

UEAPME Newsflash

SG Willems meets VP Dombrovskis on social dialogue

At the bilateral meeting with EC Vice-President Valdis Dombrovskis, Secretary General Véronique Willems recalled that the EU Pillar of Social Rights should keep the right balance between the economic and social dimension. On the various initiatives, she insisted on keeping a constructive approach towards social dialogue despite the difficulties raised by the new work-life balance package. She also highlighted the importance of two ongoing consultations on the written statement directive and on access to social protection for self-employed, both very relevant for small businesses. Last but not least she recalled the need for more EU support for SMEs so as to be present and active in social dialogue. The lack of capacity has a direct impact on SME recognition and participation in social dialogue at all levels. And this might create concrete obstacles to improve the implementation of the social acquis.

Contact: [Liliane Volozinskis](#)



CCCTB is about simplification and fairness

UEAPME was invited by the European Parliament's ECON Committee to a public [hearing](#) on a common corporate tax base (CCCTB). Economic Policy Director Gerhard Huemer [explained](#) that 28 different tax regimes are one of the main barriers for SMEs doing cross-border business within the single market. At the same time large multinationals use these differences for creative tax planning, which leads to significantly higher effective tax rates for smaller companies. These two factors are why UEAPME supports a common tax base that has to be mandatory for large companies. As regards the concrete proposal from the European Commission, Mr Huemer raised [concerns](#) about not having the possibility to do cross-border consolidation in a first phase and about the super-deduction for R&D spending, which is not seen as the best way to support innovation in SMEs. Finally, he welcomed the proposed neutral treatment of equity and debt finance.

Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

Social protection: reforms still needed for sustainability

At a Social Protection Committee meeting, Social Affairs Adviser Arnold de Boer pointed out the need for productive investments in social policy in the Member States. Labour market participation and (re-)integration measures are crucial for the sustainability and adequacy of social protection systems. Smart solutions are needed to make work pay. Social partners were invited to comment on a horizontal review of the implementation of the 2016 Country-Specific Recommendations in the area of social protection and social inclusion. On pensions, reforms are still needed to align the effective retirement age with the statutory pensionable age. Mr De Boer also referred to the current debate on access to social protection (e.g. for self-employed) and highlighted the need for a balanced approach, taking into account the extent to which persons in different forms of employment wish to participate (e.g. in unemployment or pension insurance schemes).

Contact: [Arnold de Boer](#)

Which operational restrictions exist for SMEs in the retail sector?

The EC organised a [workshop](#) with Member States and stakeholders to discuss operational restrictions in the retail sector. In the panel on the economic effects of retail restrictions, Enterprise Policy Director Luc Hendrickx urged the Commission not to give in to the pressure of some international groups and to not give the impression that Member States should abolish some regulations that are not in the competence of the EU (e.g. opening hours, ban of sales below costs, establishment). Indeed, the regulations are a framework in which enterprises have to act and should not be seen as restrictions. On opening hours, he stressed that these regulations are, in general, based on a broad consensus. Widening opening hours often leads to additional costs for retailers, higher than a possible increase of turnover.

Contact: [Luc Hendrickx](#)

German Regional Craft Chamber visits UEAPME

During an information trip to the EU Institutions, the Committee of European Affairs for the regional Craft Chamber from Baden-Wuerttemberg (Germany) visited UEAPME to discuss the main challenges for a European SME Policy. After introducing UEAPME, Economic Policy Director Gerhard Huemer [exchanged](#) views on the current debate about the Future of Europe and the up-coming Brexit negotiations. Participants raised their concerns about abuse of freedom of movement and the malfunctioning of the internal market. In addition, Mr Huemer explained the progress made as regards SME finance, where programmes have been extended and regulations are to be improved. Finally, the visitors were updated on current initiatives in the area of taxation.

Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

EVENTS AHEAD:

- Brussels Economic Forum (01.06, contact [Gerhard Huemer](#)) - [Registration](#)
- AECM: Global Conference on Guarantee Institutions for SME Financing (02.06, Madrid, contact [Gerhard Huemer](#))
[Registration](#)
- East Invest 2 Annual Conference (21.06, Kyiv, contact [Luc Hendrickx](#))
- Research & Innovation - Shaping our Future - High-Level Group Pascal Lamy (03.07, contact [Gerhard Huemer](#))
[Registration](#)

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