

# UEAPME Newsflash

## Europe should grasp opportunities of digitalisation

President Ulrike Rabmer-Koller [participated](#) in the Informal Employment and Social Affairs Council in Vienna on “Digitalisation, robotisation and new forms of work” with Commissioner Thyssen, Ministers and the European social partners. Digitalisation is already a reality, therefore adaptability and entrepreneurial spirit are more than ever key competences. SMEs can only thrive in an adequate and flexible regulatory environment. Social protection systems should be adapted to facilitate transitions between different employment statuses, in particular from employee to self-employed. Moreover, SMEs should be given the right framework in the fields of technology, innovation, HR management, and digital skills. Secretary General Véronique Willems also participated in the discussion on the impact of robotics. She stressed the joint responsibility in skills development and the need to ensure a level playing field for self-employed and equal access to technology and data.

Contact: [Liliane Volozinskis](#)

## Single rules will improve regional programmes

Regional Policy Senior Adviser Hubert Delorme participated in the EESC’s first meeting of the study group on the proposal for a regulation on the Common Provision Regulation for decentralised managed programmes post 2020. He welcomed that the governance of the programmes will ensure a better link to the real needs of the regions. However, this requires maintaining the principle of partnership with economic and social partners for the preparation and implementation of operational programmes. Therefore, a partnership with the administrative and managing national and regional authorities needs to be considerably strengthened.

Contact: [Hubert Delorme](#)

## Regional Funds needs better governance

The EESC’s [Study Group](#) on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund invited stakeholders to their first meeting to discuss the related [Commission proposal](#). Economic Policy Director Gerhard Huemer welcomed the fact that the future ERDF continues to cover all regions in the EU and sets the right priority objectives with innovation, digitalisation and SMEs. However, if the regulation rightly provides the needed flexibility in defining the operational programmes, the sufficient involvement of stakeholder representatives in the governance of the programme at regional level has to be ensured. Finally, UEAPME supports the proposed simplification measures and especially the single rules for all decentralised managed programmes, even if further improvements should be envisaged (see also the discussion on the Common Provision Regulation above).

Contact: [Gerhard Huemer](#)

## New Deal for Consumers: a missed chance for SMEs

UEAPME published a [position paper](#) on the Omnibus proposal in the New Deal for Consumers. The result of the targeted revision of the European consumer law in the “New Deal for Consumers” is a missed chance to simplify the consumer acquis. Too much emphasis is put on enforcement. Focus should instead be on information to and awareness raising of SMEs. UEAPME opposes the proposed possibility for Member States to restrict door-to-door sales. The positive factor is that the Commission has taken into account UEAPME’s request to remove two specific obligations on traders regarding the 14-days right of withdrawal. Indeed, there is proof these obligations constitute disproportionate burdens for SMEs.

Contact: [Luc Hendrickx](#)

## Standardisation: UEAPME and CEN-CENELEC talk SMEs

Secretary General Véronique Willems met CEN-CENELEC Director General Elena Santiago Cid to discuss standardisation and SMEs. Other than possible future cooperation, some of the topics broached were: cooperation with the Annex III organisations, CEN’s increasing focus on SMEs, SMEs as suppliers, and Brexit and the implications on standardisation and trade.

Contact: [Doris Rabetge](#)

## UEAPME newsflash takes a summer break

Dear readers, this is the last UEAPME Newsflash before the summer break. The next one will be sent and published on 7<sup>th</sup> September. We wish you pleasant holidays and a great summer!

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