

# UEAPME Newsflash

## Horizon Europe: Innovation Council needs adequate budget to deliver

Europe's SMEs very much [welcome](#) the strong focus on innovation in the Commission [proposal for Horizon Europe](#), the next framework programme for Research and Innovation. With the creation of a European Innovation Council to support SMEs and start-ups during the whole cycle of market creating innovation, Europe will get a fully fledged programme that aims to turn first class research into business opportunities. However, the budget allocated does not match its high objectives and should be increased. Furthermore, the definition of research and innovation missions for societal challenges and industrial competitiveness has the potential to break up traditional research silos and increase impact for businesses and people in Europe by providing new solutions, products and services. However, these results will only be achieved if businesses, especially SMEs and start-ups, that want to participate are not faced with unnecessary administrative burdens.

Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

## European Labour Authority should serve the purpose of SMEs

UEAPME published a [position](#) on the European Labour Authority (ELA) stating that the European efforts to further promote cross-border mobility and a better functioning of the Single Market are a positive step for SMEs. These efforts materialise through the establishment of the European Labour Authority and through the full enforcement of European legislation and fight against fraud and abuse. The ELA should support better cooperation among Member States in terms of exchange of information, experiences and practices. To achieve this, the Labour Authority has to provide concrete added value compared to what already exists as regards European structures and bodies while fully respecting the competences of national authorities, such as technical assistance and capacity building. However, UEAPME emphasises that, as an Agency, the ELA should have no regulatory power, as this should be left to Member States.

Contact: [Liliane Volozinskis](#)

## UEAPME supports access to social protection for all

UEAPME supports access to social protection for all, including self-employed. Following the Commission's proposal on access to social protection for workers and self-employed, UEAPME published a [position](#) on the topic. Labour markets are changing and social protection for all is necessary but self-employed must have a certain degree of freedom to choose what they want and need. UEAPME has strong concerns with the mandatory approach to nearly all areas of social protection in the draft recommendation. To improve social protection of self-employed, Member States should offer the possibility of higher levels of protection at a reasonable cost and ensure flexibility. Indeed, tailored offers that are adapted to the needs of the various groups of self-employed are essential. Moreover, UEAPME believes Member States should explore policy avenues for adapting their social protection systems in a sustainable manner.

Contact: [Arnold de Boer](#)

## "The role of business in the circular economy"

CEPS (Centre for European Policy Studies) recently published a [report](#) with the title "The role of business in the Circular Economy – markets, processes and enabling policies". This report is the summary of a task force set up by CEPS. Sustainable Development Director Guido Lena was part of this task force. The report gives an insight on the main steps necessary to make the concept of circular economy a reality for our society, with case studies and a set of recommendations also addressing SMEs.

Contact: [Guido Lena](#)

## Feedback given by banks to SMEs: progress, but not enough

A year after the signature of the agreement on [high-level principles](#) on feedback given by banks on declined SME credit applications, the European Banking Federation organised a [workshop](#) to discuss the progress made on implementation. Indeed, in the agreement, the banking associations committed that their national organisations contact national SME associations to kick off implementation. At the event, Economic Policy Director Gerhard Huemer underlined once more the importance of such feedback for SMEs to improve their creditworthiness or find more adequate forms of finance for their projects. From an SME point of view, implementation gives a mixed picture: while some UEAPME members report no need for further actions or progress in agreeing on a common code of conduct, others report difficulties to agree on a common way forward. Even worse, too many UEAPME members still report not having been contacted by their national counterparts.

Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

## e-Bay & B2B platforms: ensuring honest & fair business relations

e-Bay (one of the world biggest internet platforms) organised a lunch debate with stakeholders on the proposal for a regulation on B2B platforms. Enterprise Policy Director Luc Hendrickx congratulated the Commission for having promptly reacted to the request of SMEs. He stressed, however, that it is not about small against big, but about how to ensure honest and fair business relations. Therefore, legislation is necessary and the support of e-Bay proves that the proposal is balanced and will certainly not stop innovation in this field. Finally, he stressed that the proposal needs to be strengthened, e.g. by introducing a ban on price parity clauses.

Contact: [Luc Hendrickx](#)

## TÜRKONFED delegation visits UEAPME

UEAPME Turkish member [TÜRKONFED](#) organised a study visit to the European Institutions and UEAPME for a delegation composed of the Secretary Generals of TÜRKONFED member organisations from different regions in Turkey and led by TÜRKONFED Deputy Secretary General Betül Çelikkaleli. The [Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung Für die Freiheit](#) informed the participants about their work on the respect of the rule of law, human rights, and European values. Enterprise Policy Director Luc Hendrickx explained the mission and functioning of UEAPME. Files discussed were digitalisation, B2B platforms, family businesses and women entrepreneurship.

Contact: [Luc Hendrickx](#)

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

## Standardisation: Commission & stakeholders discuss 2019 priorities

At the Inter-institutional dialogue meeting on European standardisation, representatives from the European institutions along with representatives from the standardisation bodies (CEN / CENELEC and ETSI), industry and stakeholders discussed the priorities for standardisation in 2019. Taking into account disruptive changes taking place across the economy, the question was put forward whether the standardisation system was still fit for purpose. Secretary General Willems emphasised the need to ensure that all companies and regions (e.g. also rural areas) are taken along and that capacity building is crucial. The Commission will further develop its Annual Union Working Program based on the inputs out of the discussion.

Contact: [Doris Rabetge](#)

### EVENTS AHEAD:

- EU Company law "upgraded" Package: making the best of digital solutions and cross-border mobility (29.06, contact [Luc Hendrickx](#))

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