

# UEAPME Newsflash

## Integration of migrants via SMEs & entrepreneurship

Secretary General Véronique Willems met EC Director General Matthias Ruete (Migration and Home Affairs). They both agreed that integrating migrants in the labour market is a top priority, and that Crafts and SMEs contributed a lot to this. A successful integration requires language courses which can be combined with on-the-job-learning and further training. Small companies also need legal certainty and support to deal with the complex procedures related to labour market access. As many refugees and migrants suffered traumatic events, some psychological support will also be needed. Ms Willems finally recalled migrants' entrepreneurship as a very valuable integration path and declared that UEAPME is ready to actively contribute to new initiatives in the framework of the European Dialogue on Skills and Migration.

Contact: [Liliane Volozinskis](#)

## Waste: UEAPME achieves less costs and red tape for SMEs

Last week, the EP ENVI Committee voted on the revision of the waste legislation (Circular Economy Package). Following UEAPME's voting recommendations, two important results were achieved: (i) on the definition of municipal waste, a reference to "mixed waste and separately collected waste from small businesses..." is now included in the text, and (ii) on the setting-up of a new threshold of 2 tons a year under which businesses transporting hazardous waste do not need to keep a register. Moreover, a measure compelling businesses to automatically transmit information concerning some aspects of waste treatment was also rejected. UEAPME hence significantly contributed in cutting costs and red tape for SMEs in the waste sector. However, UEAPME is still appealing the Council to make EPR (Extended Producer's Responsibility, i.e. main concept applied in the area of waste recuperation and treatment) more flexible and less expensive for SMEs.

Contact: [Guido Lena](#)

## Simplification of Structural Funds: UEAPME writes to MEP Krehl

In view of the upcoming report on simplification of structural funds, UEAPME sent a [letter](#) and its related [position papers](#) on the topic to MEP Constanze Krehl. Ms Krehl is the rapporteur for the EP Committee on Regional Development. In the letter, UEAPME underlined the four key issues for simplification in order to guarantee the efficiency of structural funds for SMEs: (i) avoid gold plating, (ii) reduce formalities and controls, (iii) support the role of SME intermediary organisations, and (iv) implement an effective partnership based on a real multilevel and multi-actor governance involving SME economic and social representatives at EU, national and territorial level.

Contact: [Hubert Delorme](#)

## Economic recovery continues in spite of increasing risks

Based on a technical presentation from EC DG ECFIN, the EU Social Partners discussed the current economic situation with the European Institutions. Moderate recovery seems to continue and further increase in employment can be expected, and this even if the downward risks have increased: global trade, hard landing in China, geopolitical and security threats in Europe, unsolved bank problems and political uncertainty (BREXIT, upcoming elections). Economic Policy Director Gerhard Huemer said that SMEs profit from stronger internal demand, the main driver of the current upswing, but imbalances between countries still exist (Italy) or emerge (UK and neighbours). The new proposal from the Commission to pay more attention to the overall fiscal stance of the EMU was welcomed by Mr Huemer, but he added that targeting a certain fiscal stance for the EMU would mean a transfer of sovereignty from Finance Ministers towards the EU Institutions.

Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

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

## Eurovignette: a common EU-wide legal framework is needed

The Transport Forum published its [position](#) on the Eurovignette Directive review highlighting the need to create a common EU-wide legal framework for the road charging scheme. The uniform implementation of the 'user pays' principle is recommended and it is important to strictly earmark revenues from transport charges to reinvest back into the road infrastructure. The Forum is also in favour of the EU ensuring that all vignette prices are set proportionately to the use of a given road network by a given type of vehicle. Concerning CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, the position stresses the importance of establishing an integrated approach towards substantially decreasing the emissions. It is also totally opposed to addressing the issue of these emissions in the Eurovignette Directive. Last but not least, the Transport Forum clearly disagrees with enforcing congestion charges on freight operators and extending external cost charges on heavy goods vehicles.

Contact: [Patrizia di Mauro](#)

## Better conditions for food waste management by SMEs

UEAPME is member of the newly set-up EU platform on food losses and food waste. In this context, UEAPME sent in its [concrete proposals](#) to help SMEs with the new guidelines on food donations and food measurements. For food donations, UEAPME advocates to authorise tax exemptions on food donations by Member States, to support a simple legal framework in which SMEs can operate, and to clearly define food waste and food loss. For food measurements, UEAPME advocates

to hold systematic (SME) stakeholder consultation on waste prevention measures to be adopted by Member States (with the involvement of representative SME organisations), to keep targets aspirational, to involve SME representative organisations and make means available to support SMEs, and to avoid additional administrative burden for SMEs according to the 'Think Small First' principle.

Contact: [Birte Day](#)

#### EVENTS AHEAD:

- [Removing Information Barriers to Investments in SMEs](#) (08.02, contact [Gerhard Huemer](#))
- Preventive restructuring & second chance for entrepreneurs: what's in it for SMEs?" (28.02, contact [Luc Hendrickx](#))
- REACH 2018 SME Workshop (09-10.03, contact [Guido Lena](#))

### Founding member of UEAPME passes away

Last week, Fons Margot passed away at the age of 95. Until 1986, he was the NCMV Secretary General (now Belgian member organisation UNIZO). Mr Margot was the one to give a voice to self-employed and small enterprises for the first time in the societal and political debate in Belgium. He set out the grounds for a social security system for the self-employed in Belgium. As member of the resistance, he had experienced the consequences of a divided Europe and was therefore a convinced European and one of the co-founders of UEAPME. His European engagement was also reflected in his election as President of the European Economic and Social Committee in 1986.

Contact: [Luc Hendrickx](#)

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