

UEAPME Newsflash

European SE Charter conference is approaching

Registrations are now open for the annual conference on the European Charter for Small Enterprises, organised by the European Commission and the Slovenian Presidency of the EU in Brdo on 3-4 June. The conference provides a forum for business organisations and policy makers from more than 40 countries to learn from each other the best ways to facilitate the business environment for small enterprises through the exchange of best practices in areas such as internationalisation, reducing the administrative burden and teaching entrepreneurship at all levels of school. Keynote speakers Andrej Vizjak, the Slovenian Minister of the Economy and Heinz Zourek, Director General of DG Enterprise and Industry of the EC, will give an overview of the support that SMEs can count upon at EU level. Secretary General Andrea Benassi will deliver the opening address.

➤ [Read more](#) or contact [Luc Hendrickx](#)

UEAPME welcomes French EU Affairs Head of Cabinet

Mr Denis Simonneau, Head of Cabinet for the French Minister of European Affairs, visited UEAPME on 23 April. He was welcomed by Secretary General Andrea Benassi, UEAPME's Directors and representatives from our French members APCM, UPA and CGPME. The meeting aimed at exchanging views on the main policy aspects of the forthcoming French Presidency from an SME perspective and in the run-up to the Small Business Act for Europe, which is likely to be finalised during the second half of the year. Each UEAPME Director had also a chance to elaborate on the key issues at stake in the respective policy area. According to Mr Simonneau, the meeting was very interesting and fruitful and UEAPME's positions will be duly considered during the French Presidency of the EU.

➤ Contact: [Hubert Delorme](#)

EP hosts event on SMEs and family-friendly initiatives

Social Affairs Adviser Helen Hoffmann participated on 23 April in a joint meeting of the Family and Protection of Childhood and SME Intergroups at the European Parliament. Chaired by Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou MEP and Othmar Karas MEP, the event discussed family-friendly initiatives adopted by SMEs. Speakers included Françoise Le Bail, SME Envoy at the European Commission, who underlined SMEs' crucial contribution to economic growth and competitiveness. Ms Hoffmann recalled the legal obligations in place and the ongoing activities of the European Social Partners targeted at improving and identifying new measures to reconcile family and professional life. She also stressed the benefits of family-friendly measures for SMEs and the external dimension whereby SMEs are socially responsible actors deeply embedded in the local community.

➤ [Read more](#) or contact [Helen Hoffmann](#)

Delegation from Congo-Brazzaville visits UEAPME

A delegation from the Republic of Congo-Brazzaville led by SME Minister Ms Adalaide Moundele Ngollo visited UEAPME on 22 April. This visit follows the signature of a convention between UEAPME and the Ministry of SMEs of Congo Brazzaville in 2005. The Minister, who took office in December 2007, seeks UEAPME's contribution in order to promote social and economic development in Congo-Brazzaville through the empowerment of crafts and SMEs. In particular, the Minister is interested in training for Congolese experts in enterprise creation and in UEAPME's Europe-wide network of SME associations.

➤ Contact: [Rosa Solanes](#)

UEAPME backs von Gabain for EIT's Governing Board

Dr Alexander von Gabain, a successful entrepreneur in the biotech sector and a renowned University Professor, recently announced his decision to stand as candidate for the Governing Board of the European Institute of Technology. Trained and educated as a molecular biologist, Dr von Gabain held posts at the Universities of Heidelberg, Stanford and Umea. He currently teaches microbiology at the Vienna University and vaccinology at the Stockholm School of Medicine. In 1998, Dr von Gabain founded Intercell, today one of the five largest biotech enterprises in Europe with its 220 employees. UEAPME backs Dr von Gabain's application, and is strongly convinced that his academic and business curriculum have the potential of making a strong contribution to the EIT Board from the outset.

➤ Contact: [Liliane Volozinskis](#)

SMEs key drivers of sustainability in tourism sector

Enterprise Policy Director Luc Hendrickx spoke on 19 April at a conference organised by the SME Union on "Sustainable tourism in Europe: chances and challenges for SMEs" in Sofia, Bulgaria. His panel was devoted specifically to the role of SMEs in the tourism sector. Seasonality and the lack of skilled workforce are a major challenge for European tourist destinations and for their economy, said Mr Hendrickx. As far as sustainability is concerned, he stressed the role of SMEs as guardians of the authenticity of the local culture and of its products and services. Other issues such as real estate developments should also be taken into consideration, pointed out Mr Hendrickx, who concluded with a call for "more and better" data on tourism-related economic activities in the EU.

➤ [Read more](#) or contact [Luc Hendrickx](#)

FORWARD PLANNING**KEY EVENTS AHEAD:**

- European Social Partners seminar on restructuring in Spain (28-29/04, contact [Liliane Volozinskis](#))
- SME Union Working Breakfast on Late Payment & SMEs (06/05, contact [Luc Hendrickx](#))
- European Social Partners seminar on restructuring in the United Kingdom (06-07/05, contact [Liliane Volozinskis](#))
- EESC hearing on “The impact of ongoing development of energy markets on industrial value chains in Europe” (Brussels, 07/05, contact [Gerhard Huemer](#))
- EESC hearing on “Research and development programmes for SMEs: challenges and opportunities” (Brussels, 07/05, contact [Ulrich Schröder](#))
- [Lexelerator workshop on legal issues for e-business](#) (Brussels, 07/05, contact [Dieter Grohmann](#))
- High Level Conference on Counterfeiting (Brussels, 13/05, contact [Luc Hendrickx](#))
- European Social Partners seminar on restructuring in Sweden (14/05, contact [Liliane Volozinskis](#))
- [Brussels Economic Forum 2008: “Economic and Monetary Union in Europe: 10 Years On”](#) (Brussels, 15-16/05, contact [Gerhard Huemer](#))
- [Conference on the European Charter for Small Enterprises](#) (Bled, Slovenia, 03-04/06, contact [Luc Hendrickx](#))
- “Super Market Access Committee” (Brussels, 04/06, contact [Rosa Solanes](#))
- [“Cutting red tape for Europe” conference](#) (Brussels, 20/06, contact [Luc Hendrickx](#))

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