

UEAPME Newsflash

Access to finance: spotlight on alternatives at ACCA event

Our member organisation ACCA, the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, organised a [lunch meeting](#) on the impact of financial regulation on access to finance for SMEs and the real economy this week in Brussels. Speaking at the event, organised in cooperation with UEAPME and Leaseurope, Economic and Fiscal Policy Director Gerhard Huemer insisted on the need to immediately revise the risk weights for SME loans when implementing in the EU the “Basel III” rules on capital requirements. When it comes to alternative sources of funding, Mr Huemer stressed that loans are limited by nature and not appropriate for riskier projects such as start-ups and innovation. In these cases, more equity-oriented instruments are needed, starting from “mezzanine finance”. The new “Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs” (COSME) should give special attention to these instruments, said Mr Huemer, who also stressed the importance of leasing (see *below*) and venture capital. Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

SAC focuses on preparation of Tripartite Social Summit

Our Social Affairs Committee (SAC) met this week in Brussels. Our experts adopted the work programme of the European Social Partners for 2012-2014, which should be presented at the upcoming Tripartite Social Summit on 1st March, if adopted by all the four organisations. They also discussed a series of recommendations on the EC “Youth Opportunities Initiative”, as well as the wider EU “Employment Package”, including the Green Paper on restructuring recently launched by the European Commission. On the agenda was also a session on health and safety at work, dealing with the simplification of the EU rules in the field and with concrete dossiers such as exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMF) and musculoskeletal disorders. Finally, participants were updated on the negotiations on the working time directive. Contact: [Liliane Volozinskis](#)

PEGASE project on social dialogue: first works start in Brussels

The first working session of the network of [PEGASE](#) social dialogue experts took place this week in Brussels. The PEGASE project aims to reinforce the capacity of 11 UEAPME members in 9 countries, by supporting their active participation in the European Social Dialogue and enabling them to better express the needs of the SMEs they represent. The session started with an overview of the European Social Dialogue, its main outcomes and the role of UEAPME and its members in the process. Another session was centred on two concrete cases and on their concrete implementation at national level: the autonomous framework agreement on work-related stress and the framework of action for the life-long development of competencies and qualifications. Both were discussed with national senior experts from UEAPME member organisations, giving a country perspective from Luxembourg and Austria. Contact: [Liliane Volozinskis](#)

Common European Sales Law discussed at ERA in Trier

Legal Affairs Advisor Dora Szentpaly-Kleis spoke this week in Trier, Germany, at a [conference on the Common European Sales Law](#) organised by ERA, the Academy of European Law. Her session dealt specifically with the status of business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) contracts. On B2C, the aim to boost cross-border sales activities between consumers and (mainly) SMEs is questionable, as it is demonstrated that differences between national contract law systems are not deemed to be the most significant obstacle neither by consumers nor by SMEs. On B2B, Ms Szentpaly-Kleis welcomed the fact that freedom of contract is sufficiently ensured. As the state of play for B2B contracts at European level is quite fragmented, the success of the Common European Sales Law among SMEs depends to a large extent on whether it will become yet another set of rules or a new, user friendly instrument properly covering both B2B and B2C transactions. [Read more](#) or contact [Dora Szentpaly-Kleis](#)

New report shows use and advantages of leasing for SMEs

Economic and Fiscal Policy Director Gerhard Huemer met this week in Brussels with representatives of Leaseurope, the European Federation of Leasing Company Associations, to discuss how leasing can contribute to SME finance in the different EU countries. The association has recently released a [report](#) by Oxford Economics, which shows that 40% of European SMEs are using leasing already and that around 20% of the total SME investment in 2011 was financed by leasing. Although its use is restricted by definition to tangible goods, leasing can indeed be a very useful instrument for SMEs, stressed Mr Huemer. For instance, compared to loans, leasing does not have collateral requirements. Moreover, the competition with leasing tends to keep loan prices in check, he concluded. Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

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