and fast-growth European companies. Its focus on job creation and growth in medium sized enterprises is unique and distinguishes it from many other business rankings.
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  - 7) The 2004 *Europe's 500* analyses company performance over three fiscal years: from end December 2001 to end December 2004.
  - 5) To quantify companies' performance *Europe's 500* uses the David Birch Employee Growth Index (which combines relative and absolute job creation). The companies are ranked according to their BIRCH Index. In addition several criteria are considered such as: entrepreneurial involvement; independence; employment, turnover and organic growth; size (minimum 50 employees at end 2004 and maximum 5000 at end of 2001).
  - 6) Companies from the 25 EU member states, plus Iceland, Norway and Switzerland were considered for the 2005 edition (for the first time the selection was extended to include companies from the 10 new member states . 19 countries are present in the 2005 Listing – all EU15, plus Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and the Czech Republic.
  - 7) Detailed information on each of the 2005 *Europe's 500* listed companies (searchable by country, industry, employment, ...) and complete statistical data and tables (including downloadable graphs) are available at [www.europes500.com](http://www.europes500.com) (select The Listing then Results).