

UEAPME Newsflash

Stakeholders join forces ahead of EPC workshop

Economic and Fiscal Policy Director Gerhard Huemer represented UEAPME at a meeting on 14 May among customer stakeholders of the European Payments Council, the decision-making and coordination body of the European banking industry in relation to payments, ahead of an EPC workshop on direct debit next week. All participants agreed that the SEPA direct debit model must be less expensive and at least at par with the current national systems to become a viable alternative. Moreover, the existing national rules to activate new direct debit mandates vary significantly. Stakeholders found consensus on the so-called CMF+ system, by which debtors mandate a creditor company to withdraw from their accounts, but banks check the accuracy of the information received. Participants also discussed refund or pre-notification periods and the changeover to the new direct debit systems, which should be automatic but with veto rights for consumers.

➤ Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

Sweden closes series of ten seminars on restructuring

The last of a series of ten seminars on restructuring organised by the European Social Partners UEAPME, BUSINESS EUROPE, CEEP and ETUC as part of their 2006-2008 work programme took place in Stockholm, Sweden, on 14 May. Participants exchanged views on the challenges facing the Swedish labour market and on the role of social partners in restructuring. The final results and lessons learnt from all national seminars will be discussed at a closing conference in Brussels on 19-20 June.

➤ [Read more](#) on the restructuring studies or contact [Liliane Volozinskis](#)

Counterfeiting and piracy: SMEs' awareness must grow

The 2008 High Level Conference on Counterfeiting and Piracy took place in Brussels on 13 May. Enterprise Policy Director Luc Hendrickx took the floor on behalf of SMEs in a panel dedicated to the implications of counterfeiting and piracy for European competitiveness. The fight against counterfeiting so far has been led with the misleading assumption that it only affects luxury goods and textiles, he said. Against this background, awareness raising activities are needed to inform consumers and involve SMEs, which may underestimate the impact of counterfeiting on their business and which are often not in the position to protect their IPR rights, nor to follow the related legal procedures. Moreover, public private partnerships and administrative cooperation have proved their worth as means to fight counterfeiting, an area in which some Member States are lagging behind. Finally, Mr Hendrickx stressed the need to strike a balance between product piracy and legitimate competition, two aspects that must not be confused.

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

"Cutting red tape" conference is approaching

A high level conference on "Cutting Red Tape for Europe" will take place on 20 June at the European Parliament in Brussels. The event is organised by the European Commission and aims to present the progress made on the Commission's Action Programme to reduce administrative burdens in the EU. Alongside several plenary sessions, the conference will feature four parallel workshops in the afternoon, bringing together policy makers, expert advisers and practitioners. Three workshops will address the possibilities for reducing administrative burdens in relation to specific policy areas. Enterprise Policy Director Luc Hendrickx will speak during the fourth workshop, which will discuss red tape reduction in a more horizontal manner. Should you wish to attend this event, you are kindly requested to register as soon as possible via the conference website.

➤ [Visit the website](#) or contact [Luc Hendrickx](#)

From Andrea Benassi's agenda: a fully packed week

Secretary General Andrea Benassi travelled this week to Barcelona and Budapest to meet our members PIMEC, PIMEB and IPOSZ. He also met high-ranking representatives from the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic (this week) and of Sweden (some weeks ago) ahead of their EU Presidencies in 2009.

14/05: In Barcelona, Mr Benassi visited our members **PIMEC** and **PIMEB**, the SME organisations for Catalunya and Balears. The two will participate with a single voice as UEAPME members from now on. Mr Benassi was impressed by their organisational structure, in particular as far as their study and statistics units are concerned. PIMEC and PIMEB will collaborate with UEAPME for the creation of its Study Unit.

15/05: Back in Brussels, Mr Benassi met **Jana Reinisova**, Deputy Ambassador at the Czech Republic's Permanent Representation, after having met **Barklund Larsson**, Deputy Ambassador at the Swedish Perm Rep, some weeks ago. Both meetings aimed to exchange views on the two countries' forthcoming EU Presidencies in 2009. In both cases, Mr Benassi stressed the need to ensure a proper follow-up to the SBA to be adopted this year, in particular regarding its founding principles.

16/05: Today in Budapest, Mr Benassi will meet President **György Szücs**, Vice President **Robert Kassai** and Director **Gabor Solti**, from UEAPME's Hungarian member IPOSZ, to discuss the work programme of UEAPME and its main policy priorities for the future. In the afternoon, he will speak at a seminar organised by the **European Mutual Guarantee Association (AECM)**, during which he will reiterate the importance of guarantee providers for SMEs and the need to foster the existing good relationship between UEAPME and AECM as their representatives at EU level.

➤ For questions on Mr Benassi's agenda, please contact the [UEAPME Secretariat](#)

FORWARD PLANNING**KEY EVENTS AHEAD:**

- [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](#))
- EU Social Partners closing conference on restructuring (Brussels, 19-20/06, contact [Liliane Volozinskis](#))
- [“Cutting red tape for Europe” conference](#) (Brussels, 20/06, contact [Luc Hendrickx](#))

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