

UEAPME Newsflash

Véronique Willems takes up office as UEAPME Secretary General

Following the election at the General Assembly in December, Véronique Willems took office at the beginning of the year. Ms Willems comes with 15+ years' experience in European Policy and SMEs from Belgian member organisation UNIZO, where she was the Head of European Affairs since 2009. Her overall priorities as Secretary General are to put more focus on traditional SMEs and to make sure that these businesses are on the right track in the context of digitalisation and globalisation. Ms Willems intends to further work on the priorities set out in the [UEAPME 2020](#) paper as well as those [highlighted](#) by President Ulrike Rabmer-Koller at the start of her mandate.

Contact: [Jenny Manin](#)

Online & distance sales: a potential balanced solution for all parties

UEAPME adopted its [proposal](#) for amendments to the Arimont report on the proposed Directive on certain aspects concerning contracts for the online and other distance sales of goods. The report has many merits and straightens out the European Commission's proposals on some important points. There is, according to UEAPME, a clear will to find a balanced solution that could be acceptable for all parties. Major improvements put forward in the report are: the reduction of the burden of proof to six months, no right to terminate the contract in case of minor defect, and to maintain the guarantee's length to two years. UEAPME can support the enlargement of the scope to offline sales provided the conditions of the proposals are bearable for SMEs.

Contact: [Chiara Aprea](#)

Stakeholders discuss Data protection Regulation with the EC

In December, EC Vice-President Andrus Ansip (Digital Single Market) and Commissioner Věra Jourová (Justice, Consumers and Gender equality) organised a meeting with the industry stakeholders on the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Enterprise Policy Director Luc Hendrickx emphasised that the owner manager of an enterprise cannot fulfil the function of a Data Policy Officer creates a problem for many SMEs. He also highlighted the fact that SMEs need specific support and guidance in implementing the GDPR and that they need understandable and clear guidelines. The National Data protection Authorities should work together with the representative SME organisations. Finally, he asked to invest in awareness raising instead of penalising.

Contact: [Luc Hendrickx](#)

UEAPME insists on proven relevance of the new Europass

As one of the EU tools and services on Education and Training, Europass is currently under review by the EU Parliament and Council. The Commission proposed to simplify and modernise a number of tools and services under the Europass umbrella. In its [position](#), UEAPME insists on a real European added value in the field of education and training (compared to national competences) and on a strategic approach. The guiding principle should be that services and tools have proven to be useful, cost-effective and relevant for all end-users on the labour market, including businesses and social partners. UEAPME considers that the relevance of the new EU classification for Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) has not yet been sufficiently proven and therefore requests avoiding its planned integration in Europass.

Contact: [Arnold de Boer](#)

----- News from UEAPME Sector Fora -----

Coiffure EU representativeness for personal services proven

According to the representativeness study in the hair and beauty sectors – conducted by [Eurofound](#) – UEAPME member organisation [Coiffure EU](#) is the most important EU-wide representative on the employers' side. Indeed, the organisation tends to organise the most important national players in the sector. With 17 direct members and two indirect ones in 18 Member States, Coiffure EU represents 46% of the employers' organisations represented in the sector. This is a meaningful result for the adoption of the agreement signed between EU social partners in the field and their counterpart on the Trade Unions' side, UNI Europa. Both, Coiffure EU and UNI Europa cover the majority of Member States in the EU.

Contact: [Liliane Volozinskis](#)

Transport Forum discusses Eurovignette & access to occupation

The Transport Forum met in December to mainly discuss the review of the Eurovignette Directive and of the Regulations on the occupation of road transport and on cabotage. The forum members supported the fact that road charges should be applied in line with the "user pays" principle, recalled that transport taxes and charges have to be earmarked only to finance road transport sector, and asked for the establishment of a common EU-wide legal framework for the road charging scheme linked to the use of road infrastructure at EU level. Concerning Regulations on access to occupation and to road haulage market, the Forum called for abolishing letterbox companies by ensuring coherent enforcement of existing rules and guaranteeing their harmonised application. Finally, the Forum agreed on the proposal to extend the access to ERRU (European Register of Road Transport Undertakings) to road side officers in order to check whether a company is registered.

Contact: [Patrizia Di Mauro](#)

New Year wishes from UEAPME!

Secretary General Véronique Willems and the UEAPME staff wish you all a healthy, entrepreneurial and happy 2017!!

EVENTS AHEAD:

- The importance of Financial Intermediaries for SME finance (joint event of UEAPME and AECM) – [registration](#) is open (26.01, contact [Gerhard Huemer](#))

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