



**For Immediate Release**

**CONTACT:**

Nele Devolder

[ndevolder@kelleneurope.com](mailto:ndevolder@kelleneurope.com)

+ 32 2 761 1600

**EUROCONFERENCE 2009 – HELPING ASSOCIATIONS THROUGH THE CRISIS**

**Brussels, Belgium (5 May 2009)** -- Kellen Europe held its ninth annual *EuroConference* in Brussels, Belgium on April 29<sup>th</sup> 2009. This year's conference brought together association executives, high level association leadership and consultants, who addressed the values and roles of associations during the economic crisis and the upcoming changes in the EU institutions in 2009.

The First Plenary session looked at how associations should position to keep afloat during tough economic times.

Marc Stocker, Director at Business Europe, illustrated the parallels as well as differences in how the recession is hitting the EU compared with the US and which sectors are most hurt. He went on to indicate how the EU has an important role to play in supporting jobs and stimulating European economies. Public Affairs Directors Mr. Christopher Burghardt (Anheuser-Busch InBev), Mr. Hanns Glatz (Daimler) and Ms. Marta Baffigo (Kellogg) underlined that while costs savings are important, many associations have an opportunity to demonstrate their added value by being proactive and aligning their work with that of the members. Following the discussion with the audience they concluded that a focused package of association services will result in much better member retention and greater influence in the EU policy and regulatory landscape.

A series of breakout sessions dealt with measuring association effectiveness, creative association leadership, implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility and the preparation for the new EU Institutions.

The Second Plenary session heard key trends on how to design an association's strategy in the light of future demographic destinies, economic power shifts and more complex politics. The results of this survey, carried out by Kellen Europe and EurActiv can be found on: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/pa/associations-see-opportunities-crisis/article-181923>

Rohit Talwar, CEO Fast Future, provided insights in these trends and how associations can "win in a downturn" by being portals for business services such as building stakeholder relationships, re-thinking recruitment and training, and stimulating innovation. He also spoke of using the downturn for re-evaluating priorities, taking tough governance decisions, thought leadership serving the economic value chain, considering new services and projects, and designing organisational excellence around the new priorities.

"Europe faces many challenges, however the debates also illustrated that Europe's 60+ years of economic and policy integration is serving as a model for other regional initiatives worldwide. European level associations will continue to grow in importance and increasingly exert their influence on EU policies and regulations", said Alfons Westgeest, Managing Partner Kellen Europe. He added that "the strategic content appealed to attendees and confirmed that the EuroConference is the major annual gathering for working for and with associations in Brussels".

*The Kellen EuroConference was sponsored by Tiveria and OneTec. EurActiv, European Voice, New Europe, The Parliament Magazine and Brussels International were media partners.*

For more information, visit [www.kelleneurope.com/euroconference](http://www.kelleneurope.com/euroconference)

**About Kellen Europe**

Kellen Europe provides association management, strategic advice, communications, government affairs, benchmarking studies, internet services and other professional advice to associations and corporations worldwide. Over the last 20 years, Kellen Europe has gathered considerable expertise that enables the company to rapidly anticipate the needs of emerging or existing associations and to provide tailored organisational solutions. For more information, please visit [www.kelleneurope.com](http://www.kelleneurope.com) and/or [www.kellencompany.com](http://www.kellencompany.com).