

UEAPME Newsflash

UEAPME family meets in Vienna

President Ulrike Rabmer-Koller invited the UEAPME family to Vienna for the meetings of the Board of Directors, Administrative Council and General Assembly. One of the highlights was a discussion with Reinhard Mitterlehner (Austrian Vice-Chancellor, Minister for Economic Affairs, former member of UEAPME's Administrative Council) and Christoph Leitl (WKO President) about the main challenges for SME policy in Europe. Both the Minister and UEAPME representatives put investment for growth, structural reforms, reduction of regulatory burdens and SME finance at the top of the agenda. During the General Assembly, the following Vice-Presidents have been elected as new Committee Chairs: Gunilla Almgren (Sustainable Development), Alban Maggiar (Economic & Finance) and Hans Peter Wollseifer (Vocational Training). Finally, UEAPME agreed on and signed a [Cooperation Agreement](#) with SME Academy Avignon, which should give the Academy a fresh start and will support UEAPME in its policy work through projects and studies.

Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)



Macroeconomic Dialogue discusses Structural Reforms

Eurogroup President Jeroen Dijsselbloem called for an extraordinary meeting of the Macroeconomic Dialogue with the EU social partners to discuss how structural reforms can contribute to growth and jobs and to an improved sustainability of social systems. These aims can only be achieved if Europe improves its competitiveness and attractiveness for private investments and Secretary General Peter Faross underlined the importance of internal demand and investments to do so. For the design and implementation of the right reforms at national level, national competitiveness or productivity boards could help in taking better informed decisions. An involvement of the social partners in such reform processes would increase ownership and strengthen implementation. However, SME organisations especially need support for capacity building to participate in such processes – as Mr Faross reminded EC Vice-President Dombrovskis at the meeting.

Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

SMEs welcome EU Skills Agenda for better and more relevant skills

The Commission published its Agenda for better skills, improved employability and skills matches on the labour market. Such efforts are highly necessary to respond to the changing world of work and adapt education systems for more growth, jobs and social inclusion. Crafts and SMEs [welcomed](#) the new Skills Agenda for Europe. Avoiding skills shortages and mismatches is one of the major SME concerns throughout Europe. More efforts on Education and Training reforms will be crucial to ensure that the skills delivered are relevant for the economy, especially SMEs, and for society. However the new skills guarantee might create expectations which will be difficult to meet unless supported by additional EU financial means.

Contact: [Liliane Volozinskis](#)

UEAPME takes position on Mandatory Transparency Register

UEAPME [replied](#) to the public consultation on a proposal for a Mandatory Transparency Register. According to UEAPME, transparency regarding who and what has influenced their policy decisions should come first and foremost from the EU Institutions. In order to achieve a sound framework for relations with interest representatives, their representativeness has to be taken into account and individuals with particular interests have to be seen differently. On data disclosure and quality, UEAPME stresses that the right information is currently required and sufficient. Any new additional information requirement should exclusively use a "ticking-box" tool.

Contact: [Luc Hendrickx](#)

EFPI will put more money into SME finance

At a breakfast meeting of the SME Intergroup at the European Parliament, Secretary General Peter Faross discussed the impact of the [European Fund for Strategic Investments](#) (EFPI) with the EFPI General Manager Willi Molterer and MEPs (including Othmar Karas (EPP, AT), Udo Bullmann (S&D, DE) and Eva Pauvova (EPP, BG)). Mr Faross [reiterated](#) that an SME finance window, the possibility of bundling small projects, and providing advisory services at local level to potential SME project promoters have been UEAPME's main requests from the beginning. Mr Molterer said that the SME window is the most successful part of EFPI and already provides finance to more than 140.000 SMEs, but it will run out of budget before the end of this year. Therefore, and as often requested by UEAPME in the last months, the EFPI Board has decided to increase to guarantees for SME finance by shifting 500 Mio Euros from infrastructure projects to the SME window.

Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

SME views put forward in Single Market Forum

In the context of the High-Level Stakeholder Conference “[Working together to strengthen the Single Market for EU businesses and consumers](#)”, UEAPME participated in four of the panels: collaborative economy, e-commerce, cross-border trade in services, and start-up and scale-up ecosystem. Concerning the digital single market, Advisor Chiara Aprea once again stressed the SME concerns regarding the consequences of the geo-blocking proposal – in particular, the impact on the after-sale practise and the applicable law. On collaborative economy, she drew the attention to the difference between a real sharing activity and a regular source of income that should comply with the rules already in place to guarantee fair competition in the market. Regarding cross-border trade in services, Director Luc Hendrickx stressed that, before starting new initiatives, the functioning of the single points of contact should be improved and Member States should apply the “Only Once” principle whenever possible.

Contact: [Chiara Aprea](#)

Working Group Taxation discusses VAT Action Plan

The main topic at the meeting of the Working Group on Taxation was DG TAXUD’s presentation of the new [VAT Action Plan](#) and a first discussion about its impact on SMEs. The primary elements for SMEs will be the extension of the Mini One Stop Shop to e-commerce with tangible goods and the review of the current SME scheme. This scheme provides Member States with a framework for SME exemption as regards registration and compliance as well as for other simplification measures. The aim of the review should be further simplification and reduction of barriers for cross-border business created by differences in SME exemptions between Member States. Finally, UEAPME will look deeper into the consequences of a definitive VAT system applying the destination principle, in order to ensure SMEs can handle it in a simplified way.

Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

Waste: more joint action from UEAPME & EUROCHAMBRES

Following the publication of the draft report on the revision of the Waste Framework Directive by rapporteur Simona Bonafè from the ENVI Committee, UEAPME and EUROCHAMBRES decided to continue their concerted actions. . The two organisations drafted joint [letters](#) for more than 30 individually addressed MEPs in the ENVI Committee putting forward their concrete text [proposals for amendments](#). These letters aim to prevent further red tape or financial costs for SMEs which could derive from some of the proposed legal elements.

Contact: [Guido Lena](#)

New accounting directive implementation discussed at roundtable

UEAPME member EFAA (European Federation of Accountants and Auditors for SMEs), with the support of ACCA, organised a roundtable discussion with stakeholders and the Commission on “The New Accounting Directive: A Harmonised European Accounting Framework?”. The main topic was the [survey](#) carried out by EFAA in eight Member States on the likely effect of its implementation and how the options have been exercised. Commenting on the survey, Enterprise Policy Director Luc Hendrickx stated that the new Directive is indeed a missed opportunity to have a more harmonised accounting framework and that it fails to ensure a higher comparability of the financial statements. Moreover, harmonised accounting rules are also useful and necessary for micro-enterprises and essential to the Single Market.

Contact: [Luc Hendrickx](#)

----- News from UEAPME Projects -----

SMEs sign up to EC’s Joint Initiative on Standardisation

SBS [endorsed](#) the [Joint Initiative on Standardisation](#) in the presence of Commissioner Elżbieta Bieńkowska. This initiative focuses on 15 concrete actions aimed at modernising, prioritising and streamlining the delivery of standards by the end of 2019, some of which are specifically designed for smaller companies. Standards are crucial for SMEs, therefore these actions are a further step towards better representation of SMEs in the standardisation world, said SBS President Gunialla Almgren at the signing-ceremony.

Contact: [Christel Davidson](#)

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