



*“The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe”*

## **Digitalisation is crucial for SMEs’ competitiveness**

***UEAPME asks for a holistic approach and presents best practices at a meeting with Commissioner Bieńkowska***

**Brussels, 27<sup>th</sup> February 2018 – “Entrepreneurs need an enabling legal framework and an environment with adequate support structures to guide their company through digital transformation. Therefore, UEAPME calls for increasing measures on skills development, financial support, capacity building, an appropriate infrastructure and standardisation”** stated UEAPME President Ulrike Rabmer-Koller during a meeting with Commissioner Bieńkowska. On this occasion, Ms Rabmer-Koller also handed over the UEAPME brochure<sup>(1)</sup> containing best practices on support for digital transformation from member organisations.

Digital transformation is a big challenge for SMEs today. Companies lagging behind risk losing their competitiveness power in the digital single market. UEAPME calls for a comprehensive and coherent approach among all Commission initiatives and services, encompassing an enabling legal framework as well as setting up an environment with the adequate support structures. The legal framework should be flexible enough to allow further developments, neutral and future-proof. On the other hand, it needs to ensure fairness, transparency and a level playing field for all companies. To strengthen an environment that facilitates digital transformation, UEAPME calls for extra measures on skills development, financial support, capacity building, an appropriate infrastructure and support for SMEs in standardisation.

*“UEAPME will work together in a constructive way with the Commission and other stakeholders to increase capacity building on digitalisation among its national cross-sectoral SME organisations and European sectoral federations. A Digital Knowledge Centre should be set up, to improve exchange of knowhow with experts, exchange of best practices, develop toolkits and training materials, and in general raise awareness on digital business opportunities.”* commented Ms Rabmer-Koller.

Since the number of initiatives taken at European and national level increases every year, the UEAPME General Assembly decided to put “Digitalisation” forward as the annual theme for 2018. In this framework, UEAPME collected best practices on supporting SMEs to go digital from member organisations. These were compiled into a brochure that is a living document, which will include more practices during the year. Moreover, on this basis, UEAPME will feed into the future work with the European Commission on support measures for digitalisation of SMEs.

(1) [http://www.ueapme.com/IMG/pdf/Best\\_practices\\_on\\_assisting\\_SMEs\\_with\\_the\\_digital\\_transformation.pdf](http://www.ueapme.com/IMG/pdf/Best_practices_on_assisting_SMEs_with_the_digital_transformation.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 64 member organisations covering about 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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