

# UEAPME Newsflash

## ECHA meets UEAPME to strengthen cooperation

An [ECHA](#) delegation led by Executive Director Geert Dancet met Secretary General Peter Faross and Sustainable Development Director Guido Lena. The main aim of the meeting was to discuss how to increase the cooperation between ECHA and UEAPME, and this with particular reference to the third REACH registration deadline of May 2018, which will mainly impact SMEs. However, during the meeting other relevant topics were also discussed, such as the revised guidance on data sharing in REACH, and the main Biocidal Products Regulation problems encountered by SMEs.

Contact: [Guido Lena](#)

## SME test: still far from being effective

Advisor for Enterprise Policy Chiara Aprea participated in the Commission's workshop on "SME Test in the Member States". The aim of the workshop was to support the implementation of the SME Test at EU and Member States level, to exchange good practices and to find practical solutions. Despite some good practices, a report on the SME Test implementation by Belgium's SME Envoy showed that the implementation of the test across Europe is still not homogenous. Indeed, some Member States carry out an SME test only on ad-hoc basis or do not properly take into consideration the results of such a test. Ms Aprea underlined that to be effective at national level, governments need to consult all representative SME organisations, and not only Chambers of Commerce. Concerning the EU consultation procedure, UEAPME signaled that public consultations are often too long, run simultaneously and are not always neutral.

Contact: [Chiara Aprea](#)

## UEAPME experts appointed to VAT Expert Group

The European Commission (DG TAXUD) has appointed two members of UEAPME's Working Group on Taxation to its [VAT Expert Group](#), one as member and one as alternate. Carsten Rothbart (ZDH) and Laura Kurki (Finnish Enterprises) will represent SMEs in the expert group set up to support the Commission in the implementation of the [VAT Action Plan](#) and will advise DG TAXUD on the preparation of legal acts and policy initiatives in the field of VAT. Furthermore, UEAPME working group chairman Chas Roy-Chowdhury (ACCA) will continue to represent UEAPME in the [EU VAT Forum](#).

Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

## Fitness Check: experts discuss Consumer & Marketing law

The European Economic and Social Committee organised an [expert hearing](#) on the Fitness Check of the European Consumer and Marketing law. At the hearing, Enterprise Director Luc Hendrickx stated that as the proposals on online sales and geoblocking are interlinked with the Consumer Rights Directive and the review of the European Consumer law. Therefore they should all be treated together after the evaluation. The main problems encountered by SMEs are the extensive information obligations for traders as well as burdensome rules on price indication. Nevertheless, adequate and transparent price information is key for both consumer and retailer. Finally, Mr Hendrickx insisted on including provisions to tackle the Misleading Directories.

Contact: [Luc Hendrickx](#)

## Regions should strengthen conditions for private investments

Economic Policy Director Gerhard Huemer was invited by the President of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) to discuss "[How to tackle the current investment gap](#)" with other stakeholders. Indeed, neither public nor private investments in Europe have so far reached pre-crises levels. Mr Huemer reminded the participants that even if national and regional authorities spend more on investments in future growth and less on consumption, the fiscal capacities would not allow to close the gap by public investments. Therefore, private investments have to become more attractive and regions have to play their role as a [survey](#) conducted by CoR proofs: 91% see burdensome administrative procedures as the main obstacle for private businesses and 87% see slow juridical procedures. Furthermore, Mr Huemer recommended to make better use of the new possibilities offered by EU Investment and Structural Funds to support innovation and SME finance.

Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

## Labour market integration of refugees should be the priority

In view of finding solutions aimed at early labour market integration, CEDEFOP and OECD organised an expert forum in Rome entitled "Upskilling, reskilling and employing adult refugees" and covering the role of VET and VET-related skill development strategies. Social Affairs Director Liliane Volozinskis recalled the pressing need to start with language skills as the prerequisite for any further integration in the economy and society. The next steps should then be an early skills assessment for refugees and asylum seekers in order to integrate them in vocational training and enhance their employability. She also underlined the refugees' vast potential as future successful entrepreneurs, which is very much promoted by UEAPME organisations at national level. While the business case is an economic reality, concluded Ms Volozinskis, dealing with refugees and asylum seekers is first and foremost dealing with people and this should be borne in mind at all times.

Contact: [Liliane Volozinskis](#)

## Social partners discuss the impact of climate change

At ETUC's roundtable debate on Industrial Regions and Climate Policy, Secretary General Peter Faross discussed the role of social partners in the transition towards a low-carbon economy. He emphasised that climate change has an impact on the whole economy and society and, as such, requires an adaptation of all jobs. More concretely, this process very often does not require to reinvent the wheel, but mainly to upskill the workforce with green skills. Mr Faross also pointed out that social partners have a key role in supporting restructuring at various levels as well as contributing to skills needs anticipation. Furthermore, he talked about ways to further promote green skills in Europe.

Contact: [Guido Lena](#)

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

## Transport: Collaborative economy and reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

UEAPME Transport Forum organised an informal meeting on the issues of collaborative economy and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction. On the former, a fair level playing field is recommended. The main concern is the recognition of service providers which will be tackled by focusing on the frequency of commercial activities and their nature. National legislations rule autonomously on the matter, yet the EU is seeking to formulate a common position. On the latter, the EU has stepped forward, although the technology employed to diminish emissions has increased fuel consumption, resulting in a stalemate. Also, certain companies cannot renovate their fleet and adopt environmentally friendly policies since this would lead small manufacturers to encounter unbearable investment costs. Therefore, the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions entails a wide range of implications and the Forum supports an EC proposal to arrange new provisions to better meet the needs of manufacturers.

Contact: [Patrizia Di Mauro](#)

### EVENTS AHEAD:

- SBS Annual conference (19.10, contact [Tessa Delville](#)) - ([Registration](#))
- European Forum on eco-innovation - Tallinn, Estonia (26-28.10, contact [Guido Lena](#))
- East Invest 2 Annual Conference - Yerevan, Armenia (27.10, contact [Doris Rabetge](#))
- [Co-operative banks & innovation in SME Financing](#) (09.11, contact [Gerhard Huemer](#)) - ([Registration](#))

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