

UEAPME Newsflash

“New Deal for Consumers”: missed chance for SME-friendly law

The European Commission published its package on the “New Deal for Consumers” – a targeted revision of the European consumer law. The revision follows the Fitness Check of consumer and marketing laws and the parallel evaluation of the Consumer Rights Directive which had the aim of identifying excessive regulatory burdens, overlaps and inconsistencies that may have appeared over time. UEAPME [stated](#) that the result is a missed chance to simplify the consumer acquis and that too much emphasis is put on enforcement. Given the complexity of consumer law, the risk of SMEs with no legal department committing unintentional infringements is particularly high.

Contact: [Luc Hendrickx](#)

An SME-friendly reading of the GDPR is more than necessary

In a [letter](#) to the Article 29 Working Party on the General Data Protection Regulation, UEAPME insisted on an SME-friendly reading of article 30.5 of the GDPR. The Working Party is the independent European Union Advisory Body on Data Protection and Privacy, composed of representatives from each Member State, the European Data Protection Supervisor, and the representative of the European Commission. Article 30 states that SMEs are exempt from keeping a register of all their processing activities. However, a strict reading of this article would result in all SMEs losing that exemption. By applying a more generous reading, the burden on most SMEs could be lowered.

Contact: [Luc Hendrickx](#)

Strategic discussions on social partners’ next work programme

The European social partners (UEAPME, BusinessEurope, CEEP and ETUC) started discussions on their sixth work programme with a strategic seminar involving their national members. The four organisations reaffirmed their commitment to the autonomous European social dialogue as an important tool to tackle common economic and social challenges. They presented their priorities in view of their next social dialogue work programme. UEAPME expressed its choice for a concise one reflecting the main SME challenges: skills shortages including digital skills, labour market changes, job creation and capacity building. Support to SME organisations is a necessity for strengthening their role in social dialogue and contributing to reforms’ design, ownership and implementation as foreseen in the European Semester.

Contact: [Liliane Volozinskis](#)

SMEs worried about approach towards a definitive VAT system

Alongside representatives from BusinessEurope and Accountancy Europe, Economic Policy Director Gerhard Huemer met MEP Jeppe Kofod (S&D), rapporteur in the ECON Committee for the definitive VAT regime and the “Certified Taxable Person (CTP)” proposal. Mr Huemer explained the [concerns of SMEs](#) as regards the additional burdens caused by applying the VAT rate of the country of destination. He argued that the suggested CTP system may create significant disadvantages for SMEs. Indeed, SMEs delivering goods within the internal market would have to differentiate between a buyer that is a consumer, a certified business client or a non-certified company. Furthermore, if the CTP status is only accessible for larger companies due to costly and complex compliance procedures, smaller companies will suffer from paying VAT on supply from abroad. These SME concerns were shared by the other business organisations.

Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

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

Upcoming 3rd Mobility Package discussed with VP Šefčovič

At a meeting with UEAPME and other social partners, EC Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič introduced the main lines of the 3rd Mobility Package and stressed the aim to reach safer, more accessible and competitive transport while respecting the environmental commitments. This includes the production of vehicles of all classes. Sectoral Policy Director Dieter Grohmann and Transport Forum Chairman Marco Digiioia underlined the fact that further technical alternatives to pure e-mobility exist and are market ready. However, realistic transition periods as well as broad investment in infrastructure are crucial. Aside from this meeting in a bilateral discussion with Mr Šefčovič, Mr Grohmann also highlighted the need for ‘equal digitalisation chances’ in the field of aftermarket and repair services as well as the need for a level playing field between vehicle manufacturers and independent service providers.

Contact: [Dieter Grohmann](#)

Deepening the interaction with sectoral members

UEAPME organised a meeting with the Secretary Generals of the sectoral member organisations in order to deepen the interaction with each other and with UEAPME. The main topics discussed included policy priorities and aligning lobbying activities, the GDPR implementation, projects’ development, social dialogue as well as gaining new members and deeper standardisation activities. Improvement in sharing experiences in various fields was also deemed to be important as developments in the policy fields are often progressing in parallel although the vertical topics are very divergent.

Contact: [Dieter Grohmann](#)

Unfair trading practices: a step forward for food businesses

Alongside several organisations, UEAPME [welcomed](#) the European Commission proposal for a directive on unfair trading practices (UTPs) in the food supply chain. Such a proposal for a directive has the potential to create a minimum harmonisation at EU level without endangering well-functioning existing systems already in place in some Member States. The organisations are nevertheless concerned with the limited scope of the proposal, covering only SMEs suppliers. A successful approach to combating UTPs needs to be applicable to all players in the supply chain as it would therefore impact all commercial relations.

Contact: [Birte Day](#)

EVENTS AHEAD:

- [AECM & UEAPME event on SME financing: EU financial instruments post 2020](#) (19.04, contact [Gerhard Huemer](#))

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