

UEAPME Newsflash

Combination of economic & social dimension needed for more jobs

Ahead of the Social Summit in Gothenburg, President Ulrike Rabmer-Koller [highlighted](#) that UEAPME's first priority for the European Pillar of Social Rights is to better integrate the economic and social dimension. Indeed, UEAPME supports the overall objective of the Pillar but believes the link between the two dimensions is not sufficiently present. Furthermore, UEAPME sees the Pillar as a new driver for reforms at national level and it should definitely aim at fostering entrepreneurship and self-employment as they highly contribute to social cohesion and stability. In the context of the future social dimension of the European Union, Ms Rabmer-Koller emphasised that the UEAPME priorities focus on fair distribution of positive effects of globalisation, better support in periods of change, and guaranteeing openness and fairness within the single market.

Contact: [Liliane Volozinskis](#)

Cohesion Policy Post 2020: UEAPME meets Cretu Cabinet

Social Affairs Director Liliane Volozinskis and Regional Affairs Senior Advisor Hubert Delorme [met](#) with representatives from Commissioner Cretu's cabinet to present the UEAPME [priorities](#) for post-2020 cohesion policy. Several key points were discussed: the importance of European funds for support to SMEs, the role of SME representative organisations at national and regional level and their need for capacity building, as well as the relevance of the partnership principle. In order to maintain a strong cohesion policy with a sufficient budget – a priority of the Cretu cabinet, UEAPME emphasised that cohesion policy has to focus on the economic and social objectives for all regions in Europe. UEAPME insisted on the new EU challenges and the involvement of economic and social partners at all levels in the future negotiation and implementation process.

Contact: [Hubert Delorme](#)

VAT reform has to deliver on simplification for SMEs

At a meeting with the EC's DG TAXUD, Economic Policy Director Gerhard Huemer discussed the upcoming Commission proposal for a review of the [VAT Small Business Scheme](#) and the [first steps](#) proposed for a definitive VAT regime. On the Small Business Scheme, Mr Huemer explained the main requests put forward in UEAPME's [position paper](#) and that the most important issue for SMEs is further simplification and that it provides a level playing field between exempted and non-exempted SMEs. The main difficulty for SMEs regarding the first steps announced for a definitive system is the differentiation made between goods and services, which is made less and less possible. Furthermore, the proposed concept of trusted taxpayers (no VAT to be charged) and others (VAT has to be charged) in B2B business, may create significant risks and costs for SMEs. Finally, he announced a more detailed UEAPME position paper for the beginning of 2018.

Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

Guarantee Institutions are crucial for SME finance

Economic Policy Director Gerhard Huemer welcomed the [AECM](#) Board of Directors for a meeting in the UEAPME premises. The members of AECM (mutual guarantee schemes, guarantee banks and public guarantee institutions) provide guarantees to banks, micro finance institutions, venture capital funds and alternative finance providers to support access to finance for SMEs, micro businesses and others. Therefore, UEAPME works in close cooperation with these organisations to improve the conditions for access to finance. Currently, the main dossiers for the cooperation with AECM are the implementation of EFSI 2.0, the successor programmes for COSME and Horizon 2020, as well as a better use of structural funds for financial instruments. Finally, Mr Huemer discussed further need for simplification, including State aid rules, with the Board Members.

Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

News from UEAPME Projects

How UEAPME is helping SMEs on the quest for Circular Economy

UEAPME has been involved in the [R2π project](#) in the aim of helping SMEs that want to go green and go from a linear model to a circular one. Indeed, they can be faced with serious obstacles in the process, such as lack of information, lack of technical assistance, difficult access to finance to cover the upfront costs to change plants and manufacturing schemes, lack of skilled workers, and sometimes lack of experts in this field. Therefore, UEAPME has been [lobbying](#) for the set-up of a favourable framework at EU and national level providing SMEs with information, technical assistance at local level (preferably for free or at a very low cost), easier access to different forms of financing, tax reductions when employing staff specialised in sustainability, and capacity building for the SME organisations to increase their knowhow on the topic.

Contact: [Guido Lena](#)

Standardisation: national awareness raising seminar in Belgium

SBS and Belgian member organisation UNIZO organised a national awareness raising seminar on standards and their impact on SMEs. Enterprise Policy Director Luc Hendrickx presented SBS' functioning and activities as well as the role of SMEs and their organisations in the standardisation process. Participants exchanged views on how to be better involved in standardisation and agreed to come up with concrete proposals.

Contact: [Luc Hendrickx](#)

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

Food Forum discusses food safety, hygiene and waste

At the Food Forum [meeting](#), the main topics discussed were in relation to food safety, hygiene and waste. EC DG SANTE representatives explained the next steps regarding the regulation on acrylamide, the guidelines for food business operators to handle the application of the regulation, and the new guidelines for food donations to encourage SMEs to get involved despite the challenges they face. Finally, the Commission proposes a legislative act for better B2B relations and against unfair trading practices in the food supply chain, UEAPME is involved in the discussions. Finally, the [Food Forum Work Program 2018](#) was discussed.

Contact: [Birte Day](#)

EVENTS AHEAD:

- Resource Efficiency in the Manufacturing Industry (24.11, Berlin, contact [Guido Lena](#))
- General Data Protection Regulation (27.11, contact [Luc Hendrickx](#))

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