

UEAPME Newsflash

Possible ways out of the crisis discussed with MEPs

The European Parliament's Special Committee on the Financial, Economic and Social Crisis organised a [hearing on the impact of the crisis on SMEs](#) in Brussels this week. Economic and Fiscal Policy Director Gerhard Huemer spoke in a session on possible ways out of the crisis. Firstly, he stressed that access to finance must be improved. Although liquidity is no longer an issue, the credit squeeze must be counteracted by guarantee schemes, new financial regulations and new financial products. Secondly, recovery programmes must be more oriented towards the future. The limited public resources left must be used to mobilise private demand, and exit strategies must be prepared so firms have a clear vision of what lies ahead. Finally, more attention must be devoted to the efficiency of the public sector and to the quality of legislation, he concluded, calling on the EC to act as "Guardian of the Treaty" and on policymakers to respect the "Think Small First" principles. [Read more](#) or contact [Gerhard Huemer](#)

SMEs list problems faced in meeting REACH deadlines

The first meeting of the Directors' Contact Group on meeting the REACH registration deadline (*see issue 142*) took place in Brussels this week. Speaking on behalf of UEAPME, Sustainable Development Director Guido Lena presented participants with a [document](#) listing the main problems faced by SMEs when complying with REACH-related registration requirements. Substance Information Exchange Forums (SIEFs) and consortia are sometimes an obstacle for SMEs, said Mr Lena, as it is difficult to get the right information in SIEFs and the costs related to consortia are very high, while at the same time fair treatment and legal certainty are not guaranteed. The enforcement of REACH must be more consistent across Member States, continued Mr Lena, who also stressed that the availability of electronic registration only in English is a concern for small companies and that the ECHA guidance documents are often too time-consuming and complicated for their needs. Contact: [Guido Lena](#)

Insurance intermediaries play a crucial role for SMEs

Enterprise Policy Director Luc Hendrickx spoke this week at a conference on "Insurance intermediaries: serving every player in the economy" organised at the European Parliament by BIPAR, the European Federation of Insurance Intermediaries. Insurances play a crucial role for SMEs, said Mr Hendrickx. First of all, they are the expression of the enterprise's responsibility towards staff, clients and the environment. Moreover, insurances act as innovation drivers, enabling SMEs to enter new markets and develop new products while diminishing the related risks. Unfortunately, some insurance products are still unavailable to SMEs and the internal market for cross-border insurance services is insufficient, continued Mr Hendrickx, who concluded by stressing the important role played by insurance intermediaries in providing active risk management services. [Read more](#) or contact [Luc Hendrickx](#)

UNIEP Board discusses projects and structural funds

The Board of our associate member UNIEP, the International Association of Painting Contractors, met in the premises of UEAPME in Brussels this week. Among the items on the agenda were a series of projects in which UNIEP is currently involved, such as [Chemxchange](#), funded by FP7 and dealing with legal compliance with existing and new chemical legislation, and [PaintingSkills](#), funded by the Leonardo programme and dealing with vocational training and qualifications for painters in the construction sector. Participants also prepared an upcoming stakeholders meeting organised by the EC on the Paints Directive and were updated by UEAPME Advisor Birte Day on structural funds and on possible simplifications for SMEs. Contact: [Ludger Fischer](#)

KEY EVENTS AHEAD:

- ["European Entrepreneurial Region" award ceremony](#) (11/02, contact [Hubert Delorme](#))
- [Forum for Competitiveness and Growth in SMEs 2010 at CeBIT](#) (04/03, contact [Sebastiano Toffaletti](#))

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