

The 5 main achievements for Crafts and SMEs in Europe

UEAPME defends the interests of small businesses in Europe and is successful in improving the environment for the 20 million Crafts and SMEs in the European Union. These are the 5 main achievements for our small businesses over the last 2 years:

EU Investment Plan will push investments in SMEs and renovation in buildings



The European Fund for Strategic Investments will support new financial instruments for risky investments and innovation in SMEs and start-ups aiming to finance € 75 billion additional investments. Furthermore, the Fund will finance energy-efficiency investments in buildings by bundling small investments into EU projects. Both were demanded by UEAPME.

'Small Business Standards' gives voice to SMEs in EU Standardisation Process



UEAPME, with some of our member organisations, created Small Business Standards (SBS) – an association implementing an EU funded project to ensure the participation of SMEs in the European Standardisation Process and inform SMEs of up-coming EU Standards. Currently about 50 experts give SMEs a voice in technical committees of EU and international Standardisation Bodies.

Cost for accepting credit and debit cards have been reduced



As of end 2015, an EU regulation will limit multilateral interchange fees to 0.3% for credit cards (MasterCard and VISA) and to 0.2 % for debit cards. Furthermore, the revised Payment Services Directive will increase competition for payment cards acquiring services. Both will reduce the costs for accepting payment cards from clients, as these are especially high for small companies.

No compulsory disclosure of non-financial information for SMEs



UEAPME succeeded in getting only big corporations to have to disclose in their management report, information on policies, risks and outcomes as regards environmental matters, social and employee aspects, respect for human rights, anticorruption and bribery issues, and diversity in their board of directors. In addition, if SMEs wish to comply they can do so in a flexible and SME-friendly manner.

SMEs got a say on the implementation of REACH and Biocides Regulation



UEAPME was deeply involved in simplifying the implementation of both REACH and the Biocidal Products Regulation for SMEs through official groups drafting guides on important aspects such as the letter of access, the setting-up of consortia, access to Substance Information Exchange Fora (SIEFs) and data sharing.

The 5 most relevant policy improvements for SMEs in Europe

UEAPME is the voice of small businesses in Europe and the agenda setter for SME policy in Europe. These are the 5 most important policy improvements for our members over the last 2 years:

'SMEs mean jobs and growth' & 'Competitiveness First' set SME policy agenda



After intensive internal discussion UEAPME Members agreed on a comprehensive Craft and SME policy agenda presented to the incoming Commission and the new elected Parliament in 2014. The document "SMEs mean jobs and growth" was also used for a joint statement of the four EU business organisations to ask the EU Commission to put "Competitiveness First" on its agenda.

The reboot of EU Social dialogue will strengthen voice of SMEs in EU Policies



The new and strong commitment of the Juncker Commission to strengthen the role and the responsibility of social partners at European and national level will increase the possible impact of Crafts and SMEs in economic governance and other fields of policy such as Investment Plan, Energy Union, Digital Single Market, Transport Policy, Migration Policy and Trade Policy.

SMEs will benefit from support measures for apprenticeship



EU Commission and Council have acknowledged the importance of apprenticeship for businesses and young people with the Riga Conclusions for Vocational Education and Training and by boosting the European Alliance for Apprenticeship. The needs and specificities of small and micro companies have been recognised and should be supported by targeted measures and incentives.

Green Action Plan helps SMEs become greener and more resource efficient



The Green Action Plan for SMEs provides a comprehensive framework helping SMEs become greener and more resource-efficient. The recognition of the specific needs of the big bulk of traditional SMEs for their transition to a circular and resource-efficient economy without losing growth and jobs in Europe is especially important.

Administrative simplification to help SMEs access European Funds



On the request of UEAPME, the EU Commission and Member States commit to a large programme to simplify administration, finance and procedures and to make access to European Structural and Investment Funds easier. This is especially important for SMEs and micro-enterprises as well as their representative organisations, as they struggled to profit from these funds in the past.