

# UEAPME Newsflash

## SMEs at the core of the Single Market Forum

Enterprise Policy Adviser Chiara Aprea participated in the [closing conference](#) of the “Single Market Forum 2016/2017” in Malta, organised as part of the Maltese Presidency in collaboration with the EC. The aim was to highlight priorities for action – especially for SMEs, start-ups and scale-ups – in order to fully implement the Single Market for goods and services. On the EU services e-card, she highlighted that UEAPME welcomes the proposal as a means to reduce the administrative burdens for businesses and service providers in line with the directive. But the effectiveness of the proposal will depend on how it is implemented. UEAPME insists that the needs and concerns of the sectors are taken into account, yet UEAPME fully supports the introduction of the “Only once” Principle among public administrations. On collaborative economy, Ms Aprea discussed the definition of the business models and the need to ensure a level playing field.

Contact: [Chiara Aprea](#)

## SG Willems discussed future of Europe at UNIZO General Assembly

Secretary General Véronique Willems was invited to the General Assembly of member organisation UNIZO. The meeting focussed on the future of Europe debate with [interventions](#) from Ms Willems, Commissioner Marianne Thyssen and Herman Van Rompuy. Ms Willems put forward various views of SMEs in Member States on the European Pillar of Social Rights, consumer law and administrative burdens.

Contact: [Véronique Willems](#)

## GDPR: UEAPME talks awareness campaign with DG Justice

Secretary General Véronique Willems met DG Justice representatives to discuss the need for an Awareness Raising Campaign for SMEs in view of the upcoming entry into force of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). They exchanged views on existing tools and on the role of the Data Protection Authorities (DPAs) in engaging with SME organisations at national level. UEAPME will continue to collaborate with the European Commission to point out best practices and ensure SMEs are properly targeted and informed about the new legislative provisions of the GDPR.

Contact: [Véronique Willems](#)

## Insolvency Proposal is balanced, but fine tuning is needed

Enterprise Policy Director Luc Hendrickx [spoke](#) at the hearing on a proposal for a directive on preventive restructuring frameworks and second chance, organised by the European Parliament’s JURI Committee. He stressed that UEAPME supports the objectives of the proposal and considers it to be a good proposal in general that takes into account the interests of both debtors and creditors, which often are small enterprises. However, the proposal needs to be fine-tuned. On second chance, Mr Hendrickx emphasised that it should be limited to honest entrepreneurs. Finally, he spoke up against introducing any new rules on workers’ representation in this proposal.

Contact: [Luc Hendrickx](#)

## UEAPME puts forward amendments on energy efficiency

UEAPME contacted the members of the ITRE Committee of the European Parliament in order to put forward [amendments](#) on the Commission’s proposal on the Energy Efficiency Directive. The amendments mainly focused on the energy savings’ calculation. In this line, UEAPME would like energy savings resulting from energy efficiency measures taken before 2020 to be included in the following period, to the extent that they exceed the 2020 energy efficiency target. Also on the energy savings scheme, measures aimed at boosting energy efficiency should benefit the greatest possible number of energy consumers, not only social housing but also private housing as well as SMEs.

Contact: [Rosa Solanes](#)

## SG Willems participated in the ZDH WG on EU Affairs

Secretary General Véronique Willems participated in the Working Group on European Affairs of member organisation ZDH. She used the opportunity to present herself and the objectives for her mandate. She also highlighted that she wanted to put traditional crafts and SMEs – those providing our day to day needs – back in the spotlight of European policy and taken into account by EU policy makers.

Contact: [Véronique Willems](#)

## Social partners remain committed to youth employment

The EU social partners organised a [conference](#) to evaluate their [Framework of Actions on Youth Employment](#) (adopted in 2013) and identify the challenges ahead. Social Affairs Director Liliane Volozinskis stated that despite noticeable improvements, youth unemployment remains high in some Member States. The agreed priorities of the Framework of Actions (education, transition, employment and entrepreneurship) are still valid and need further efforts to tackle structural unemployment. If most reforms took place on education for more work-based learning and apprenticeship, shortcomings remain on transitions and labour market functioning. Furthermore, the Youth Guarantee requires more social partners’ involvement at all levels to really deliver. Without a stronger partnership, as well as growth and better framework conditions for more job creation by SMEs, youth unemployment will remain a permanent challenge in Europe.

Contact [Liliane Volozinskis](#)

## FP 9: Impact needs involvement of businesses

UEAPME was invited by [LERU](#) to discuss the prospects for the next European Research and Innovation Framework Programme (FP9) with representatives from Universities and EU Institutions. Economic Policy Director Gerhard Huemer started by presenting the positive experiences with Horizon 2020 and went on to underline that research only has an impact on society and competitiveness if it is transferred into innovation. Therefore, UEAPME supports the current three pillar approach of excellence, societal challenges and leading technologies. With a future European Innovation Council, all activities to support innovation, including the improvement of the regulatory framework and financial instruments, could be better coordinated and become more coherent. Finally, SMEs would like to see more synergies and an easy switch between the framework programme and programmes financed by ESIF.

Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

## SG Willems presents UEAPME objectives at Europatat congress

Secretary General Véronique Willems [delivered a keynote speech](#) in the [Europatat](#) (European Potato Trade Association) congress in Antwerp (BE). She gave an overview of UEAPME, its role in defending SMEs at European level and the priorities. Furthermore, she presented the added value of the EU for SMEs and put forward her objective to put more focus on traditional crafts and SMEs. Ms Willems also named files UEAPME is lobbying on, such as high level principles for banks' feedback on SME credit applications and acrylamides.

Contact: [Véronique Willems](#)

## UEAPME presented to International Centre for EU Studies

As an alumnus, Enterprise Policy Director Luc Hendrickx was a guest speaker at a lunch debate organised by the International Centre for European Studies ([CIFE](#)). CIFE activities encompasses educational and research activities concerning European integration, federalism, regionalism and changes within the structures of contemporary society in accordance with a federalist prospective. Mr Hendrickx presented UEAPME and discussed the main working priorities with the participants, as well as the particularities of small enterprises.

Contact: [Luc Hendrickx](#)

### ----- News from UEAPME Projects -----

## Consumer Law Ready: Training of trainers started

The [first workshop](#) for the lead trainers in the "Training for SMEs on consumer rights in the digital age", as part of the "Consumer Law Ready" project, took place. The project is funded by the European Commission and led by BEUC (European Consumer Organisation), in cooperation with UEAPME and EUROCHAMBRES. It aims to stimulate the compliance of micro and small enterprises with consumer and marketing law. Participants discussed the different training modules and exchanged experiences on adult education.

Contact: [Luc Hendrickx](#)

## BSOs demand better business climate for SMEs

More than 100 representatives from business support organisations (BSOs) gathered in Kiev for the final conference of the EU funded East Invest project. Participants discussed the private sector's engagement in policymaking across the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries and showcased East Invest success stories and achievements for SMEs and BSOs across the region. Business representatives notably endorsed a [regional position paper](#) with recommendations for the six Eastern partner countries' policy makers and the wider donor community to improve the business environment for the SME sector. Specific topics identified by the stakeholders as having the biggest impact on the activities of the SMEs included the business climate, innovation, SMEs' access to markets, finance and skills as well as taxation and customs procedures. The wider use of digital solutions in all these areas was underlined.

Contact: [Luc Hendrickx](#)

### EVENTS AHEAD:

- Research & Innovation - Shaping our Future - High-Level Group Pascal Lamy (03.07, contact [Gerhard Huemer](#))

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