

UEAPME Newsflash

The future of VET gains importance in DGVT reflections

As a European Social Partner, UEAPME regularly participates in the Directors General for Vocational Education and Training (DGVT) meetings. Besides a review on “Teacher and trainers in work-based learning and apprenticeships”, the DGVT in Tallinn brainstormed on the changing role of VET and its future. Demography and changes in occupational structures have a strong influence on VET, which currently receives more policy attention due to the skills mismatch in the economy. While much is expected from VET systems, participation is rather stable and schools really struggle to follow labour market changes. Hence VET also needs to evolve towards more flexibility and permeability since differentiation between initial and continuous VET as well as between VET and general education at a higher level is more and more blurred. The future of VET reflection is only starting but is essential to adequately reply to new skills needs at a time of quick technological change. Contact: [Liliane Volozinskis](#)

EPBD: UEAPME presents voting list to MEPs

Ahead of the vote in the EP ITRE Committee, UEAPME sent a [voting](#) list regarding the compromise amendments on the EPBD (Energy Performance of Buildings Directive). UEAPME expressed the view that the EPBD should only encompass efficiency-related aspects due to reasons of coherence and clarity and reiterated its scepticism about the introduction of new instruments, such as the building renovation passport. Likewise, UEAPME advocated for the directive to introduce regular maintenance of heating and air-conditioning systems along with inspections. Contact: [Guido Lena](#)

Digitalisation may support VAT compliance

At a workshop on the “[Future of VAT: digitalisation is here](#)” organised by Accountancy Europe, the discussions focussed on the challenges for taxation in a digital economy, but also on how digitalisation can help both tax authorities and businesses to comply with increasingly complicate rules. Economic Policy Director Gerhard Huemer welcomed measures to fight VAT fraud and ensure [fair taxation](#) of e-market places and platforms. He supported the extension of the [One Stop Shop](#) to all business areas and explained why SMEs are against a move towards reverse charge models for VAT collection. Finally, Mr Huemer welcomed initiatives taken by some Member States to provide digital solutions for VAT declarations and referred to the potential of linking e-invoicing and e-accounting with e-tax-declaration as a means to reduce compliance costs and error rates. Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

Future ESF should foster competitiveness, growth & jobs more

UEAPME was invited to present SME priorities at the European Social Fund (ESF) Committee’s special meeting, organised to prepare its opinion on the future of ESF post 2020. Social Affairs Director Liliane Volozinskis highlighted the need for consistency and complementarity with the other structural funds (ESIF) in order to implement the EU strategic future priorities. These priorities should be competitiveness, growth, jobs and welfare. Since the ESF is the main fund directly benefiting EU citizens, it should primarily foster labour market participation and social inclusion through skills. To ensure a higher impact, the ESF managing authorities should be obliged to apply the partnership principle with true involvement of social partners at all levels and stages. It therefore requires a renewed support to social partners’ capacity building to fully play their role in implementing common policy priorities and national structural reforms as recommended by the EU Semester. Contact: [Liliane Volozinskis](#)

SME financing differs throughout Europe

At a [workshop](#) organised by the European Saving Banks Group, scientists, stakeholders and EU Institutions discussed the differences of SME finance in Member States. The discussion was based on findings by the EIF in their “[European Small Business Finance Outlook](#)”, which shows the different forms of financing used by SMEs and the differences by Member States, types of SMEs and needs for finance. During the discussions, Economic Policy Director Gerhard Huemer also put forward the differences on the supply side, where SMEs in regions with decentralised banking sectors have much less trouble accessing finance than in regions dominated by few commercial banks. Furthermore, SMEs face more problems to finance riskier projects like innovation, investment in non-tangible goods, internationalisation or business transfer via bank loans and therefore need alternative instruments. Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

Member visit: CPME delegation comes to UEAPME

During a European study visit organised by UEAPME French member [CPME](#), entrepreneurs from the Department of Val-d’Oise came to visit UEAPME. Sustainability Director Guido Lena gave an overview of UEAPME’s mission, lobbying strategies and priorities as well as its relations to the European Institutions. Mr Lena also explained how the cooperation of UEAPME and its national members makes lobbying strategies more successful, particularly towards the European Parliament and the Council. Contact: [Guido Lena](#)

Member visit: MKB Nederland delegation comes to UEAPME

The Europa Platform of MKB Nederland, composed of representatives of MKB branch organisations, discussed the importance of Europe for SMEs with Secretary General Véronique Willems. They exchanged positions on current topics, such as the Future of Europe, impact of Brexit, franchising, imports from third countries and customs duties. Finally, the representatives of the Dutch branch organisations also shared their views on sectoral policies.

Contact: [Véronique Willems](#)

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

EU Regulation on standardisation – 5 years on

Vice-President Gunilla Almgren (Företagarna) opened and closed this year's SBS [Annual Conference](#). The theme this time was the 5th Anniversary of EU Regulation 1025/2012 on European standardisation and the changes for SMEs since the adoption. Speakers from public and private sectors of the European standardisation community discussed and exchanged views on the initiatives that have been put in place following the adoption of the regulation, the impacts on SMEs, and future actions being envisaged at national and European levels to ensure a level playing field between the needs of standards makers and users. It emerged that most SMEs believe this legislation has been a 'door opener', improving their ability to participate in the standardisation process. Yet, major challenges remain, especially linked to bridging the gap between SMEs and standardisation overall.

Contact: [Luc Hendrickx](#)

SBS Expert meeting look into digitalisation and standardisation

At the [SBS experts meeting](#), Enterprise Policy Director Luc Hendrickx gave an update on the political issues related to standardisation that affect SMEs –the State of the Union declaration, the MEP Mizzi Report on Standardisation and the new Industrial Policy strategy. He also highlighted the importance of the G7 Industry Summit's declaration, which dealt with standardisation for the first time and emphasised the need to facilitate SMEs participation in standardisation. The meeting also focussed on the digitalisation of Europe, presented and discussed with representatives from the European Commission and from the European Standardisation Organisations (CEN, CENELEC and ETSI).

Contact: [Luc Hendrickx](#)

EVENTS AHEAD:

- Implementation of R&I Framework - Stakeholder Workshop (20.10, contact [Gerhard Huemer](#))
- 4th Eastern Partnership Business Forum (26-27.10, Tallinn, contact [Doris Rabetge](#))

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