

UEAPME Newsflash

SME needs have to be better recognised in digitalisation process



Digital skills are crucial and this is particularly true for SMEs. At a Round Table on Digital Skills for the European labour force, President Ulrike Rabmer-Koller [met](#) Commissioner Oettinger, alongside other stakeholders, to discuss the challenges and solutions to the digital skills shortage across Europe. She stressed that improved education systems and more awareness raising on the subject are highly necessary for more SME innovation and job creation. Furthermore, President Rabmer-Koller put forward the various situations of SMEs regarding digitalisation and presented the actions UEAPME and its member organisations are taking to face this challenge (e.g. awareness raising, exchange of good practices and through social dialogue). Indeed, the vast majority of European SMEs need neutral and objective information, advice and guidance on the potential of digital skills, on how to identify digital skills needs and on how to acquire them with the right training. Contact: [Liliane Volozinskis](#)

Chemical Management: focus on REACH & workplace legislation

Considering the exploitation of synergies to come between workplace legislation and REACH will be a key aspect of chemical management in the EU, UEAPME joined the Cross Industry Initiative for Better Regulation in Chemicals Management (CII) in its early stages and has been an active member since. A year after publishing its [position](#) on a better regulation on chemicals, the CII is currently working on new position papers. While the CII's [first position](#) showed that potential risks of substances – exclusively handled in the workplace – are more effectively addressed by the workplace legislation, the currently developed papers tackle the following issues: workplace exposure limits, restrictions as complements to the occupational safety and health legislation as well as improving synergies between REACH and the workplace legislation. Contact: [Guido Lena](#)

Group on Fitness Check of Consumer and Marketing Law initiated

The “[Stakeholder Consultation Group for the Fitness Check of EU Consumer and Marketing Law](#)” met for the first time at the initiative of DG Justice. Enterprise Policy Director Luc Hendrickx represents UEAPME in this group consisting of 25 stakeholders associations at national and EU level representing consumers and businesses (retailers, service providers and manufacturers, including SMEs). Members of the Group will advise the European Commission on key issues related to the REFIT exercise and will discuss whether or not specific rules need to be modernised. Mr Hendrickx stressed that the current legislation is too complex and implies an overload of information obligations for SMEs. Furthermore, he questioned the representativeness of the business part of the 2016 consumer survey. Contact: [Luc Hendrickx](#)

Unified Patent Court Agreement needs to be applied promptly

In view of the Competitiveness Council, UEAPME and EUROCHAMBRES wrote a [joint letter](#) to the Council to insist that all countries involved do everything possible to enable the swift ratification of the Unified Patent Court Agreement (UPCA). The entry into force of the UPCA is essential for the reform of the European patent system's operation to be initiated. Any delay in the implementation of the European patent system will be highly detrimental to European enterprises and, in particular, to SMEs. Contact: [Luc Hendrickx](#)

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

SBS organises its first national seminar in Spain

SBS held its first national awareness raising seminar in Madrid, Spain, co-organised with SBS' member organisation EFESME, with speakers from the European Commission, CEN-CENELEC and AENOR (Spanish Standardisation Organisation). The event focused on SMEs' sectoral representation in the EU standards making process, particularly in the Lifts Sector and was structured in two parts: a general one aiming to inform SMEs and national horizontal and sectorial associations of the European Standardisation Systems and the tools available for SMEs; and a second part focused on the Lifts Sector. The seminar was the occasion to raise awareness on the [Joint Initiative on Standardisation](#) signed by UEAPME and SBS in June. The new Lift Directive and the related differences in approach of market surveillance across Member States were discussed with a representative from the EC's Unit in charge of the Directive. Contact: [Chiara Aprea](#)

----- News from UEAPME Sector Fora -----

Painting sector: more trainings and more environmental solutions needed

UEAPME and UNIEP organised a seminar on “Building an Innovative and Sustainable Future for the Painting Sector” to gather various stakeholders to reflect and exchange views on common challenges in the sector. In the context of the impact of the demographic factor and the ageing of the population as well as the young generation’s increasing lack of interest in entering the profession, the solutions proposed include: training processes to ensure high-quality level workers, constant training of trainers, adaptation of training content according to local needs, improvement of the quality assurance framework of in-company learning mobility, and promotion of multilingualism. On Circular economy and sustainability for SMEs, good practices from France were presented and the UK drew the attention to leftovers (increasing the waste factor). To tackle this problem, manufacturers have been called to set up new policies taking into consideration the environmental impact. Contact: [Patrizia Di Mauro](#)

EVENTS AHEAD:

- SBS Annual conference (19.10, contact [Tessa Delville](#))
- European Forum on eco-innovation - Tallinn, Estonia (26-28.10, contact [Guido Lena](#))
- East Invest 2 Annual Conference - Yerevan, Armenia (27.10, contact [Doris Rabetge](#))
- [Co-operative banks & innovation in SME Financing](#) (09.11, contact [Gerhard Huemer](#)) - ([Registration](#))

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UEAPME Newsflash
Compiled by: [Jenny Manin](#)
Press and communications officer
Phone: +32 2 230 7599
Mobile: +32 496 520 329