



“The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe”

Ulrike Rabmer-Koller: new head of Crafts and SMEs in Europe

Priority: more impact for SMEs on EU Policy, i.e. less regulatory burden, improved access to finance and skills

Brussels, 16th December – Today, the General Assembly of UEAPME (the EU employers’ organisation representing the interests of European Crafts and SMEs) unanimously elected Ulrike Rabmer-Koller, current Vice-President of the organisation, as new President. She will take over as from January 2016 and succeed Gunilla Almgren who successfully led UEAPME over the last four years. In her acceptance speech, Ms Rabmer-Koller highlighted the main objective for her two-year mandate: *“Instead of talking about SMEs, EU decision makers need to concretely act in their favour, allowing them to invest and create jobs. What we need is a concrete action plan for SMEs, ensuring a coherent policy approach and considerably improved framework conditions for running an SME”*.



For this purpose, Ulrike Rabmer-Koller will work on the following priorities:

- (1) increasing SMEs’ impact on European policy by intensifying the dialogue between UEAPME and the European Institutions and other stakeholders,
- (2) improving conditions for SMEs in Europe by ensuring better regulation and less administrative burden, facilitating access to finance, closing the skills gap and unlocking the full potential of digitalisation.

As for her priorities, Ms Rabmer-Koller emphasised that: *“SMEs all over Europe encounter similar problems: high costs and efforts to comply with complicated regulations and administrative procedures, difficulties in accessing funding and shortage as regards qualified and skilled workforce. I will dedicate all my energy to achieve tangible improvements in those areas during my UEAPME Presidency.”*

UEAPME is recognised as the voice of the 20 Million plus Crafts and SMEs in Europe. To support a more SME-friendly policy at EU level, UEAPME offers its knowledge and evidence of the real life of SMEs and will start a dialogue with other stakeholders. *“We have to stop analysing and talking about SMEs’ problems and needs and should finally come forward with concrete actions and innovative solutions”*, said Ms Rabmer-Koller explaining her initiative to start a European SME Dialogue.

Europe needs a coherent approach for a European SME policy like a European SME Action Plan, building on the existing Small Business Act and addressing the new challenges SMEs are faced with. With the establishment of the European SME Dialogue, UEAPME will contribute to this end.

Ulrike Rabmer-Koller⁽¹⁾ is the owner and General Manager of the Rabmer Group in Austria – an internationally operating medium-sized company in the area of construction and environmental technology – and is the Vice-President of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO).

From 2011 to 2015, she served as UEAPME Vice-President and Chairperson of the UEAPME Sustainable Development Committee. Both positions enabled her to develop a European policy network and build up contacts with Craft and SME organisations from all over Europe.

(1) A biographical note on Ms Rabmer-Koller is available at the following link: <http://www.ueapme.com/spip.php?article249>

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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 on Twitter.

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