

UEAPME Newsflash

Members meet up in Malta for the mid-year statutory meetings

In the context of the Maltese Presidency of the Council of the EU, UEAPME held its Board of Directors, Administrative Council and General Assembly meetings in Malta. The two-day event was co-organised with UEAPME Maltese member GRTU and opened by the Maltese President Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca. At the General Assembly, GRTU CEO Abigail Mamo gave a presentation on the policy priorities for SMEs and on what the organisation does for them. Additionally, member organisations ESEE (GR), ZDH (DE) and GRTU presented SME best practices regarding digitalisation.

Contact: [Véronique Willems](#)

Banks agree to better inform SMEs if loan applications are declined

The European banking and business associations, in the presence of EC Vice-President Valdis Dombrovskis, [signed](#) an agreement on "[High-level principles on feedback given by banks on declined SME credit applications](#)". Agreeing on principles at EU level and leaving it up to the national organisations to implement them in practice entails recognising the subsidiarity and the structural and cultural differences in SME finance among Member States. Speaking at the signature ceremony, President Ulrike Rabmer-Koller welcomed the commitment taken by all banking associations to improve the information given to SMEs throughout a whole credit application process. Ensuring that SMEs can better understand the expectations of banks is an important step which will help SMEs access loans. Now the focus has to be put on the implementation at national level to transform our high-level principles into a positive practical experience for SMEs in Europe.



Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

UEAPME presents demands on energy efficiency of buildings

In a position paper on the revised [Energy Performance of Buildings Directive \(EPBD\)](#), UEAPME advocates for financial incentives to promote buildings' renovations rather than obligations to carry out such renovations. Another important point for UEAPME is the fact that Energy Performance Certificates remain an information tool and are not used to compare the energy performance of a building before and after renovation. Last but not least, the organisation highlights that not only inspections but regular maintenance of energy equipment is necessary and should be envisaged by the directive.

Contact: [Rosa Solanes](#)

SMEs need support for improving Health and Safety at work

In a [position](#) regarding the Commission's initiative on the modernisation of health and safety policies, UEAPME stresses how important it is to support SMEs and in particular micro-companies in complying with existing rules. With the EU legislative framework being adequate and sufficient, focus should now be on assisting businesses at local level. This can be done by developing simple and effective tools for risk-assessment such as [OIRA](#), by better cooperation with and tailored guidance from labour inspectorates, and by building capacity of SME organisations and other intermediary bodies. Crafts and SMEs in Europe are still strongly concerned with the burdens often caused by 'gold-plating' legislation at national level. This is contrary to the 'Think Small First' approach advocated by UEAPME, and UEAPME therefore expects a lot from the EC's initiative in terms of cooperation with the Member States to reduce and avoid excessive burdens.

Contact: [Arnold de Boer](#)

Digital Content: UEAPME addresses Council on SME concerns

Ahead of the June Justice and Home Affairs Council and because the Maltese Presidency wanted to reach a general approach, UEAPME sent a [letter](#) to share SME concerns regarding the proposed directive on certain aspects of contracts for the supply of digital content. UEAPME particularly addressed the provisions regarding the burden of proof. In fact, the EC proposal extends the six month presumption period, currently applied in most Member States. For UEAPME, half a year should be the longest plausible time period for the legal presumption that a defect had already existed at the moment of the delivery. The Council hence set the minimum for the reversal of the burden of proof at one year. This is a better scenario compared to the indefinite period proposed by the EC or the two-year approach of the Parliament. However, there is still work ahead to ensure that this new legislation really takes into account the needs and resources of SMEs.

Contact: [Chiara Aprea](#)

Joint declaration on the future of Horizon 2020

UEAPME co-signed a [joint declaration](#) from business organisations and research organisations asking for an ambitious next EU Research & Innovation Framework Programme (FP9) built on Horizon 2020's achievements. The declaration calls on the European Institutions to: (i) significantly increase the overall EU budget for research and innovation in FP9 within the current discussion on the Multiannual Financial Framework, (ii) focus on a well-balanced three pillar structure, while allocating an equivalent share of the budget to each pillar, (iii) strengthen the EU industrial leadership to guarantee sustainable application and implementation of European research, and (iv) continue financial incentives in the form of grants for all actors of the value chain, including small and large companies.

Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

Clear terms and conditions needed for access to non-personal data

Enterprise Policy Advisor Chiara Aprea participated in a [workshop](#) on access and use of non-personal data, organised by the European Commission in the framework of a stakeholder dialogue following the publication of the communication on the European Data Economy. While the discussion is still in a preliminary stage, UEAPME remarked that access to machine generated data is becoming an increasing issue for SMEs in some specific sectors, such as the automotive one. While there are some good practices and in some cases contractual agreements are properly functioning, UEAPME advocates for clear guidance on terms and conditions for the access of data. In many cases, the player with the stronger negotiating power determines who can access and use data, putting SMEs in a disadvantage position. Sector specific binding legislation might be one of the possible solutions.

Contact: [Chiara Aprea](#)

EVENTS AHEAD:

- 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](#))

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