

UEAPME Newsflash

Public spending: quality of spending more important than quantity

Secretary General Véronique Willems [participated](#) in the policy meeting of the Macroeconomic Dialogue with Maltese Finance Minister Professor Scicluna, Euro Group President Jeroen Dijsselbloem, EC Vice-President Valdis Dombrovskis, ECB Vice-President Vitor Constancio and the other Social Partners. [Speaking](#) on the current economic situation, Ms Willems agreed that the current growth mainly comes from internal demand, but is phasing out. There is a decrease in expectation from sectors depending on internal demand, such as construction and personal services. Therefore, the conditions for private investments to stabilise the recovery and to reduce imbalances need to improve. During the debate on the overall fiscal stance of the Euro Area, Ms Willems argued that the quality of public spending (i.e. for investments in future growth) is more important than the quantity of spending (i.e. increasing public deficits).

Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

SG Willems discusses current SME topics with DG ENVI

Secretary General Véronique Willems met DG ENVI's Director General Daniel Calleja Crespo and Deputy Director General Joanna Drake for a first introductory encounter. Ms Willems seized the occasion to present some of the environmental challenges SMEs are facing in the context of the Circular Economy and of REACH. On circular economy, she explained UEAPME's involvement in the Horizon 2020 project [R2π](#) aiming to spread circular economy in different sectors and through successful business models. Likewise, she referred to the ongoing revision of the waste directives and reiterated the need to take SMEs into account at all levels. Last but not least, Ms Willems highlighted the necessity to speed up efforts to help SMEs with the upcoming 2018 REACH registration deadline.

Contact: [Rosa Solanes](#)

UEAPME addresses challenges in cross-border trade

Secretary General Véronique Willems spoke at a BusinessEurope conference on the EU Single Market and SMEs, focusing on remaining barriers within the internal market. On ways to boost SMEs' cross-border activities, Ms Willems highlighted that problems may differ when dealing with trading goods or with services. However, one of the major issues for SMEs is still VAT formalities and declarations. Concerning goods, standards can play an important role and SMEs need to be better informed and involved in their development process. Uncertainty on debt recovery procedures and dispute resolution across Member States also hinder SMEs from trading abroad. Moreover, when designing legislation to support cross-border trade, the 'Think Small First' principle always needs to be applied. Finally, all enterprises should be free to choose the market they want to be active in.

Contact: [Chiara Aprea](#)

Pillar of Social Rights and mobility on EU social partners' agenda

In the Social Dialogue Committee, an exchange of views on the Commission's Social Affairs Work Programme took place with EC Director General Michel Servoz. It included the EU Pillar of Social Rights follow-up with the revision of the written statement directive and a new initiative on social protection. UEAPME recalled that any new EU legislative initiative should thoroughly assess the financial impact on SMEs as well as respect the better regulation and the 'Think Small First' approach. The mobility package on the revision of coordination of social security systems was first debated with the EC and the Maltese Presidency in the UEAPME Social Affairs Committee. For SMEs, it is important to support free movement of citizens and their families in the EU while ensuring more clarity and certainty on prevailing rules. Finally, social partners' capacity building and better use of EU Social Fund opportunities were discussed between national members and the EC.

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

SBS newsletter: 1st issue of 2017 is out

SBS published the first [issue](#) of its 2017 newsletter on standardisation activities. It contains information on the associations' actions, including an extension of the sectoral approach, i.e. since January 2017, SBS covers lifts as a third sectoral specific approach, besides construction and ICT. The issue also includes information on the public hearing on standardisation organised by the European Parliament, where SBS called for a better inclusion of SMEs in the standardisation process at European, but also national and international level.

Contact: [Tessa Delville](#)

EVENTS AHEAD:

- 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](#))
- [Business Transfer Conference](#) (17.03, Malta, contact [Luc Hendrickx](#))

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