

# UEAPME Newsflash

## **SMEs publish proposals on new EU employment strategy**

UEAPME published this week its proposals on the European Employment Strategy post 2010 currently under discussion. The economic downturn, which has quickly translated into steadily growing unemployment, is adding short term challenges to already existing structural long term issues on the labour markets and on public finances. The next employment strategy should tackle both in view of contributing to boost job creation and European competitiveness, wrote UEAPME. On the content, UEAPME called for the respect of the "Think Small First" approach in all policies and measures introduced, stressing the importance of flexicurity, inclusive labour markets, active ageing and work-life balance policies. On the process, the strategy must be based on fewer and more focused priorities and must better involve social partners at European, national, regional and local level. [Read more](#) or contact [Liliane Volozinskis](#)

## **Environment news roundup: biocides, Committee meeting**

UEAPME recently published its response to a European Commission proposal for a regulation on the placing of the market and use of biocidal products. Despite the positive elements in the new text compared to the existing directive, UEAPME warned that the clauses on data sharing risk creating a quasi-monopoly situation for data owners and lock SMEs out of the biocides market. It urged therefore the Parliament's Industry Committee to reduce data protection periods and to introduce compulsory sharing for all data. Also this week, the Environment Committee met in Brussels. On the agenda was a presentation by Imola Bedo from DG Environment on the first results and next steps of the Environmental Compliance Assistance Programme (ECAP), which was followed by a discussion with the audience. Committee members were also updated on the role of SMEs in the upcoming EC Energy Efficiency Action Plan by a speaker from DG TREN. [Read more](#) on biocides or contact [Guido Lena](#)

## **Migration policy must be based on evidence and demand**

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the European Commission organised this week an expert seminar on migration and the economic crisis. Enterprise Policy Director Luc Hendrickx was one of the speakers at the event, which featured representatives from the United Nations, EU institutions, Member States, academia, trade unions and business organisations and aimed at discussing the implications of migration for labour market policies in the EU and for the post-2010 Lisbon agenda. Migrants are on average more entrepreneurial than locals in the EU, said Mr Hendrickx. Migrant entrepreneurship must therefore be supported to promote growth. A proper migration policy must be evidence-based and demand-driven and should avoid a "brain drain" in third countries, continued Mr Hendrickx. Moreover, the unemployed and the less qualified must be integrated in the labour market as well since they are an untapped source of talent, he concluded. Contact: [Luc Hendrickx](#)

## **New guide aims to promote e-invoicing uptake in SMEs**

The European e-Business Lab (EBL), a cross-industry initiative to share and improve e-business best practices, recently published a [guide on electronic invoicing for SMEs](#) that is sponsored among others by UEAPME and its Austrian member WKÖ. The potential savings from the adoption of e-invoicing are estimated at 238 billion EUR, with figures suggesting that companies could reduce costs by up to 80%. However, paper invoices remain the norm in SMEs, mainly due to the lack of unbiased information and on the need for SME owners to rely on third party suppliers. The guide aims therefore to provide practical guidance and information on the business, technical, practical, legal and compliance aspects of e-invoicing. According to UEAPME, this guide has the potential to promote the uptake of e-invoicing in SMEs, which must also be supported by a single, EU-wide legal framework amending and simplifying the current rules, as proposed by the EC. Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

## **ACCA SME Committee discusses long-term survey data**

Enterprise Policy Director Luc Hendrickx participated this week in London to a meeting of the SME Committee of our member ACCA, the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, which brings together representatives from the leading business organisations in the UK. The meeting dealt with the long-term trends in SME activity in the UK. Participants were presented with the findings from the longest running survey of SMEs in the UK, using data from the past 25 years, which was completed by Dr Francis Greene from Warwick University. The presentation was followed by a round table discussion, during which Mr Hendrickx took the floor to comment on the EU perspective and on better regulation. Contact: [Luc Hendrickx](#)

## **CSR: SMEs back a bottom-up approach to disclosure**

The third of a series of seminars organised by the European Commission on environmental, social and governance disclosure by enterprises in the framework of CSR took place in Brussels last week. Enterprise Policy Director Luc Hendrickx spoke at the event, which focused on the civil society, consumer and media perspective. The current expectations of civil society and consumer groups on disclosure cannot be met by SMEs, he stressed, since these groups support compulsory disclosure via reporting requirements that are tailored to large enterprises and multinationals. SMEs would be burdened by such requirements even if they were exempted, continued Mr Hendrickx, due to their relations with large enterprises as subcontractors and suppliers. A better understanding of the business reality is therefore needed, coupled with a bottom-up approach to ESG disclosure, he concluded. Contact: [Luc Hendrickx](#)

**From Andrea Benassi's agenda: Brussels, Tallinn, Italy**

**02/12:** In Brussels, Secretary General Andrea Benassi was among the speakers at a conference on the first anniversary of the Small Business Act co-organised by the EESC, UEAPME, EUROCHAMBRES and BUSINESSEUROPE (see *issue 79*).

**02/12:** On the same day in the afternoon, President Georg Toifl and Mr Benassi chaired the UEAPME General Assembly and Administrative Council (see *issue 79*).

**03/12:** Mr Benassi spoke at the second European Forum "Cooperative Banks and SMEs" organised in Brussels by the International Confederation of Popular Banks, the European Association of Co-operative Banks and UEAPME (see *issue 79*).

**04/12:** In Rome, the Secretary General spoke at a conference on eProcurement for SMEs organised by CONSIP, a joint stock company of the Ministry of Economy.

**08-09/12:** In Tallin, Mr Benassi met Juhan Parts, Minister of Economic Affairs, and participated to the annual ceremony of our Estonian member EVEA.

**10/12:** In Rome again, Mr Benassi spoke at a European conference on employee financial participation for corporate governance and social dialogue as part of an EC-funded project on restructuring, well-being at work at work and financial participation.

**10/12:** Today in Florence, Mr Benassi has spoken at a conference on artistic crafts organised by Artex, the Centre for Artistic and Traditional Handicrafts of Tuscany.

➤ For questions on Mr Benassi's agenda, please contact the [UEAPME Secretariat](#)

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