

UEAPME Newsflash

Social pillar needs an economic dimension

UEAPME participated in the first dedicated hearing on the EU Pillar of Social rights organised by the Commission. While highlighting the need to further clarify the Pillar aims, Social Affairs Director Liliane Volozinskis insisted on the employment and economic dimension as a key priority for ensuring more convergence in the European Monetary Union (EMU). SMEs need competitiveness and growth to create jobs and wealth and tackle poverty. This requires further labour market reforms, such as a renewed flexicurity concept and better implementation of the existing EU social acquis. One of the main challenges is to ensure easier transitions on the labour market taking into account new forms of work. Benchmarks limited in number, but well-chosen, could greatly help the assessment and understanding of Member States' performances and reach better convergence. Further reflections should take place among social partners at national and EU level before drawing final conclusions. Contact: [Liliane Volozinskis](#)

Operation of REACH & CLP: UEAPME reacts to ECHA report

UEAPME sent a [letter](#) to ECHA, DG GROW and DG ENV in reaction to ECHA's publications of its second [report](#) on the operation of REACH and CLP. The report describes the impact, success and remaining challenges of the legislation on chemicals and includes a number of commitments and recommendations. In the letter, UEAPME emphasises that increasing the awareness of enterprises regarding their obligations within the framework of REACH still remains one of the major challenges of this legislation. Moreover, UEAPME stresses the importance of rather focusing on the implementation and especially on the enforcement of the already existing rules than to change them. This is also why UEAPME opposed the proposal to include polymers within the scope of registration. Contact: [Guido Lena](#)

UEAPME campaigns for healthy workplaces for all ages

UEAPME became a partner of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work's campaign on healthy workplaces for all ages. As the voice of crafts and SMEs, [UEAPME is raising awareness](#) on the need for active ageing and age-friendly workplaces, as well as the advantages of age management policies in SMEs. Today's demographic developments require thinking about ensuring a healthy workforce and enabling people to work longer. Healthy workplaces are a win-win situation for employers and employees of all ages. SMEs need healthy young people for innovation in production and for the future, and older workers for their valuable contribution in terms of experience and knowledge. It is important to come to workable solutions at company level notably for micro-enterprises, in which different generations are able to work together without stereotypes and with the tools needed. Contact: [Arnold de Boer](#)

SME credits: banks should provide better information

As part of its Capital Market Union [Action Plan](#), the European Commission intends to strengthen the feedback banks have to give to SMEs in case their credit application is declined. In order to prepare this initiative, Economic Policy Director Gerhard Huemer met with banking associations for a first exchange of views so as to explore possible solutions. There seems to be a broad consensus that only national measures are able to provide sufficient flexibility to reflect different banking and institutional structures in Member States. Mr Huemer underlined that the main objective of the exercise has to be that SMEs understand why a loan application has been rejected in order to allow for future improvement. SMEs should also be well informed about what banks need for a successful application. As regards the role of the Commission, Mr Huemer wants to see the EC as the initiator and facilitator for national solutions and not as a regulator on this subject. However, if the national level fails to improve the situation, further legislative action at European level should not be excluded. Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

----- News from UEAPME Projects -----

East Invest 2: public private dialogue in EaP countries

One of the main targets of East Invest 2 is to ensure that business associations (BSOs) can effectively and efficiently contribute to the public private dialogue in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries and to install a more effective dialogue between the private sector and the government. More than 150 representatives of associations were trained to better cope with their members' needs, to better communicate their cause and to better analyse who are the stakeholders and what is at stake. During these events, different donors therefore presented their programmes regarding the available support for the development of BSOs and that of their members, as well as their priorities for SME development. In this respect connecting associations from the EaP countries to associations in the EU is key. European BSOs are invited to engage more actively in cooperation with those in the EaP countries. Contact: [Christian Gessl](#)

----- News from UEAPME Sector Fora -----

Transport Forum: discussions focus on interoperability

UEAPME Transport Forum met to discuss the revision of the interoperability directive (Directive 2004/52/EC). DG MOVE highlighted that the directive is an opportunity to bring down the cost of tolling for Member States due to the greater interoperability and harmonisation of tolls. Furthermore, the revision of the Directive is aimed at addressing the issue of the current monopoly – or long-term contracts – tolling providers are faced with in some Member States. Regarding the euro-vignette, the trend is to have tolls that contribute to the decarbonisation effort. The European Commission is exploring, on one side, the differentiation of tolls on the basis of CO₂ performance and, on the other, bonuses for certified trucks while promoting low emissions technologies. Contact: [Patrizia di Mauro](#)

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