

UEAPME Newsflash

SMEs welcome EU Framework for Quality & Effective Apprenticeships

UEAPME [welcomed](#) the Commission proposal of a European Framework for Quality and Effective Apprenticeships. Crafts and SMEs, as main providers of apprenticeship in Europe, support the proposal, which includes many of their requests with regard to the support that is needed, the demand-led approach, the time to be spent in the company, and their involvement in the governance of apprenticeship systems. UEAPME has consistently put forward these requests in the past and more recently in the joint work of social partners and Member States on this issue. This work has now proven a good basis for the proposal, since it is based on real needs of employers and learners, and expressed through true partnership. Apprenticeship is beneficial for Crafts and SMEs since it not only enhances the possibility of good employment for young people, but also responds to the skills needs of the businesses.

Contact: [Liliane Volozinskis](#)

ECOFIS Committee discusses the deepening of EMU

Participants of the [ECOFIS Committee](#) looked into and discussed the first results from the upcoming EU SME [Barometer](#), which will show interesting developments for SMEs. The main topic of the meeting was the UEAPME position on deepening the European Monetary Union, where members agreed on: (i) completing the Banking Union after further risk reduction in the banking sector has occurred, (ii) fiscal rules supporting investment in future growth and needed reforms, rather than current consumption, and (iii) strict conditionality requirements for any financial capacity for the Euro area. On the new [Industrial Policy Strategy](#), members underlined the importance of SMEs for the industry and asked for full involvement in the upcoming discussion. In addition, participants were updated on VAT dossiers, EFSI prolongation and the future of H2020.

Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

Circular economy: UEAPME asks for focus on financing SMEs

UEAPME became member of the Commission's Expert group on "Support to Circular Economy Financing". At the first meeting Sustainability Director Guido Lena pointed out that to facilitate the transition from a linear to a circular economy, a favourable framework should be set up at European and national level to support SMEs. This should be based on easier access to specific financing, support for reskilling and upskilling, information and technical assistance, as well as a reduction of red tape through the 'Think Small First' principle. Moreover, SME organisations at national level should be supported through capacity building schemes in order to strengthen their role towards SMEs in the transition to the circular economy.

Contact: [Guido Lena](#)

Sustainable finance is an increasing problem for SMEs

"[Accountancy Europe](#)" invited Economic Policy Director Gerhard Huemer to their Member Assembly in Frankfurt to discuss the [interim report](#) on Sustainable Finance, published by the European Commission in June. Referring to the different needs and problems SMEs have in accessing finance, especially for long term finance for riskier projects, Mr Huemer explained that difficulties amplify when it comes to sustainable finance. Risk assessment and the calculation of profitability becomes more uncertain and finance providers more hesitant. Mr Huemer invited accountants to help SMEs better present their business cases to banks and investors, but also called on regulators to increase legal certainty for mid and long-term investments and to make the regulatory framework for financing sustainable investments less burdensome.

Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

SMEs in the future Rural Development Policy post 2020

At the meeting of Consultative Group on the future of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) and Rural Development post 2020, Cohesion Policy Senior Advisor Hubert Delorme underlined the major role of SMEs in rural areas. The future CAP should focus on four instruments: agricultural market development, rural development, food security, and environmental protection – involving all economic and social actors of rural areas, including better involvement of non-farming SMEs. In this context and in relation with the new EU experimental initiatives, Mr Delorme recalled the essential role SMEs play in maintaining economic and social balance, valorisation of local products and jobs, services to the rural population and the agricultural community. He underlined the problems of maintaining economic activities and local public services, and that SMEs are often the only opportunity to maintain/create jobs in many deprived areas.

Contact [Hubert Delorme](#)

Future of Europe discussed with Polish member ZRP

President Ulrike Rabmer-Koller and Secretary General Véronique Willems met with UEAPME Polish member ZRP's Board of Directors. Ms Rabmer-Koller presented UEAPME's draft position on the Future of Europe and SME policy. Participants discussed the attractiveness of dual learning, access to finance, red tape, and challenges stemming from digitalisation and globalisation.

Contact: [Véronique Willems](#)

SME Envoys tackle crucial SME issues

At the last meeting before the SME assembly, the SME Envoys discussed their annual report, the SME action programme, the SME test at national and European level, and public procurement for SMEs.

Contact: [Véronique Willems](#)

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

Exchange of views on SMEs and standards in Poland

Secretary General Véronique Willems, SBS Director Christel Davidson and a ZRP representative met with the Polish national standards organisation. They discussed how SMEs are informed on standards and involved in the standardisation process. Best practices gathered will be used in further SBS work to enhance involvement of SMEs in standardisation.

Contact: [Véronique Willems](#)

Consumer Law Ready: first national training in Dublin

UEAPME Irish member ISME organised the first national training of local trainers on consumer legislation for SMEs in the context of the “Consumer Law Ready” project. The project is funded by the European Union and led by BEUC (European Consumer Organisation), in cooperation with UEAPME and EUROCHAMBRES. It aims to stimulate the understanding and compliance of micro and small enterprises with consumer and marketing law, especially in online trade. The “intermediary trainers” are now expected to train SMEs and raise awareness on their obligations and entitlements. In the context of the project, at least one “trainers’ training” will be organised in each Member State.

Contact: [Chiara Aprea](#)

EVENTS AHEAD:

- Regions & Cities for Sustainable & Inclusive Growth (10-13.10, contact [Birte Day](#))
- SBS Annual Conference (10.10, contact [Christel Davidson](#))
- CoR Workshop on Work-Life Balance (11.10, contact [Arnold de Boer](#))
- 4th Eastern Partnership Business Forum (26-27.10, Tallinn, contact [Doris Rabetge](#))

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