

# UEAPME Newsflash

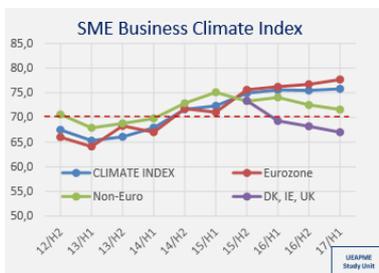
## Tripartite Social Summit on growth, employment and fairness

At the [Tripartite Social Summit](#), in presence of the Presidents of EU Council and Commission and the Maltese Prime Minister, President Ulrike Rabmer-Koller's intervention focused on the future of Europe. Building on the Crafts and SME Barometer results (see below), she [highlighted](#) that internal demand continues to contribute to SMEs' recovery and that more has to be done to sustain further growth and competitiveness. She again emphasised the crucial need for SMEs to finance their investment projects and supported the prolongation and extension of the Juncker EU Investment Plan. On the White Paper on the Future of Europe, Ms Rabmer-Koller insisted on the key challenges Europe is facing. She stated UEAPME's commitment to contribute to the process and to the future developments of Europe. Only a united Europe will make the EU stronger.

Contact: [Liliane Volozinskis](#)



## SMEs' recovery continues, but new risks and imbalances surface



At the Tripartite Social Summit (see above), President Ulrike Rabmer-Koller [presented](#) the latest results of the UEAPME [European SME Barometer](#) to the leaders of the EU Institutions. The SME Climate Index reaches 75.8 points, reflecting an overall positive situation for European SMEs. Yet, imbalances are on the rise. Non-Euro countries seem to be particularly bearing the effects of the recent geopolitical events, especially Brexit. Furthermore, an expected slowdown in domestic demand has lowered SMEs' expectations, particularly affecting the construction and personal services sectors. This requires improvements as regards competitiveness and investment conditions to make economic growth sustainable.

Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

## EU Social Partners sign agreement on active ageing

President Ulrike Rabmer-Koller officially signed the ["Active Ageing and an intergenerational approach" framework agreement](#) in presence of President Tusk, President Juncker and Prime Minister Muscat. This new agreement was concluded by the cross-industry social partners (UEAPME, BusinessEurope, CEEP and ETUC) and offers a practical toolbox for companies of all sizes and workers of all ages to facilitate longer working lives and to better respond to demographic challenges. Active ageing and transfer of knowledge and competences between generations at the workplace is already a reality in many SMEs but it needs to be further promoted to reduce the gap between real and legal retirement ages. This agreement shows that the European social dialogue can contribute to finding realistic solutions to common challenges all over Europe.

Contact: [Liliane Volozinskis](#)

## Women's Economic Empowerment starts in the labour market

During the week of the International Women's Rights' Day, Social Affairs Adviser Arnold de Boer spoke with the EP Rapporteur Anna Hedh (SE, S&D) on priorities to empower women economically. Creating equal opportunities is done first through increasing female labour market participation and combating stereotypes. Actively promoting non-traditional careers can be supported by enhanced business-education cooperation. Entrepreneurship and starting a business should become a normal option for women to empower themselves. Similarly, at a briefing by the EC on the EU's message for the upcoming UN Commission on the Status of Women, Mr De Boer highlighted Europe's track record of social partners' actions on work-life balance. Solutions in SMEs are best found at the workplace. The EU can promote its relatively high standards in that regard, and is a strong example of equal opportunities through education and training.

Contact: [Arnold de Boer](#)

News from UEAPME Sector Fora

## Transport: more clarity & harmonisation needed in social legislation

The Transport Forum published its [position paper](#) on the enhancement of the social legislation in road transport. The position highlights the fact that, although they sufficiently protect the workers' social rights, the current dispositions are not appropriate to eliminate unfair competition. The Forum identifies two main issues. On one hand, the lack of clarity of certain EU provisions leaves too much room for interpretation to the Member States, hampering an efficient harmonisation of the legislations on working, driving and resting time, cross-border control cooperation and co-liability in the operation chain. On the other hand, in some other cases (e.g. posting of workers and drivers' working time directives), EU law is inadequate for cross-border transport operations. The Forum therefore calls for clarification and, consequently, harmonisation of the legislation in force, both based on defined criteria that take into consideration the need of the transport sector.

Contact: [Patrizia Di Mauro](#)

**EVENTS AHEAD:**

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

**SUBSCRIBE / UNSUBSCRIBE / PAST ISSUES**

To subscribe to, unsubscribe from or read and download all the issues of the UEAPME Newsflash, please visit the following link: <http://www.ueapme.com/spip.php?rubrique14>

*UEAPME Newsflash*  
Compiled by: [Jenny Manin](#)  
Press and communications officer  
Phone: +32 2 230 7599  
Mobile: +32 496 520 329