

UEAPME Newsflash

Review process must give new impetus to the SBA

UEAPME published this week a position paper on the review of the Small Business Act recently announced by the European Commission. While welcoming the informal consultation exercise started by the Commission and its commitment to build and monitor its policies using the SBA as a basis, UEAPME stressed the lack of progress so far on the "Think Small First" principle and on the concrete measures linked to the Small Business Act. Against this background, UEAPME stressed that what was promised must now be fully implemented and that the review process must give the SBA a new impetus. It also called for a State by State analysis on the reasons why the implementation of the SBA has been so slow. The same should be done at EU level, wrote UEAPME, which also commented on the governance aspects and on how to strengthen the "reviewed" Small Business Act. [Read more](#) or contact [Luc Hendrickx](#)

SMEs hail extension of deposit guarantees to companies

The European Commission proposed this week a series of changes to the legislation on bank deposit guarantees, which kick in to cover accounts should a bank fail. Under the new rules, companies' bank accounts would be covered by default by deposit protection, with payback up to 100.000 EUR per account and within 7 days. UEAPME, which had repeatedly called for the extension of deposit guarantee schemes to SMEs, welcomed the proposal and stressed that it has the potential to restore confidence in the banking system for private households and companies, especially for the smallest. SMEs were hit as hard as private consumers by the crisis, but under the current rules they do not enjoy the same level of protection of their bank accounts in all the EU Member States, stressed UEAPME, which called therefore on Parliament and Council to approve the proposal as soon as possible. [Read more](#) or contact [Gerhard Huemer](#)

Innovation must start from the market, not from R&D

The Belgian Presidency of the EU organised an informal meeting of Industry Ministers in Louvain-la-Neuve this week. Ahead of the meeting, which dealt with the future EU Research and Innovation Plan, UEAPME put forward a [document](#) with a series of policy recommendations on how to maximise SMEs' innovation potential. UEAPME called for a broader definition of innovation, which cannot be limited to pure R&D and must start from the needs of the market and business ideas. It also identified the main problems for SMEs to innovate, such as the lack of funding opportunities for riskier projects and the difficulties in access to technologies. Moreover, it insisted on the need for better coordination in the existing financial support instruments at EU level and for more coherence in the next generation of programmes. Finally, UEAPME made a plea to the Belgian Presidency of the EU to close the file and find solutions for a simple and affordable EU patent system. [Read more](#) or contact [Gerhard Huemer](#)

Policy developments discussed with EC Vice President

A delegation of UEAPME staff led by Secretary General Andrea Benassi met this week Viviane Reding, Vice President of the European Commission responsible for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship. Mr Benassi gave Ms Reding an outline of the impact of the crisis on crafts and SMEs, stressing that while SMEs seem to be confident that the worst is behind they remain quite uneasy about the future and hesitant to invest and create new jobs. Participants also discussed several important files such as the Consumer Rights Directive, which is currently being dealt with by the European Parliament and in which the question of "full targeted harmonisation" supported by UEAPME ([read more](#)) is still pending. Other files discussed included collective redress, European contract law, data protection, [misleading company directories](#), maternity leave directive and impact assessment. Contact: [Luc Hendrickx](#)

Expert group on Key Enabling Technologies starts its work

Secretary General Andrea Benassi participated this week to the first meeting of the [EU High Level Expert Group on Key Enabling Technologies](#) (KETs), i.e. advanced general purpose technologies, such as nanotechnology and biotechnology, which will be the basis of future products and services. UEAPME is a member of the expert group alongside representatives from Member States, industry, academia and the European Investment Bank. According to UEAPME, KETs have a clear potential to foster innovation due to their enabling nature. However, it is crucial that the support for KETs is designed to ensure their uptake in all companies, including SMEs, and at a reasonable cost. UEAPME will work to ensure that KETs will bring added value to SMEs in the expert group, which will meet twice a year and will be supported by a "group of Sherpa" in which UEAPME is also represented. Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

UEAPME delegation meets Environment Commissioner

A delegation of members of the UEAPME staff led by Vice President Gunilla Almgren, Chair of our Sustainable Development Committee, and Secretary General Andrea Benassi met last Friday with Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik. Among the items on the agenda were the Environmental Compliance Assistance Programme for SMEs (ECAP), which according to UEAPME must be fully implemented at national level to bring about concrete benefits for SMEs, the upcoming revision of the REACH regulation, which must be simplified as it is too complex for SMEs and for their organisations at present, and the current discussions on eco-innovation and its uptake in SMEs. Also discussed were the importance of fully applying the "Think Small First" principle to minimise the impact of environmental legislation on SMEs, as well as the need to organise information and training campaigns for SMEs and to increase funding for their environment-related activities and investments. Contact: [Guido Lena](#)

From Andrea Benassi's agenda: Commissioners and more

09/07: In Brussels, Vice President Gunilla Almgren, Chair of our Sustainable Development Committee, and Secretary General Andrea Benassi led a UEAPME delegation that met Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik (*see above*).

13/07: The Secretary General attended the inaugural meeting of the EU High Level Expert Group on Key Enabling Technologies, opened by Vice-Presidents Antonio Tajani and Neelie Kroes and Commissioner Maire Geoghegan-Quinn. On the same day, he met the Commission's Vice President Viviane Reding (*see above for both*).

14/07: Mr Benassi met Danuta Hübner MEP (EPP, PL), Chair of the European Parliament's Regional Development Committee, as a follow up to our Administrative Council in Vienna to which Ms Hübner participated (*see issue 104*).

14-15/07: The Secretary General met members of the Cabinet of President Barroso to discuss the latest developments on the EU 2020 strategy and the main policy dossiers on the table of the European Social Partners.

15/07: Mr Benassi met Marcel Roy, Secretary General of AECM, the European Association of Mutual Guarantee Societies and Guarantee Funds. Later on the same day he met Noed Van Rooj, Director of our member organisation MKB Nederland.

15/07: The Secretary General met members of the Cabinet of Vice President Tajani.

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

EVENTS AHEAD:

- UEAPME conference on "Sector policy, social dialogue and SMEs" (15/09, contact [Frank Baumeister](#))
- [Open Days – 8th European Week of Regions and Cities](#) (04-07/10, contact [Birte Day](#))

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