



"The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe"

Employment of young people has to become attractive, SMEs tell Youth Summit

Main concerns of SMEs: lack of qualification, skill mismatches and costs involved in employing young people

Berlin, 3 July 2013 – Heads of States and Labour Ministers joined to put youth unemployment even higher on the agenda. Gunilla Almgren, President of UEAPME, represented Crafts and SMEs at these meetings in Berlin, which followed the signing of the European Alliance for Apprenticeship Declaration by the European Commission, the Lithuanian Council Presidency and the European Social Partners at its launch event in Leipzig. This morning at the round table for promoting youth employment, she presented the UEAPME document containing eight recommendations for more and better apprenticeships in Crafts and SMEs and later in the day at the Youth Summit of Heads of States, she emphasised the need for a more attractive environment for business owners to employ young people.

At the roundtable in Berlin with Ministers of Labour discussing new approaches to tackle youth unemployment, UEAPME President **Gunilla Almgren** focused on the main topics for SMEs to make it more attractive to them to hire young people: *"For SMEs, the main source for jobs in Europe, improvements regards employability of young people through work-based learning and apprenticeship and further labour market reforms are the preconditions to providing more jobs to young people. The European Youth Employment Initiative has to be used to back up reforms of education and training systems, reduce the costs of hiring young people and setting up active labour market policies fitting the needs of young people and SMEs."*

Ms. Almgren, following the signing of the European Alliance for Apprenticeship yesterday, presented a UEAPME document¹ putting forward eight recommendations for more and better apprenticeships in Crafts and SMEs in Europe, illustrated by good practice examples. *"The UEAPME document on apprenticeship puts forwards eight recommendations aiming at promoting apprenticeship and calls for parity of esteem in particular between higher education and vocational training,"* explained Almgren. These include a clear legal framework on rights and obligations for both sides – i.e. employers and apprentices, the involvement of SME organisations in the governance of the apprenticeship system and the design of specific training curricula, tailored advice and support services for SMEs along with financial incentives.

UEAPME message to the Youth Summit : Youth Employment has to become more attractive

Later on today, President Almgren participated – along with the other Social Partners – in the Youth Summit of Heads of States called by Chancellor Merkel. Ms. Almgren reminded participants that *"Youth unemployment can only be tackled by adapting education systems to meet skills needed on the labour market, by improving labour market functioning and flexibility."* To make progress on this, UEAPME welcomes this Youth Summit to discuss what works – like vocational education, apprenticeships and work-based learning – and where the problems are. The current Youth Employment Initiative, which is very much supported by UEAPME, must tackle all dimensions to become successful.

1. http://www.ueapme.com/IMG/pdf/UEAPME_paper_contribution_of_Crafts_and_SMEs_to_apprenticeships.pdf

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EDITORS' NOTES: UEAPME is the employers' organisation representing exclusively crafts, trades and SMEs from the EU and accession countries at European level. UEAPME has 80 member organisations covering over 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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