



"The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe"

UEAPME puts focus on SMEs at Industry Day

President Rabmer-Koller takes part in High-level Industrial Roundtable

Brussels, 22nd February 2018 – Today, at the first meeting of the High-level Industrial Roundtable with Commission Vice-President Katainen and Commissioner Bieńkowska, UEAPME President Ulrike Rabmer-Koller put forward the need to have a specific focus on SMEs within a renewed EU Industrial Policy Strategy. SMEs are crucial to the industry sector and therefore need to be taken into account in industrial policy. In a position paper⁽¹⁾ published last month, UEAPME had asked for an adequate role for SMEs during the "Industry Day" annual event and for representation in this Roundtable, for which President Rabmer-Koller was selected. Ms Rabmer-Koller used the first meeting to highlight the essential recognition of the specific situation and needs of SMEs in implementation of all actions of the renewed policy. Discussions focussed on what will shape the EU industry of 2030 and beyond and what policy response is needed to make Europe competitive and create jobs.

UEAPME supports a horizontal industrial policy approach. The overall goal is to improve the framework conditions for businesses of all sizes and particularly taking into account the importance of SMEs. At European, national and regional level, and in particular for SMEs, industry should be enabled to tackle present and future challenges, including the transformation to safe and sustainable technologies. Appropriate framework policies must be coherent with other policy fields like competition, climate and energy policy. Accompanying sectoral initiatives should focus on sectors with high growth potential or sectors facing economic challenges or significant change.

National economic policy activities are necessary to support EU policy initiatives. The role of Europe is identified as that of a coordinator and catalyst: bringing together stakeholders and diffusing knowledge and ensuring all countries speak with a single voice, for example in areas like international trade agreements, patenting and energy markets.

During the Industry Day event, UEAPME is organising a workshop on how to "Facilitate the uptake of new technologies by traditional SMEs" to show how to support SMEs in the fast changing world, including the digitalisation process. "*SMEs will thrive with the appropriate framework conditions regarding the digital, green and circular economies, which is why awareness raising and support structures are crucial in helping SMEs catch-up with these global trends*", highlighted **UEAPME President Ulrike Rabmer-Koller**. As a follow-up to the workshop, UEAPME will put forward concrete recommendations for different EU policy levels.

(1) http://www.ueapme.com/IMG/pdf/UEAPME_comments_on_A_renewed_EU_Industrial_Policy_Strategy.pdf

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EDITORS' NOTES: UEAPME is the employers' organisation representing Crafts and SMEs from the EU and accession countries at European level. UEAPME has 64 member organisations covering about 12 million enterprises with 55 million employees. UEAPME is a European Social Partner. For further information please visit <http://www.ueapme.com/> or follow [@UEAPME](https://twitter.com/UEAPME) on Twitter.

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