

UEAPME Newsflash

FORWARD PLANNING

UEAPME CONSULTATIONS:

- Position on the impact of climate change on employment (13/11, contact [Guido Lena](#))
- Call for candidates for the Budget Committee (13/11, contact [Guido Lena](#))
- Call for speakers for the next European Eco-innovation Forum (16/11, contact [Guido Lena](#))
- New European Employment Strategy post 2010 (19/11, contact [Liliane Volozinskis](#))
- Fundamental rights to the protection of personal data (30/11, contact [Dora Szentpaly](#))
- Revision of the Non-Road Mobile Machinery Directive and its impact on SMEs (07/01/2010, contact [Guido Lena](#))
- The interconnection of business registers (20/01/2010, contact [Luc Hendrickx](#))

FORTHCOMING UEAPME MEETINGS AND EVENTS:

- SME finance and relations to Banks Working Group (18/11, contact [Gerhard Huemer](#))
- UEAPME Food Forum (25/11, contact [Ludger Fischer](#))
- UEAPME Administrative Council and General Assembly (02/12, contact [Guido Lena](#))
- Environment Committee (09/12, contact [Guido Lena](#))

OTHER KEY EVENTS AHEAD:

- [First Annual European E-Commerce Conference](#) (17-18/11, contact [Luc Hendrickx](#))
- [Workshop on the late payments directive](#) (18/11, contact [Luc Hendrickx](#))
- [EESC seminar on "Young European Entrepreneurs"](#) (19-20/11, contact [Luc Hendrickx](#))
- ["Small Business Act: Happy Birthday?" conference at EESC](#) (02/12, contact [Luc Hendrickx](#))
- [2nd European Forum "Co-operative Banks and SMEs on access to finance"](#) (03/12, contact [Gerhard Huemer](#))

ECOFIN urged to gear recovery plans towards the future

Secretary General Andrea Benassi spoke this week at the Macroeconomic Dialogue between Finance Ministers, the Commission, the ECB and the European Social Partners that met before the ECOFIN. He stressed that it is too early to withdraw the recovery measures put in place in the last months and singled out as a key concern the negative effects of rising unemployment on private consumption, a crucial source of revenues for SMEs. However, recovery plans must be future-oriented and resources must be spent wisely, stressed Mr Benassi. Member States must attract private investments, provide support to qualify workers for sectors likely to prosper in the future and privilege innovation and the creation of modern infrastructures. Unfortunately this is not the case at the moment, said Mr Benassi, who also called on Member States to ensure order in banking structures, public budgets and social security to prop up citizens' falling confidence. [Read more](#) or contact [Gerhard Huemer](#)

Focusing on conformity will reduce CSR uptake in SMEs

The Swedish Presidency of the EU organised a [conference on corporate social responsibility \(CSR\)](#) in Stockholm this week to discuss the findings of a [report](#) on business and human rights by the United Nations. Secretary General Andrea Benassi spoke at the event in a panel on "the State as an enabler". SMEs inherently implement the objectives described in the theoretical publications on CSR, he said. However, the CSR concept must be placed in the context of the enterprise and provide answers to the daily challenges entrepreneurs face on concrete issues. Public authorities must understand, respect and support SMEs in their efforts to create solid, competitive and long-standing enterprises. They must also insist not only on externally driven CSR, which mainly aims at conformity, but also on internally driven CSR, led by the personal values and attitude of the entrepreneur. Failure to do so will undermine the uptake of CSR in SMEs, stressed Mr Benassi. Contact: [Luc Hendrickx](#)

SMEs present recommendations to meet VET challenges

Social Affairs and Training Policy Director Liliane Volozinskis spoke this week at a [conference on vocational education and training \(VET\)](#) organised by the Swedish Presidency. VET and apprenticeship are the best way to recruit qualified workforce at all levels for crafts and SMEs, she said. The crisis has put VET at the forefront and has accelerated VET reforms and developments to meet the rising demand by young people and jobless adults looking to upgrade their skills and employability. Short and long term challenges can be tackled through VET by bridging the gap between labour supply and employers' needs, involving social partners more closely, investing more in alternating schemes such as apprenticeship, increasing cross-border mobility, putting in place flexible training systems, recognising non-formal competences, teaching the right mix of skills and improving the attractiveness of VET to reach parity of esteem with higher education, she concluded. Contact: [Liliane Volozinskis](#)

Consumer rights: SMEs call for a real impact assessment

The Czech Business Representation to the EU (CEBRE) and Edvard Kožušník MEP (ECR, CZ) organised a working breakfast on the consumer rights directive in Brussels this week. Enterprise Policy Director Luc Hendrickx spoke at the event. While supporting the harmonisation approach taken by the European Commission, he pointed out that the current text completely ignores the possible negative impact on SMEs mainly acting at local level. He also expressed concerns on the current wording on legal and commercial guarantees, asking for greater attention to relationships within the market chain. All speakers called on the European Parliament to carry out a new impact assessment which takes the real situation of the practical business life and the costs benefits more into account. The European institutions should take all the time needed in the legislative process as the upcoming directive is likely to produce long-lasting effects, concluded Mr Hendrickx. Contact: [Dora Szentpaly-Kleis](#)

Transport Forum welcomes ETRA and tackles policy issues

The UEAPME Transport Forum met in Brussels today. The meeting was opened by Secretary General Andrea Benassi, who welcomed participants before leaving the floor to Annick Roetynck, Secretary General of the Forum's newest member ETRA (European Twowheel Retailers' Association). Participants to the Transport Forum, chaired by UETR, discussed the latest developments on several important policy dossiers such as the Working Time Directive for self-employed drivers, the so-called "Car Block Exemption", the European Commission's communication on the future of

transport, the European Road Safety Action Plan and the EC Action Plan on Urban Mobility. Finally, Forum members had the opportunity to listen to a presentation on co-operative systems for intelligent transport by Luis Busquets Pérez, from the the EC's DG Enterprise, which was then followed by a lively discussion. Contact: [Iris Marlovits](#)

Vacancy: Young Graduate in Economics/Management

UEAPME is looking for a [young graduate in either Economics or Management](#) to join its Brussels-based Secretariat. The candidate will cover different tasks in the organisation. As Young Project Manager, (s)he will assist the Project Manager in carrying out tasks related to the management of EU-funded projects, e.g. coordination of partners, organisation of meetings, reporting, budgeting. As Young Analyst in the Study Unit, the candidate will provide independent economic analysis and support to the Head of Unit. No previous work experience is requested, although previous traineeship(s) as well as familiarity with scientific and analytical work and EU-funded projects are an asset. Candidates will have to be leadership minded and results oriented. An excellent knowledge of English is required and additional languages are welcome. Applications must be sent before 20 November to info@ueapme.com.

In memoriam: Ulrika Barklund Larsson

Ulrika Barklund Larsson, Ambassador at the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU, passed away suddenly and prematurely during the night of 5 November after a courageous fight against cancer. She was a passionate and open-minded diplomat, who showed great attention to the needs of European crafts and SMEs both in general terms and in specific policy dossiers such as the Small Business Act. President Georg Toifl and Secretary General Andrea Benassi wish to extend their most sincere condolences to her family. She will be sorely missed by us all.

From Andrea Benassi's agenda: Brussels, Stockholm

27/10: In Brussels, Secretary General Andrea Benassi met Michele Pasca Raymondo, Deputy Director General at the European Commission's DG REGIO, for an exchange of views on how to improve the use of structural funds by SMEs.

28/10: The Secretary General met Robert Madelin, Director General at the European Commission's DG SANCO, to discuss the controversial EC plans to reduce the salt content of foods. Mr Madelin will attend the UEAPME Food Forum on 25 November to further examine the issue with our members in order to achieve workable rules.

29/10: Mr Benassi participated to the Tripartite Social Summit alongside President Toifl (*see issue 132*). He then spoke at a pre-summit conference organised by the Workers and Employers Group of the EESC. The Secretary General reported on the main outcomes of the Tripartite Summit and insisted once again on the need to apply the "Think Small First" principle in all areas including social policy to tackle unemployment, a key concern for SMEs as shown by our Craft and SME Barometer.

09/11: The Secretary General spoke at the Macroeconomic Dialogue between Finance Ministers, Commission, ECB and European Social Partners (*see above*).

11/11: In Stockholm, Mr Benassi was one of the speakers at a conference on corporate social responsibility organised by the Swedish Presidency (*see above*).

13/11: Today in Brussels, the Secretary General has opened a meeting of the Transport Forum in the UEAPME premises (*see above*).

➤ For questions on Mr Benassi's agenda, please contact the [UEAPME Secretariat](#)