



"The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe"

Making Europe competitive for growth and jobs: new task for social partners

UEAPME proposes joint policies to make recovery sustainable and Europe attractive for private investments

Brussels, 15th October 2015 – Today, at the Tripartite Social Summit, the troika of the Head of States and the Presidents of the European Council and of the European Commission, along with the EU social partners, met to discuss how to strengthen the role of social partners and their contribution to boosting convergence, jobs and growth. UEAPME President Gunilla Almgren underlined that Europe has to become more attractive for private investments to create more jobs and achieve a sustainable growth path. Therefore, Europe has to focus on its competitiveness. This is not only the responsibility of European Institutions and national governments but also that of social partners who have to develop a new common project for competitiveness. Furthermore, social partners have to be better involved at all levels in the renewed European Semester process to improve their ownership on joint policy agendas.

Referring to UEAPME's recently published European SME Barometer⁽¹⁾, UEAPME President Gunilla Almgren said that *"even if the recovery has now reached SMEs all over Europe and in all sectors, expected growth will have very limited impact on employment because SMEs have not started to invest again."* Only if Europe strengthens its competitiveness will private investments in Europe become more attractive and allow the creation of additional jobs.

Ms Almgren mentioned the EU social partners' "In-depth Employment Analysis"⁽²⁾, in which social partners agreed on a joint competitiveness concept going far beyond wages and aims to improve the overall productivity of our economies. *"Now it is up to all social partners to translate this concept into common and coherent policies. Therefore, national social partners especially should have more space for shaping and implementing country specific reforms, a key condition for convergence"*, explained Ms Almgren.

On the highly debated posting of workers issue, Ms Almgren explained that *"many SMEs are complaining about unfair competition, while others cannot fully grasp the benefits of the Internal Market due to too many constraints. We all agree that the two fundamental principles of free movement of workers and free provisions of services have to be preserved. Instead of ideological fights we need a pragmatic and balanced solution for true daily problems and let us therefore fully implement the Enforcement Directive considering it should solve many current issues raised by our SMEs."*

1) EU Craft and SME Barometer: http://www.ueapme.com/IMG/pdf/151009_Barometer15H2.pdf

2) In-depth Employment Analysis http://www.ueapme.com/IMG/pdf/Joint_IDEA_report_July_2015_final_V3.pdf

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EDITORS' NOTES: UEAPME is the employers' organisation representing Crafts and SMEs from the EU and accession countries at European level. UEAPME has 80 member organisations covering over 12 million enterprises with 55 million employees. UEAPME is a European Social Partner. For further information please visit <http://www.ueapme.com/> or follow [@UEAPME](https://twitter.com/UEAPME) on Twitter.

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