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EUROPEAN

2014 NO. 1

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SME EUROPE – PART OF THE EPP (European People’s Party) family

The purpose of “SME Europe” (Small and Medium Entrepreneurs of Europe) is to shape EU policies in a more SME friendly way. SMEs are the backbone of the European economy as it is especially them that create sustainable jobs, growth and prosperity. We closely cooperate with national business organisations and European policy makers within the EPP political family, with a particular focus on the European Parliament. As a pro-active organisation within the political networks of Christian-Democrats and Conservatives, we want to bring a new spirit and a fresh

entrepreneurial wind into the political debate. The interests of SMEs are best served when market mechanisms can freely make an impact. It is about time to contain the role of governments, so we need to have less and smarter state intervention. This provides the best framework conditions for SMEs to grow.



FOREWORD

BY MRS. NADEZHDA NEYNSKY PRESIDENT OF SME EUROPE

SMEs are the true back-bone of the European Economy, being primarily responsible for wealth and economic growth, next to their key role in innovation and R & D. Hence, the mainstays of Europe's economy are micro firms, each providing work for two persons, in average.

SME Europe intends to shape EU policies in a more SME friendly way. We closely cooperate with national business organizations and European policy makers within the EPP political family, with a particular focus on the European Parliament.

As President of SME Europe I consider targets such as the simplification of registration procedures for SMEs, more accessible credits and SME aid, a second chance for „honest entrepreneurs“ after bankruptcy and encouraging women to grasp entrepreneurial opportunities.

In this regard, SME Europe support start-ups with special focus on sectors that provide women with adequate income. Entrepreneurship development training is needed, in order to reinforce women's self-confidence and entrepreneurial know-how. The younger generation of up streaming

businesswomen has to be reached and supported according to their needs. Financial Support, a key element to entrepreneurial success, has to be implemented by for example different methods of providing access to finance.

In my work together with my colleague Dr. Rübige, we fight for less administrative burdens for SME's, more innovation and more competitiveness.

Europe needs more entrepreneurs, more business ingenuity and more young people with creativity and willingness to take risks and be innovative



FOREWORD BY COMMISSIONER JOHANNES HAHN

New companies create more than 4 million new jobs every year. Most of them are to join the large family of Small and Medium Enterprises, which account for 99% of businesses in the European Union. This is more than 20 million businesses – or otherwise said one business for every Eurozone unemployed person – and more than two thirds of private sector jobs. Asserting SMEs are the backbone of EU economy would still be an understatement; they are also our way out of the crisis.

A symbol of EU spirit and diversity, the word ‚entrepreneur‘ stems from a Latin origin and yet shares its root with ‚hand‘ (interprehendere). An entrepreneur is the one who gets hold of an opportunity: he does not merely seize it; he intends to shape it according to his wishes. Well, I am absolutely and entirely convinced that no other time offers as many opportunities to those who want to seize them than challenging, post-crisis times. Fortunately enough, polls show that the European Union is lucky to count 200 million citizens willing to become

entrepreneurs; 200 million citizens ready to grasp every opportunity, provided they can benefit from an entrepreneur-friendly environment.

In the shaping of this environment, among the ambitious and clear-sighted policy makers who took part in this edition, I am proud to say that the EU played a major role. I trust that EU policies should fit SMEs and entrepreneurs, and not the other way round. I would not be so bold as to say that I followed an entrepreneurial approach, but I did try to make the best out of grasped opportunities. Being offered a new ambitious strategy, Europe 2020, and a new multiannual financial framework for 2014-2020, I attempted to think a new regional policy out of the box, always bearing in mind my firm conviction that SMEs and entrepreneurship are the future of our economy.

Between 2007 and 2013 already, cohesion policy investments have supported up to 2012 more than 77800 start-ups and created more than 263000 jobs in SMEs.

Nearly € 70 billion were used to support companies, mainly SMEs. Only from 2014 on though will SMEs be at the very centre of regional policy. Given past achievements and new features, this is most certainly a promising perspective.

I truly believe the reform will create the conditions for SMEs to exceed expectations. Support to SMEs is to double to at least € 140 billion. Above all, support to SMEs is going to be smarter and more fitted to both their needs and our legitimate hopes. They are our way toward long term growth, and investments under the European Regional Development Fund will be concentrated on growth potential priorities, including SME support, low-carbon economy and innovation. They are our way to beat youth unemployment, and we are supporting them through the Youth Employment Initiative. They are our way to protect the environment, our way to promote gender equality and our way to fight early school leaving, and ex ante conditionality enables them to rise to all these challenges.



FOREWORD BY COMMISSIONER ANTONIO TAJANI

Some things don't change. It may seem paradoxical to say this in a year of great change, particularly at the European level, but I am thinking of one theme in particular, which is very dear to my heart: entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs create jobs and create change, they drive change – but my admiration and appreciation for them does not change, it remains constant. When it comes to entrepreneurship, I have said it before and I will say it again: entrepreneurs are the heroes of our time, they invent, produce and market products and services that keep our economy competitive and this only continues to be true.

It was in full awareness of the crisis in Europe and around the world that the Commission adopted the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan just over one year ago. Its objective is to reignite the entrepreneurial spirit in Europe. This means that we want bring about a thorough cultural and educational revolution and go way beyond creating „only“ a supportive environment for entrepreneurs. Such an environment is very

much necessary but not sufficient because real change comes from new paradigms and attitudes and not „just“ improved framework conditions. Since that time, we have seen that our vision of entrepreneurs as modern heroes only becomes more and more relevant. Since that time, we have seen various administrations take up the ideas in the Action Plan, we have seen evidence of how entrepreneurship initiatives can inspire others, and most importantly, we have seen how vital entrepreneurs are to our common European future. The Action Plan has focused attention on, and emphasised the need for, concentrated actions in four areas:

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Education is the very foundation of all our efforts in entrepreneurship. At the very beginning, we need schools that at the latest by secondary school begin to foster an entrepreneurial mind-set and help develop entrepreneurial skills. We know that students who have this sort of opportunity are more likely to start their own businesses later in

life - and even if they don't do that, what they learn about team work, about turning their ideas into results, about creativity, problem solving and responsibility – all that helps them become more employable by others and find their first positions more quickly. Equally, universities and institutions of research and technical education can and should encourage entrepreneurship as an attractive and realistic career option.

But it is not necessarily the case that one can only become an entrepreneur at a young age. Indeed, many people discover that, as they learn professional and technical skills throughout life, as they observe various business opportunities, then they later become interested in striking out to start their own business.

CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE ENTREPRENEURS CAN FLOURISH AND GROW

That is where the second action pillar of Entrepreneurship 2020 comes in. No one ever started their own business after dispassionately concluding that the

regulatory environment wasn't bad – but it can be all too easy to dissuade a would-be entrepreneur if administrative formalities are too heavy, too expensive, or simply too difficult to unravel. Entrepreneurs need and our societies and administrations must offer them an environment where they can find the information they need and where compliance with formalities can be done in a smooth and speedy fashion for the vast majority who are law-abiding business people.

ROLE MODELS AND REACHING OUT TO SPECIFIC GROUPS

Not only should the business environment work smoothly, but needed information must be available to any would-be entrepreneur, whether he or she is already familiar with the 'usual' channels of business support or not. We should not forego any entrepreneurial talent! That's why our third action pillar focuses on realising untapped potential by reaching out to and including underrepresented groups, by promoting successful entrepreneurs, and intergenerational mentoring. For instance,

despite being 52% of the total population, women are only one-third of the total number of entrepreneurs. Equally, experienced seniors are a precious resource, whether they want to start their own business after a lifetime as an employee, or whether they are willing to share their entrepreneurial experiences with those younger who want to start a business.

INTERNATIONALISATION

The best entrepreneurs do not limit their horizons to their own neighbourhoods. It is true that many good ideas begin at home, but the most successful start-ups are often those that immediately 'go international' or even are 'born international'. An experienced business adviser once told us 'I know when a business should go to international markets even before they know themselves!' In our contacts with small and medium-sized enterprises we often see that one does not need to be a large firm to be a world trend-setter or an international champion. I am proud when I see these businesses, 'made in Europe', succeed in the most competitive international markets.

None of what I have described here is easy. All of it takes action at all possible levels – European, national, regional, and even local. None of these actions are short-term – it is only through concerted consistent effort that we can build a more resilient and entrepreneurial Europe which will benefit all of our citizens. There are many bright ideas and bright people who can, together, build this future – entrepreneurial educators, far-sighted and well-trained business and finance experts, people and institutions across government administrations, community services, the media, research and technical institutes, the list is a long one.

I hope that this issue of Entrepreneur magazine can play a useful role in highlighting the achievements in some of these fields already and in underscoring the importance of us all playing our role to meet the challenges ahead. I wish you *bonne* lecture and all success.



FOREWORD

BY DR. CHRISTOPH LEITL, HONORARY PRESIDENT SME EUROPE, PRESIDENT OF THE AUSTRIAN FEDERAL ECONOMIC CHAMBER

A PLEA FOR A STRENGTHENED EUROPE

In a few weeks, almost 400 million citizens all over Europe will be able to choose their representatives to the European Parliament. The prospects and opportunities of future generations depend on how matters in and about Europe progress. It is certain that Europe can only be strong and successful in the long run when it is supported by its citizens, its youth in particular. To accomplish this, a clear direction is essential: We need a strong European Parliament with clear responsibilities – a more democratic European Union – that stands up for its citizens as a directly elected body.

The European Parliament has achieved many successes for European Union citizens in the current legislative period. Reduced roaming fees, clearer data protection frameworks and numerous pilot projects and grants for small and medium-sized enterprises have been implemented. Small and medium-sized enterprises are the backbone of the European economy. Continued sensible and non-bureaucratic support needs to be one of the Parliament's

primary concerns for the next legislative period. SMEs make up more than 98% of all businesses in the European Union and are responsible for approximately 58% of the gross value and 67% of total employment.

SMEs especially play an important role when it comes to the fight against youth unemployment. Some EU member states are facing high difficulties in this regard. Declared being a top priority by the European Parliament last year, the fight against youth unemployment will remain one of our biggest challenges. This is a generation that has been affected by a high rate of unemployment for years. The European Parliament has ceaselessly campaigned for an improvement of the situation of Europe's youth over the last years – we must continue to pursue this path. Young people's employment must remain a top priority.

Unity in diversity – that is the motto of the European Union. This also means that Europe is more than just the sum of 28 different member states. What constitutes and unites us as a Union needs to be

highlighted, in difficult times especially. Especially now the European Union needs to stand for stability, common values, solidarity and sustainability. The European Union can only be strong and function if it has the support of its citizens. To achieve this goal, bureaucratic problems, national hypersensitivities and arguments about petty matters cannot take centre stage over vital European issues such as peace, quality of life and solidarity. Peacekeeping has proved itself in the past, but now it is about guaranteeing a safe future.

Being involved in a project of such magnitude as Europe implicates certain obligations that might not always be pleasant. Yet I'm convinced that these are outshined by the positive accomplishments of a united Europe. We cannot allow Europe to become the scapegoat for national negligence.

In this spirit, let us set sail together towards growth and employment so that the European Union can take on an active and constitutive role in world affairs in the future: Cast your ballot!

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NADEZHDA NEYNSKY MEP PRESIDENT OF SME EUROPE

Born in 1962 August 9th in Sofia Nadezhda NEYNSKY finished her high school career at the Spanish High School Sofia.

Continuing secondary education at St Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia Mrs NEYNSKY acquired a Master degree in linguistics before she started her professional life as an assistant in the US Congressman Office of David Drier in 1991. In 1993 Mrs NEYNSKY successfully pursued a public relation course at BBC London, later she completed her education with Course on mastering negotiation and building sustainable agreements at the John Kennedy School

of Government, Harvard University. Her further professional career includes a position as freelance journalist and as translator for Spanish Poetry and English Literature.

In politics Mrs NEYNSKY started off as head of foreign relations for the Radical Democratic Party in 1991, after several national leading positions in Bulgaria, Mrs NEYNSKY currently holds the Chair of Right Alternative Union since 2006. Since 1997 Mrs NEYNSKY was furthermore elected for several terms in the Bulgarian national parliament, from 1997 to 2001 she worked as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria.

On European level she held the position as Vice-President of the European People's Party and became a Member of the European Parliament in 2009. Since joining the European Parliament Mrs NEYNSKY has been active in the Committee on Budget, in the Delegation to the EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee and in the Delegation for relations with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. Since 2012 Mrs NEYNSKY is the president of SME Europe of the EPP.



BENDT BENDTSEN MEP FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT OF SME EUROPE

SME-Europe's First-Vice President Bendt BENDTSEN was born in Odense, Denmark in March 1954.

After graduating school Bendt Bendtsen began training as a police constable at the Danish Police College in 1975. Stationed with the criminal investigations department in Odense, he served as a police constable from 1980 to 1984 and as detective inspector from 1984 to 1999.

A member of Odense City Council

from 1990-1999, he was elected member of the Danish Parliament for the Conservative People's Party (Det Konservative Folkeparti) in 1994. He served as party chairman from 1999 to 2008. In the years 2001-2008 he was the Minister for Economic and Business Affairs as well as the Deputy Prime Minister of Denmark.

In addition he was a member of the Internal Market Council (2001-2008) and Vice-Chairman of the Globalisation Council (2005-2006).

Bendt BENDTSEN is decorated Commander 1st Degree of the Order of the Dannebrog (2008), Commander Grand Cross of the Royal Swedish Order of the Northern Star (2007) and many more.



CHRISTOS S. FOLIAS
VICE-PRESIDENT
OF SME EUROPE

Born in Thessaloniki, Greece, 14-2-51. Businessman.

Vice President, EUROCOMMERCE (1998-2004).

Dep. Ministry of Economy (2004-2007). Minister of Development (2007-2009).

President, National Confederation of Hellenic Commerce (1996-2002).

Member, European Parliament (1999-2004).

Married with 3 children.



JEAN- PAUL GAUZES MEP
VICE-PRESIDENT
OF SME EUROPE

Jean-Paul GAUZES has been a French Member of the European Parliament since 2004. He is a Member of the European People's Party (EPP group). He sits on the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee since 2004, the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee since 2009 and the Special Committee on the Financial, Economic and Social Crisis (2009-2011). He was also a Member of Legal Affairs Committee in the previous parliamentary term (2004-2009) Jean-Paul GAUZES is, since 2008, the Coordinator in the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee for the EPP Group. He was appointed Rapporteur

for the Payment Services Directive, the first two regulations on Credit Rating Agencies and the Hedge Funds Directive. In 2012, he is the European Parliament's Rapporteur on one of the two texts (2-Pack) of the Commission's proposal to reinforce EU economic governance and on the European semester. He has been the Chairman of the Community of boroughs of Londinières since 2008. He was the Mayor of Sainte-Agathe d'Aliermont (1983-2013) and a Regional Councillor in Haute-Normandie (1993-2010).

Economics (1968), a higher degree (DES) in Public law (1969) and is a Graduate of the Institute of Political Studies (1967). He was a lawyer in the Council of State and Court of Cassation (1973-1980/1995-1998) and in the Court of Appeal of Paris (1980-1994). From 1998 to 2007, he was a member of the Executive Board and Director on legal and tax matters of a Bank.

Jean-Paul GAUZES is Knight of the Order of Academics Palms (1985), Knight of the National Order of Merit (1987) and Knight of the Legion of Honour (2004).

Jean-Paul GAUZES has a degree in



MARIO MAURO

VICE-PRESIDENT OF SME EUROPE

Mario MAURO was born in San Giovanni Rotondo (Italy) in July 1961. He made a degree in philosophy at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan. Later he was elected to the European Parliament as member of European People's Party and European Democrats in 1999. He was appointed

as Vice President of the Culture and Education Committee (1999-2004). In 2004 Mario MAURO was re-elected for the European Parliament and appointed as vice president of the EP.

He was Personal representative of the OSCE Chair-in-Office on Combating

Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, with particular reference to discrimination against Christians (2009).

At the moment he is the incumbent Italian Minister of defence and Professor under contract to the European University of Rome



PETER OLAJOS

VICE-PRESIDENT OF SME EUROPE

Mr OLAJOS was born in Budapest (Hungary) in April 1968. He is Vice-President of the SME Europe. Since 2009 Honorable President of the Association of Hungarian Small and Medium size companies (KKVE)

Former Member of the European Parliament (2004-2009). Later he was Deputy State Secretary in Hungary responsible for Green Economy and Climate Policy. Covered areas and

main responsibilities: Climate Policy, Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency, Building Retrofitting Programs, Green Innovations and Sustainable Development.

Now, he is the owner and Managing Director of Green Player Ltd. in Budapest. This Hungarian SME (consulting company) inspires green improvements. Specialized for big scale green investments in Central and

Eastern Europe. Covered areas and main responsibilities: Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency, Building Retrofitting Programs (ESCO), Green Innovations and Climate Policy.

Mr OLAJOS is also member of the China-Europe Clean Energy Centre (EC2) Scientific Board. EU-China cooperation platform for green energies. Renewables, Energy Efficiency, Clean Coal, Clean Transport, etc.



JERZY SAMBORSKI **VICE-PRESIDENT** **OF SME EUROPE**

Entrepreneur and international business consultant, specializing in SMEs sector. Founder and President of UNICORN – European Union of Small and Medium-size Enterprises and Middle Class, established in 2003, Vice-President of SME EUROPE (earlier, from 2003, of SME UNION).

Co-founder, Vice-President and Managing Director (2004-07) the European Enterprise Institute, National Delegate of the Polish Chamber of Commerce to EuroChambres (2005-7).

Member of the Program Council of the European SME Congress in Katowice.

Translator to Polish language and the publisher of the autobiography of Wilfried Martens, the late Prime Minister of Belgium and the President of the European Peoples Party Europe. Nobody Said It Would Be Easy.



SALVADOR SEDO I ALABART MEP **VICE-PRESIDENT** **OF SME EUROPE**

Salvador SEDO I ALABART was born 1969 April 3rd in Reus, Catalonia, Spain. He spent his higher education at the Polytechnic University of Catalonia, he continued his education at the IESE Business School with a Postgraduate in Leadership and Public Sector Management.

Politically, he took his first steps 1985 by becoming a member of the Democratic

Union of Catalonia (UDC). 1993 to 1996 he engaged as a Secretary-General of Unió de Joves. Since 2000 Mr ALABART is a member of the governing Council of the UDC. On European Level Mr ALABART achieved the position of a member of the Executive Committee of the YEPP (Youth of the European People's party), later he became a Member of the Political Assembly of the European People's Party.

His professional life includes a position as chairman at NISIROS SL, a consultancy for business and engineering. Since December 2011 Mr ALABART is an active Member of the European Parliament. He currently is a member of the EP Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and of the Delegation for relations with South Africa. 2012 he became Vice-President of SME Europe of the EPP.



IULIU WINKLER MEP VICE-PRESIDENT OF SME EUROPE

Iuliu WINKLER is Member of the European Parliament elected in Romania on behalf of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) since 2007. He is member of the International Trade Committee and substitute member in the Committee on Regional Development. Currently

vice-president of SME Europe, Iuliu WINKLER is member of this organization (former SME Union) of the EPP since 2008. Between 2004 and 2007 he was member of the Government of Romania, successively Minister Delegate for Trade and Minister of Communications and

Information Technology. Between 2000 and 2004 Iuliu WINKLER was Member of the Parliament of Romania, respectively Deputy in the Chamber of Deputies. He is ethnic Hungarian from Romania.



PABLO ZALBA BIDEGAIN MEP VICE-PRESIDENT OF SME EUROPE

My name is Pablo Zalba BIDEGAIN, I am MEP and Vice-Chair of the Committee of Economic and Monetary Affairs of the European Parliament. I am a believer of SMEs as engine of European economy and job creation. The Union has the responsibility to guarantee this engine work in a level

playing field. Economic stability, access to credit, internationalisation, single market and reindustrialisation are the pillars to base our future. We must foster entrepreneurship as a dynamic way of innovation and development. These ideas have been my priorities and obsessions during these last

years and as a believer of them, they continue being my goals for the next five years.



DR. ANGELIKA WINZIG **VICE-PRESIDENT AND** **TREASURER OF SME EUROPE**

Angelika WIMZIG/Upper Austria: after my studies at the University of Economy in Vienna I joined BASF/Germany where I was responsible for operative and strategic marketing for commodities and coatings raw materials.

In 1997 I started my own business and

founded a company which is in the powder coatings business as well as in the production of additives for roof coatings.

For years I am engaged in the economic chamber as well as in our national SME Organization. As representative of the

entrepreneurs I became a member of the Federal Council in the Austrian Parliament in 2010. Since October 2013 I am a member of the Austrian Parliament, with the focus on economic, education and research subjects.



DR. INGO FRIEDRICH **HONORARY PRESIDENT** **OF SME EUROPE**

Dr. FRIEDRICH finished school in 1961 and took 1963 the position of District board Member of the CSU Middle Fraction. In 1992 – 1999 he was Chairman of the CSU group in the European Parliament. Since 1993 he is Chairman of the CSU Protestant

Working Group (EAK), deputy chairman of the federal EAK and the CSU. Since 1996 he is Executive Board Member (treasurer) of the European People's Party. He fought for transparency in the European parliament, independency of the European Central Bank (ECB) and a

reform in the "Language Regime" of the EU to facilitate the communication within the EU with its 28 official languages. He always felt a strong responsibility towards Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and helped them to get a stronger voice within the EU.



DR. CHRISTOPH LEITL HONORARY PRESIDENT OF SME EUROPE

Dr. Christoph LEITL, born in 1949 in Linz, has been president of the Wirtschaftsbund since 1999. In addition to this engagement, he has been the president of the Austrian federal economic chamber for 13 years up to the present. Besides these functions Christoph LEITL holds numerous

honorary posts, e.g. president of the Austrian Institute of Economic Research (Wifo). At the present he is the honorary president of the Eurochambre and the president of the Global Chamber Platform. From 2005 to 2009 he was additionally the president of the European SME Union.

According to his extensive experience in the world of politics as well as in the world of economics, Christoph LEITL is a well-known and honored guest lecturer at universities all over the world.



JACQUES SANTER HONORARY PRESIDENT OF SME EUROPE

Jacques SANTER was born in 1937 in Wasserbillig. He was an active member of the Christian Democratic group and the European People's Party. He studied in Paris at the Institut d'Etudes politiques and later at Strasbourg University. From 1975 until 1977 he was member of the European

Parliament and 1977 until 1979 even Vice-President of the European Parliament. In 1984 he became prime minister of Luxembourg. In 1995, when his legislative period in Luxembourg ended, he became president of the European Commission until 1999. There he worked on the Currency

Union (Euro) and the expansion of the European Union to the east. From 1999 until 2004 he was member of the European Parliament, where he was member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy.



DR. PAUL RÜBIG MEP **HONORARY PRESIDENT** **AND FOUNDING MEMBER** **OF SME EUROPE**

Dr. Paul RÜBIG, born in Upper Austria, has been a member of the European Parliament since 1996 and belongs to the European People's Party (EPP). He is the owner of an Austrian blacksmith company and has a degree in Business administration, marketing and production engineering from the University of Linz, Upper Austria. He is married and has two children.

Paul RÜBIG is full member of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and of

the Committee on Budgetary Control. He is member of the Delegation for relations with Switzerland and Norway and of the EU-Iceland Joint Parliamentary Committee and the European Economic Area (EEA) Joint Parliamentary Committee, as well as Vice-Chair of the Delegation for relations with the Maghreb countries. Furthermore, Paul RÜBIG is a substitute member in the Committee on Budgets and the Delegation for relations with the Arab Peninsula.

Paul RÜBIG is very active in the field of the small-scale business promotion. He is president of SME Global, a working group of the International Democrat Union (IDU), whose objective it is to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) and to improve their business environment. Paul RÜBIG is also Vice-Chair of STOA (Science and Technology Options Assessment), an official body of the European Parliament that is supported by external experts such as universities, scientists or research institutes.



MARKUS FERBER MEP **SENATOR OF SME EUROPE**

Markus FERBER is born on 15 January 1965 in Augsburg, Bavaria and is a German politician. After his degree in electrical engineering in 1990 and subsequent employments for Siemens AG (Munich) and Pfister GmbH (Augsburg), Markus FERBER became

a Member of the European Parliament in 1994. As Member of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs he is the rapporteur for the MiFID/MiFIR in the European Parliament and he is also substitute Member of the Committee on Transport and Tourism. In 1999 he

became Chairman of the CSU delegation in the European Parliament. Since 2005, Markus FERBER is also Regional Chairman of the CSU Schwaben and Member of the bureau of the CSU. Since 2013 he is also Speaker of Parliament Mittelstand Europe (PKM).



ELISABETTA GARDINI MEP SENATOR OF SME EUROPE

Elisabetta GARDINI MEP was born in June 1956 in Padova (Veneto) in Italy. She has started her artistic career at the theatre. She became an actress for television and was a moderator for RAI, the Italian public channel. She was also a theatre producer during her artistic time.

In the period of 2004-2008 she became the national spokesman for "Forza Italia". She was the Deputy leader of Forza Italia. She was member of the committee on culture (2005-2006), a member of the Italian Parliament and secretary of the Committee on social affairs and member of the Committee on elections (2006-2008).

GARDINI is a Member of ENVI Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and D-RU Delegation to the EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee. She is substitute member of ITRE Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and D-US Delegation for relations with the United States.



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WORKING GROUPS



SME ENERGY EFFICIENCY

**CHAIRMAN OF THE SME WORKING GROUP
“ENERGY EFFICIENCY” IS - VICE-PRESIDENT OF
SME EUROPE - MEP SALVADOR SEDÓ I ALABART.**

Europe will prosper as long as SMEs grow stronger. 99% of existing companies in Europe are SMEs, which is nearly 25 million SMEs, which account for 67% of all jobs in the EU.

One of my greatest priorities when I first entered the European Parliament, was to promote the competitiveness of European Union's industry and the potential of SMEs. As vice-president

responsible for the SME's working group on Energy Efficiency I am greatly committed to improving energy efficiency for SMEs.

Energy bills are one of the biggest costs for SMEs. Finding ways to help cut those costs is essential. That is where energy efficiency comes into play. Encouraging innovation in improving business' energy efficiency is one of the main goals of the aforementioned working group.

I am fully committed and convinced of the need to achieve a sustainable, competitive and secure Europe. Therefore, in order to comply with Europe's objectives for 2020 in the field of energy (a 20% reduction in EU greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels; raising the share of EU energy consumption produced from renewable

resources to 20%; a 20% improvement in the EU's energy efficiency), a special emphasis should be put on three aspects: consumer awareness, promoting innovation and technology in the energy sector and strengthening the external dimension of the EU energy market.

The accomplishment of these objectives will lead to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, as decided by the European Council in June 2010. European SMEs have a lot to say, but also a lot to benefit from it if energy efficiency is improved. Not only will they gain competitiveness but it will also set the foundations for sustainable economic, energy and environmental regions of the EU. As SMEs are Europe's economic engine we need to help them become more energy efficient.



SME RENEWABLE ENERGY

CHAIRMAN OF THE WORKING GROUP „SME RENEWABLE ENERGY“ IS - SME EUROPE FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT - MEP BENDT BENDTSEN.

Renewable energy is a cleaner source of energy (wind, water solar, geothermal energy, etc.) that does

much less damage to the environment than conventional energy technologies. Renewable energy is not finite like other sources of energy (e.g. oil, gas, coal) and changing our energy supply to renewable energy will secure a stable energy supply for future generations.

In 2010 the level of renewable energy in European electricity consumption was less than 10%. For its 2020 climate and energy package, with binding legislative targets (also known as the 20-20-20 goals) the European Union

plans on more than doubling that figure, from 9,8% to 20% in 2020. This was done by, among other things, giving each Member state individual targets. To ensure investment security, the EU has already begun discussing the role of renewable energy, and renewable energy targets, towards 2030.

These measures are important to reduce the carbon footprint and to secure our future energy supply.



SME ENERGY AND CLIMATE

CHAIRWOMAN MEP ROMANA JORDAN IS MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRY, RESEARCH AND ENERGY AND THE DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES.

The Slovenian politician holds a Ph.D. in nuclear engineering from the University of Ljubljana. Before she was elected to the European Parliament in 2004 she worked as a researcher at the Jožef Stefan Institute.

Jordan is Member of the Management Board and Secretary of the University Science Forum, Member of the Management Board and Vice-President of the Slovenian Committee for NATO

and President of the Nuclear Society of Slovenia.

The issue of Energy is very important due to rising standards in the European Union and rising pressure by foreign producers who do not have to fulfil them. We have to make sure, that although producing in accordance to environmental standards and supporting the 20% goals of the European Union, European producers will be able to compete on the global market and Europe will have an industrial basis. Only this can guarantee jobs and economic wellbeing. To utilize all the European potentials in energy production, we have to push further in the integration of a single European energy infrastructure. Liberalizing the energy market will bring more balance between supply and demand. We have to target especially the markets for

electricity and natural gas, as these are core sectors for energy in Europe.

All these needs a long term view, as high investments will be needed to fulfil these ambitious goals, but therefore the institutions of the European Union must propose long term policies to create a trustworthy political surrounding for our companies and SMEs, making sure that their investments will be save.

Only a well-developed educational system, taking into account the needs of the labor market combined with a European research policy will help us confront the above mentioned challenges, securing the economic wellbeing of European citizens and the future of our SMEs.



Alojz PETERLE MEP is the Chairman of the SME Europe working group "SME

SME HEALTH

I AM ALOJZ PETERLE MEP, FORMER PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF SLOVENIA, FORMER VICE PRESIDENT OF THE EPP, CHAIRMAN OF THE MEMBERS AGAINST CANCER INFORMAL GROUP (MAC) IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT (EP) AND CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE HEALTH WORKING GROUP IN THE EP.

Health". Health is one of the main challenges for the EU citizens: cancer, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, obesity and other serious diseases are still progressing. On the other side, many member states are facing major problems within their health systems. We believe in principles of the social market economy and we wish to have

healthy workforce. These are two reasons why SMEs should address health as a very important issue. I am sure SMEs could and should play much stronger role in the efforts to achieve a healthier Europe.



Chairwoman Roza Gräfin von Thun und Hohenstein MEP was born on the 13th of April 1954 in Krakow, Poland. She made her Master degree at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow in 1979. Meanwhile she was the official Spokesperson for the Student Committee (KOR). From 1992 - 2005 was she General Director and Chairwoman of the Polish Robert Schuman Foundation.

SME TELECOM

THE CHAIRWOMEN OF SME TELECOM IS RÓŻA GRÄFIN VON THUN UND HOHENSTEIN MEP.

During campaign before accession referendum in Poland she initiated and organized many events and public debates on Polish accession to the EU in 2004. Mrs. Gräfin von THUN UND HOHENSTEIN was a representative of the Warsaw city council (1998 - 2000). From 2005-2009 was she elected as Head of the European Commission Representation to her home country Poland. She is a Member of the Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska), she was elected in 2009 into the European Parliament, where she is a member of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection.

Small and Medium sized Enterprises need telecommunications to expand their markets. An increasingly important part is the transfer of data. While we did a lot

to facilitate the mobile phone connection between countries (e.g. lowering roaming costs) in the last years, we have to also work on facilitating data transfer. One step would be to ensure a stable and fast internet connection to consumers and entrepreneurs. Another step would be to decrease data roaming, to ease the access to other countries for European entrepreneurs. A European Union without borders also means a roaming free Europe. "The great ideas behind the European Union will be lost, if they do not translate into concrete facts, like a functioning internal market on roaming."



Picture: „European Parliament“

As a deputy she is focused on wide range of problems of SMEs and issues related to the entrepreneurship and consumer rights protection. She was awarded the Personality of the Year 2013 Prize for supporting SMEs and female entrepreneurship in the European Union.

Internal market is a fundament of the European Union. It guarantees our citizens and businesses the free movement of goods, capital, services, and people. In order however, to be fully functional there are still some

SME INTERNAL MARKET

THE CHAIRWOMAN OF SME INTERNAL MARKET IS MALGORZATA HANDZLIK MEP, WHO IS A MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT SINCE 2004; VICE-COORDINATOR OF THE EUROPEAN PEOPLE'S PARTY IN THE INTERNAL MARKET AND CONSUMER PROTECTION COMMITTEE, WHICH DEALS WITH AN IMPROVEMENT OF EU INTERNAL MARKET BASED ON THE FREE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE, GOODS AND SERVICES.

areas in internal market which have to be improved, like for example legal and administrative environment of companies, and in particular of small and medium sized enterprises. Lots has been achieved for companies: late payment rules, recognition of professional qualifications, reduction of roaming costs, but still too many barriers exist on the internal market. Most of the problems occur in practice and it is absolutely crucial to maintain a dialog with companies in order to hear directly from them what burdens make the creation or development of businesses difficult. WG Internal Market should focus not only on how companies do in internal market, but should look at specific challenges which companies

face, depending on their type. We have not only small and medium sized enterprises on the market, but in this group there are for instance family businesses, social businesses or retail sector and it is crucial to acknowledge an important role they all play for the European economy and particular problems they encounter. WG Internal Market should be the forum for all types of businesses where their problems are heard and where the solutions are developed.



He studied history and politics in Erlangen and Prague. He was

SME SOCIAL

THE CHAIRMAN OF SME SOCIAL IS MARTIN KASTLER MEP.

Member of the European Parliament in 2003 – 2004. He was Head of the Fundamental Development Policy Issues Department and EU project coordinator, Hanns Seidel Foundation, Munich in 2004 - 2008. Since 2009 he is Spokesman on social and development policy for the CSU Group in the European Parliament and Vice-Chair of the EPP Working Group on Bioethics in the European Parliament. He is in the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety; and substitute in

the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs.



SME DIGITAL AGENDA

CHAIR OF THE WORKING GROUP SME DIGITAL AGENDA IS - VICE PRESIDENT OF SME EUROPE - PABLO ZALBA BIDEGAIN MEP.

Innovation is the most important issue to guarantee a competitive and dynamic European Union. The new technologies of information and communication are the realm to deepen in and that is why we are working in a Digital Agenda which establishes a Single Digital Market

to tackle any kind of obstacle inside our Union and creating new opportunities. SMEs must be the main beneficiaries and we try to tailor this Agenda for them.



SME ENLARGEMENT BALKANS

CHAIR OF THE WORKING GROUP ENLARGEMENT BALKANS IS - PRESIDENT OF SME EUROPE - NADEZHDA NEYNSKY MEP.

Last year, Croatia has been admitted as 28th member state into the EU - it is the second state of the former Yugoslav Republic to join the European Union. The further enlargement of the European Union is seen as an important step towards a united, prospering and peaceful Europe. With Macedonia and Serbia being official candidates and with Montenegro being in

negotiations there is a lot of work to be done to ensure a proper integration beneficial for all sides.



SME AGRICULTURE

HEAD OF THE WORKING GROUP AGRICULTURE, ALBERT DESS MEP IS IN THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT. HE GRADUATED FROM AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE IN 1966.

Regional Group in the Bundestag (1992-2004); member of the CDU/CSU Group Executive Committee (1997-2004); chair, CSU Regional Group working party for Agriculture, Consumer Protection, Environment, Transport, Building and Energy in the Bundestag (2000-2004). He is a Member of the European Parliament since 2004.

opportunities to a very large proportion of population. The development of a country is often measured in how advanced the agricultural technology/ methods are.

Moreover, Agriculture is important for international trade. Many agricultural product like sugar, milk and cheese make up a big part of European exports. To facilitate the international trade we are currently working on a Free Trade Agreement with the United States of America.

Worked in trade and industry (1968); managing director of a farming cooperative (1972) and is a full-time farmer/training establishment since 1977.

Member of the Bundestag (1990-2004); farm policy spokesman for the CSU

Agriculture is very important as it is the backbone to a socially and politically stable nation. Only when there is enough food for the whole population we can concentrate on other topics. Agriculture not only provides food and raw material but also employment



SME FUTURE

EVA MAJEWSKI IS CHAIR OF THE EUROPEAN DEMOCRAT STUDENTS (EDS), THE EPP'S OFFICIAL STUDENT ORGANIZATION.

Before joining the European office of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, she worked in the German Bundestag as an advisor for finance and taxation. She holds a M.Sc. in business administration, management and economics from Humboldt University, Berlin.

Academic degrees, high social standards and security nets - and on top an aging population demanding for well-educated staff are not marking a clear edge for young Europeans to start off their very own career as an entrepreneur.

It shall not be neglected that experience adds to these qualifications and that knowledge will be a main contributor in creating and remaining a competitive advantage. Nonetheless, youth and

students will bring more curiosity into the entrepreneurial sphere; they will contribute with ideas and are more open to being challenged.

Never before has there been a generation that was that well educated and with such an easy access to knowledge as we are.

When it comes to pursuing opportunities, EDS comes into the picture. Through our 40 member organizations from 35 countries in Europe and the European neighbourhood, we get up and we get out. Youth and students must be encouraged, so they believe into themselves and the power of their ideas and abilities. Furthermore, there mustn't be a gap in European programmes: opening up a true 'European success story' - Erasmus - to entrepreneurial skills that shall be obtained abroad. This can help bring certain expertise into new countries and regions. A skill obtained within a company abroad or an idea can improve the lives of people easier and faster.

Authorities can reduce bureaucratic burdens that hinder new business ideas. That is not tough enough. We believe that this is only one of a few things that need to change so that we spin off into a new era,

the era of the Entrepreneurial Europe.

Failure is perceived too often as a criterion that really stops any further efforts to even try again. In other nations around the globe, the failure of a business start-up will be counted as 'lesson learnt', not as stigma keeping a person away from pursuing the own future. To create the necessary entrepreneurial culture there are several important factors, entailing investment, propensity to take risk, appropriate infrastructure and -as we as EDS believe - appropriate knowledge provided to students through higher education. The development of entrepreneurial thinking amongst students must become one of the most significant factors for the creation of an entrepreneurial environment and for that reason EDS has always emphasised the role of higher education institutions. youth entrepreneurship demands proper support and development. Positive examples for this are the start-up centres linked with universities. To encourage entrepreneurship among students such centres add a value by providing guidance so that business ideas can turn into viable start-ups.



SME MICROCOMPANIES

THE CHAIRWOMEN OF SME MICROCOMPANIES IS ELISABETTA GARDINI MEP.

The importance of Microcompanies is often underestimated as they are not talked about enough in relation to their numbers. 91.8% of companies in the European Union are Microcompanies (less than 10 employees, turnover and balance sheet below € 2 Million).

The European Commission has taken the importance of SMEs (of which

Microcompanies make up a large part) into account with its "Think Small First" principle. These Microcompanies are accountable for more than 2/3rd of the workforce in the European Union. Offering an economical and regulatory climate for them to prosper will be a huge step towards a growing EU economy.



SME FINANCE

I AM MARKUS FERBER. I WAS BORN IN AUGSBURG, BAVARIA, AND I AM ENGINEER BY PROFESSION. IN 1994 I HAVE BEEN ELECTED TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND CURRENTLY CHAIR THE GROUP OF CSU MEMBERS IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT.

a strong impact for small and medium sized enterprises (SME) all over Europe. Because I felt that SME interests were often neglected in the European Parliament's decision making process, I helped founding PKM Europe, a group of like-minded MEPs dedicated to make a real difference for SMEs in Europe.

depend on bank funding and are the first to suffer in times of crisis. Therefore, one of the main aims of this working group is to explore possibilities to facilitate SME's access to different kinds of funding. A key instrument to do so is to improve the accessibility of financial and capital markets. Furthermore, we will explore the opportunities, risks and regulatory challenges that are connected with new types of funding such as crowd funding.

As a member of the Committee for Economic and Monetary Affairs and the Committee for Transport and Tourism I am closely involved with policies having

Small and medium sized enterprises face particular challenges in European legislation. Especially when it comes to financing themselves, SMEs too often

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EVENTS

PRESENTATION OF THE PEER REVIEW ON COMPETITIVENESS AND INNOVATION FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

On April 23rd 2013 the final report of the Peer Review on the CIP was presented to the public in the European Parliament.

Dr. Paul RÜBIG MEP was designated as the Rapporteur in the CONT committee of the study due to his long experience on the issue and his strong commitment to SMEs. We remind you also that Dr. Paul Rübzig was recently Rapporteur on the EP Report on “Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs): competitiveness and business opportunities”.

On the CIP study he commented that in many areas it is difficult to measure

the impact of SME funding, as indicators are rather inconsistent and complicated. He insists that the criteria for granting funding as well as for measuring efficiency have to be much clearer, simpler and especially measurable. Across all programmes targeting at the same possible funding recipients, there should be common indicators. He points out that we need much more coordination between SME funding on local, regional, national and European

level in order to achieve the highest possible level of efficiency.

The CIP programme contributes to the effort of the European Commission to strengthen the important role of SMEs within different policy fields. The study aims at evaluating the CIP in order to learn from previous experience.

CONFERENCE ON “EUROPEAN RESEARCH AFTER THE CRISIS – CHANCES AND CHALLENGES FOR EUROPEAN CITIZENS, ENTREPRENEURS AND RESEARCH”

On Tuesday, 18th of June, the SME Europe of the EPP organized in cooperation with Belgian-German Club and CSU Brussels a joint Conference on “European Research after the Crisis – Chances and challenges for European Citizens, Enterprises and Researchers”



The event was opened by a welcome speech addressed by H.E. Eckart CUNTZ, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Kingdom of Belgium. The ambassador specified that in particular after crisis European research helps us to reflect on finding better ways for the future role of the SMEs.

Nadezhda NEYNSKY MEP, Committee on Budget and President of SME Europe introduced the topic, mentioning we need to ensure the funding for the creation of knowledge, develop new

processes and support the innovative capacity for SMEs.

In the keynote speech, Rudolf STROHMEIER, Directorate General for Research and Innovation, European Commission Deputy Director-General presented the HORIZON 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. Horizon 2020 is the financial instrument implementing the Innovation Union, a Europe 2020 flagship initiative aimed at securing Europe's global competitiveness. Running from 2014 to 2020 with an €80 billion budget,

the EU's new programme for research and innovation is part of the drive to create new growth and jobs in Europe. In his address Rudolf STROHMEIER stated the proposed support for research and innovation under Horizon 2020 will strengthen the EU's position in science. The Conference continued with a panel discussion between Didier HELLIN, Relations with the Parliament and European Directives, Federal Ministry of the Kingdom of Belgium responsible for the Self-employed, SMEs and Agriculture, Guy della FAILLE, Vice President of the Young Friends of the Countryside (YFCS), Philip von EBERHARDT, Managing Partner N2S Group, Spain, Philippe de MARCHANT ET D'ANSEMBOURG, Founder & President of TERMICO, Nivelles, Belgium moderated by Udo BUX – President CSU party (Brussels branch) and David CHMELIK – President of the Belgian-German Club asbl.

They discussed the chances, challenges and the role of European – applied research in the context of the last financial crisis and the consequences for the European SMEs and Industry, but also for ordinary citizens, consumers and the research community.

WORKING BREAKFAST “CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN SAFEGUARDING THE INNOVATIONS OF EUROPEAN SMES”

On Tuesday, 25th of June the SME Europe of the European People’s Party (EPP) organised together with Fraunhofer Institute and Qualcomm a Working Breakfast on Challenges and Opportunities in Safeguarding the Innovations of European SMEs – Lessons from the “Learn to Protect” Project.

The debate was opened by Dr. Paul RÜBIG MEP, EP Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and SME Europe Honorary President who mentioned the importance of supporting SMEs and encouraging the innovation and introduced the speakers.

Silvia BARTOLINI, Member of the Cabinet of Vice President of the European Commission Antonio TAJANI, Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry stressed the European Commission’s efforts to promote successful entrepreneurship and improve the business environment for SMEs, to allow them to realise their full

potential in today’s global economy.

Mario CAMPOLARGO, Director, Net Futures, DG CONNECT, European Commission mentioned also the European Commission interest in sustaining innovative SMEs with innovative solutions. In this regard, the Horizon 2020, the financial instrument implementing the Innovation Union will be aimed at securing Europe’s global competitiveness. Running from 2014 to 2020 with an €80 billion budget, the EU’s new programme for research and innovation is part of the drive to create new growth and jobs in Europe and will address SMEs as well.

William B. BOLD, Senior Vice-President, Head of Global Government Affairs, Qualcomm Inc. shared the experience of Qualcomm investment in research mentioning the SMEs are the engine that resources the economic development.

BOOK PRESENTATION “UNTERNEHMERINNEN BRAUCHEN FREIHEIT” BY DR. PAUL RÜBIG MEP

On Tuesday, 09 of July the SME Europe of the European People’s Party (EPP) organised a book presentation “Entrepreneurs Need Freedom” by Dr. Paul RÜBIG MEP, EP Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and SME Europe Honorary President, with the participation of “European Network for Women in Leadership” and Microsoft. The event was facilitated by eupag (European Political Analysis Group).



Nadezhda NEYNSKY MEP, EP Committee on Budgets and SME Europe President welcomed the participants and opened the event.

Liliu WINKLER MEP, SME Europe Vice-President, EP Committee on International Trade introduced the speakers and emphasised that freedom itself is a critical part of successful entrepreneurial efforts.

The book presentation was opened by Dr. Paul RÜBIG MEP who mentioned the need to create a proper environment for entrepreneurship in Europe. Thus, facilitating access to finance for small and medium sized Enterprises (SMEs), creating an environment favorable to business creation and growth,

encouraging an entrepreneurial culture in Europe, increasing the sustainable competitiveness of EU companies and helping small businesses operate outside their home countries and improving their access to markets.

Dr. Paul RÜBIG MEP closed the discussion by highlighting that entrepreneurship is important for economic growth, productivity, innovation and employment. Hence, policy makers look at entrepreneurship in combination with innovation to return to a period of sustained economic growth.



WORKING BREAKFAST „TO QUOTA OR NOT TO QUOTA: WOMEN ON BOARDS“

On Thursday, 26th of September 2013 the SME Europe of the European People's Party (EPP) organised in cooperation with the SME Circle a Working Breakfast on "To Quota or not to Quota: Women on Boards".

The debate was opened by Dr. Paul RÜBIG MEP, EP Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and SME Europe Honorary President who mentioned women entrepreneurship and over ten EU legislative acts target to encourage investing, taking risks and enjoying the benefits of the self-employment, all in line with the think-small-first-principle. Dr. Paul RÜBIG MEP stated that more should be done at the European level, to encourage the women entrepreneurs. The debate followed with an intervention by Astrid LULLING MEP, EP Committee

on Women's Rights and Gender Equality offers an alternative to the proposal from the European Commission. She stressed that instead of imposing quotas among the non-executive directors of listed companies, which only affect some women, a truly innovative policy must provide positive actions that affect all women.

Bendt BENDTSEN MEP, Committee on Industry, Research and Energy stated his position against women quotas on boards and mentioned EU and the

member states should set up a favorable framework in order for women to get the possibilities to access the boards. Establishing a women quota would burden the entrepreneurs and will touch upon the entrepreneurial freedom.

Andreas STEIN, Head of Unit, DG Justice, Equal Treatment Legislation Unit, affirmed there is no obligation in the European Commission's proposal on quota and no obligation to reach that quota by any date.



WORKING BREAKFAST “HOW SAFE ARE TRADEMARKS IN THE EU? SMES PERSPECTIVES FOR AN OPEN DEBATE”

On Thursday, 5th of December 2013 the SME Europe of the European People’s Party (EPP) organised an event on “How safe are Trademarks in the EU? SMEs Perspectives for an Open Debate”.



The discussion was opened by Salvador SEDÓ I ALABART MEP, EP Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, Vice-President of SME Europe of the EPP, who introduced the participants and the subject of the Working Breakfast. He stressed the importance for the preservation of Trademark Rights in the European Union, with an emphasis on the challenges of SMEs. The laws of the European Union are not necessarily inadequate, but must be adapted to the situation of SMEs to secure the competitive advantage of the European Union in the future.

Dawn FRANKLIN, Chair of the Trademark Committee of the European Brands Association (AIM) continued as keynote speech the event. She highlighted that trademarks are a fundamental legal basis for

businesses to build brands and protect reputation. Moreover, brands benefit society through increased tax revenues, employment, consumer choice and fair competition. Dr. Egon ENGIN-DENIZ, CMS Reich-Rohrwig Hainz, emphasised the challenges the companies have to undertake to prevent trademarks from becoming common names. Starting with the present definition in the Trade Mark Directive, he explained the objective characteristics for a trade mark to become a common name, mainly due to acts or inactivity of the trade mark proprietor.

Luc HENDRICKX, Director Enterprise Policy and External Relations, European Association of Craft, Small and

Medium-sized Enterprises (UEAPME) stressed that more emphasis regarding trademarks should be put on the work of the business organizations and that more awareness should be created about this topic among SMEs.

Ilias KONTEAS, Senior Adviser for intellectual property law and trademarks, BUSINESSEUROPE, mentioned the importance of the harmonisation process between member states and the enhanced cooperation at all levels in order to level the playing field between all actors involved in the trademarks debate.

WORKING DINNER “EUROPE, SMES, YOUTH AND THE FUTURE OF E-LEARNING”

SME Europe of the EPP has organized, in cooperation with European Democrat Students (EDS) and the Youth of the European People’s Party (YEPP), a Working Dinner on “Europe, SME’s, Youth and the future of E-learning”, on November 6th in the European Parliament.

The event was moderated by Florian WEINBERGER, vice-chairman of EDS.

Dr. Paul RÜBIG MEP, SME Europe Honorary President, mentioned in his welcome note that the European Parliament realises its mission of promoting the education and making it adaptable for the development of high-technology. He underlined that the young generation has a lot of new opportunities of learning.

Eva MAJEWSKI, Chairwoman of EDS and Co-President of SME Future noted

in her speech that the web rises borders between formal and informal learning. Both are very important and should be appreciated by entrepreneurs. She stressed the importance of cooperation between universities and private sector. The debate was followed up by Ana Carla PEREIRA, Head of Unit “Skills and qualifications strategies/Multilingualism policy” at the European Commission, who presented on Opening Up Education. Starting with explaining new trends in the educational sector brought by the digital revolution, she stressed

the importance of the adaptability for this changes. According to her, Europeans should use the digital revolution as an opportunity. Konstantinos KYRANAKIS, President of YEPP and Co-President of SME Future, emphasized the challenges of the educational system. He spoke in favour of lowering of the cost of life, so that people could pay important money for the education which is, a choice of life for him.



ROUND TABLE “DIGITALISING EUROPEAN INDUSTRY AND RELATED SERVICES: AN SME PERSPECTIVE”

EPP has organised a Working Dinner on “Digitalising European Industries and Related Services: an SME Perspective” in cooperation with Microsoft Corporation, on November 13th 2013. The President of The International Association of Microsoft Channel Partners (IAMCP) and CEO, Per WERNGREN, moderated the event. The debate was opened by Nadezhda NEYNSKY MEP, EP Committee on Budgets and SME Europe President, who mentioned in her welcome speech the possibility of SMEs with a global strategy that can quickly take advantage of cross-border activities and seize numerous opportunities.

Michael RUESSMANN, Partner and Managing Director at Boston Consulting Group (BCG) Germany focused on the very important impact of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) on Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs). He stated that adopting ICT facilities are highly expensive and this issue has to be solved in favour of SMEs. Following Jonathan ZUCK, President of the Association for Competitive

Technology, presented the study “The European APP Economy”. According to Mr ZUCK, as a consequence of the adoption of the ICT facilities for the SMEs in all over Europe, the market opportunity for the SMEs will rise up. Pablo Zalba BIDEGAIN MEP, EP Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs instanced two considerable key elements for digitising the industries. First of all, SMEs should recognise their responsibility in

clustering in one single digital market and secondly, the industrialisation process has to be done in the most effective form. The debate followed with an intervention by Pablo ARIAS ECHEVERRIA MEP, EP Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection mentioned in his speech that 63% of SMEs around all over the Europe are not connected and the main undesirable result of this is a less competitive market.

WORKING BREAKFAST “WTO MEETING IN BALI. WHAT CONSEQUENCES FOR SMES?”

On Tuesday the 26th of November, the SME Europe of the EPP, together with EuroCommerce and SME Global, organized a Working Breakfast on the topic “WTO meeting in Bali” and its consequences for SMEs. Several high level speakers shared their opinions, insights and up to date information.



EU, detailed a few practical examples on how the Bali WTO round could influence businesses. Mr DELCROS also pointed out that Bali is not the end, but just a further step in a long process with many questions and issues needing to be solved in the future.

Signe RATSO, Director of Trade Strategy and Analysis, Market Access in DG Trade in the European Commission, highlighted the worldwide benefits of a successful agreement: 21 million jobs and one trillion Euros added to the economy.

Dr. Paul RÜBIG MEP, Member of EP Committee on Industry Research and Energy and Honorary President of SME Europe, emphasised that trade is playing a significant role to overcome the crisis and the importance of the inclusion of members of the parliament in the WTO process as it destroys the information monopoly the governments usually have.

Ralf KAMPHÖNER, Director of International Trade at Eurocommerce talked about the importance of a strong WTO for SMEs since they profit immensely from trade facilitation that is the main delivery from the meeting in Bali. SMEs are expected to have 15% lower trade costs since especially small enterprises profit from easier rules and lowered bureaucracy.

Pablo Zalba BIDEGAIN MEP, Vice Chair of the EP Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, believes that the WTO meeting in Bali can improve the

unemployment situation especially in the Mediterranean region.

Fabian DELCROS, chair of Trade and External Affairs Committee AmCham



A SUCCESS STORY OF EUROPEAN SME LEGISLATION WITH - BOOK PRESENTATION “ENTREPRENEURS NEED FREEDOM” BY DR PAUL RÜBIG MEP

On Wednesday, 27th of November 2013 the SME Europe of the European People's Party (EPP) organized an event “A success story of the European SME Legislation” with a book presentation “Entrepreneurs Need Freedom” by Dr. Paul RÜBIG MEP, EP Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and SME Europe Honorary President.

Dr. Paul RÜBIG MEP, welcomed the participants and opened the event. In his opening Dr. Paul RÜBIG MEP stated SMEs are synonym of dynamism, creativity and innovation, that is, entrepreneurship.

Heinz K. BECKER MEP, Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, highlighted that entrepreneurship is important for economic growth, productivity, innovation and employment and from the political level, more ideas that lead to actions should arise as regards to the entrepreneurs.

Iuliu WINKLER MEP, SME Europe Vice-President, EP Committee on International Trade mentioned SMEs still fight against regulatory burden, difficult access to finance, fragmentation of the common market, unfriendly taxation, reduced cross-border activity.

Salvador SEDÓ I ALABART MEP, EP Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, Vice-President of SME Europe of the EPP stressed the importance of freedom for entrepreneurs. Freedom itself is a critical part of successful entrepreneurial efforts.

Johannes HAHN, European Commissioner for Regional Policy closed the discussion congratulating Dr. Paul RÜBIG MEP for his initiative and for the work in favour of SMEs.

CONFERENCE ON “CROATIA – THE NEW PLAYER IN THE INTERNAL MARKET”

PART I: “BUSINESS TO BUSINESS” WORKSHOP (AT THE KONRAD ADENAUER FOUNDATION)

The 28th of November the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, the Belgian-German Club and SME Europe invited high level speakers to attend a workshop on “Croatia – the new player in the EU Internal Market”. After opening remarks from Dr. Stefan GEROLD German Ambassador H.E. Dr. Eckart CUNTZ said that Croatia is a sign of hope for the western Balkan states. He thinks that SMEs are the right topic for such a meeting since they are the ones creating jobs and deliver the success stories in export. Goran STEFANIC, Deputy Permanent Representative of Croatia to the EU, talked about the many possibilities the European single market has for SMEs. He detailed the situation of Croatia’s economy: 99% of Croatian companies are SMEs. Those 180.000 SMEs employ 75% of the workforce. He hopes that this event will further strengthen the relationship between Belgium, Germany, and Croatia. Prof. Dr. Nikica GABRIC, General Director of Svjetlost, spoke of his success as a private entrepreneur and how he achieved to outperform all state owned competition with his privately owned clinics. Dejan CVETKOVIC, Regional Technology Officer, Microsoft Central and Eastern Europe, presented Microsoft’s innovation approach they have for this region. Microsoft is building innovation centres to attract people from all over Europe to create value in Croatia. He sees the political will to change in Croatia positively especially to change the education system. This is important for IT companies like Microsoft as their sector needs highly educated people. Srdjan SVERKO, Executive Director at Raiffeisenbank Austria, emphasized the important role banks have in this region to help SMEs and start-ups not only through direct finance but also knowledge how to get funds in general. Phillipe de MARCHANT



et d'ANSEMBOURG, Founder and President of TERMICO talked about how Innovation helped his company to succeed in the difficult market of heating appliances.

PART II: CONFERENCE DINNER – “CROATIA’S ADHESION TO THE EU: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR EUROPE” (AT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT)

The Conference continued with the dinner in the European Parliament. In his welcome speech David CHMELIK, President, Belgian German Club emphasized the importance of SMEs for Croatia an important motor for growth

and jobs in the whole region with micro and small enterprises accounting for nine out of every ten companies. Neven MIMICA, Member of the European Commission responsible for Consumer Protection, highlighted the increased capabilities of Croatian SMEs to access and tackle the EU internal market. In his speech S.E.M. l’Ambassadeur François de KERCHOVE d’EXAERDE, Head of Cabinet of the Vice-Prime Minister stressed the significance of building on partnerships between academia, industry and government.

CONFERENCE “CO-WORKING EUROPE, AN ALTERNATIVE WAY OF OPERATING FOR SMES AND ENTREPRENEURS”

On Wednesday, 4th of December, the SME Europe of the European People’s Party has organized a conference on the co-working spaces phenomenon in Europe, with the title: “Co-working Europe, an Alternative Way of Operating for SMEs and Entrepreneurs”.

The event has been organized in collaboration with the European Commission in the context of its Startup Europe initiative. The meeting was attended by leaders of the co-working spaces communities, entrepreneurs and policy makers and the aim of it was: raising awareness on the concept of co-working spaces and their role in promoting new technologies and the entrepreneurship culture in Europe; discussing and proposing ways to grow the number of co-working spaces in Europe and the value added of connecting them Europe-wide. It was also an occasion

for the launching of the Startup Europe co-working spaces assembly, which will federate the biggest community of co-working spaces across Europe. Othmar KARAS MEP, Vice-President of the European Parliament, provided the opening message with explaining the importance of the issue from the point of view of SMEs and entrepreneurship. This event was moderated by Nadezhda NEYNSKY MEP, President of SME Europe of the EPP. Neelie KROES, Commissioner for Digital Agenda and Vice-President of the European Commission, provided a video message in which she welcomed

this initiative. She said that Europe needs innovations, therefore professionalism in start-ups. The resources and recognition have to be given to entrepreneurs. She stated the importance of sharing not only of spaces but also professional programs. Jean Yves HUWART from Co-working Net gave a definition of co-working in general, shared some data and an introduction to the Startup Europe Co-working Spaces assembly. He spoke about the history, evolution and challenges of this phenomenon.



WORKING LUNCH ON “ENERGY – NEW INTEGRAL APPROACHES FOR THE SINGLE MARKET AND THE INFRASTRUCTURE”

On Tuesday, 17th of December 2013, the SME Europe of the European People’s Party (EPP) organised a Working Lunch on „ ENERGIE – Neue ganzheitliche Ansätze für den Binnenmarkt und die Infrastruktur”.

The discussion was opened by Dr. Paul RÜBIG MEP, Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, Honorary President of SME Europe, who introduced the participants and the subject of the Working Lunch. The keynote speaker Markus SCHULTE Member of Cabinet of EU Energy Commissioner Günther Oettinger highlighted sustainable energy is no longer seen as a luxury. It is not restricted to minor, niche groups and the sustainability is paramount for business. This all the more important in today’s financial situation. Pierre-Alain GRAF, CEO of Swissgrid, started

his presentation with the main tasks of Swissgrid. These are maintaining the network, providing energy for the market and at last the operational issues. The ENTSO-E Visions 2030 anticipate an expansion of the renewable energy production to up to 59%. Moreover, there are several possible models of expansion of renewable energy sources (RES): Slow Progress (low level of RES, low network integration), Money Rules (low level of RES, high network integration), Green Transition (high level of RES, low network integration) and Green Revolution (high level of RES, high

network integration). It is also important to work on the physical and regulatory structure of the market. The effect of better coordination at the international level can result in optimization of the existing infrastructure for Smart Grids. Jirí BURIÁNEK, Director of DG E II, General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union, stated the benefits of a complete internal energy market are clear, namely lower energy prices for consumers and industry, and a more competitive European economy.

CONFERENCE „EPP POLICY FOR SMES – BUILDING STRONG AND DYNAMIC SMALL BUSINESSES”

On Wednesday, the 22nd of January 2014, the SME Europe of the EPP organized an event on ”EPP Policy for SMEs – Building Strong and Dynamic Small Businesses”.



A quick introduction was given by SME Europe President and Co-founder Nadezhda NEYNSKY MEP, EP Committee on Budgets. In her opening statement NEYNSKY pointed out, that the only way out of the current economic crisis are strong SMEs that provide sustainable growth as an answer to youth unemployment.

The Vice-President of SME Europe Pablo ZALBA BIDEgain MEP elaborated on the issue of education, which, as he explained, is one of the most important factor for innovation and therefore the essential ingredient for sustainable growth. To be competitive amongst others and to overcome challenges in multinational markets SMEs need highly qualified Entrepreneurs and employees.

The Keynote Speaker Gerhard HUEMER, Director of UEAPME, explained the role of SMEs, not only for the economy, but also for aspects of social stability and demographic changes. He advised the MEPs to keep the needs of SMEs in mind, since 70-80% of the daily rules with which SMEs are confronted, are (at least pre-) decided by the EU. He also stated that the number one goal must be to get out of the crises because SMEs can't develop in recessions. Another point Gerhard HUEMER made, was that EU legislators always seem to only think of big multinational companies when they draft bills. The outcome is that those regulations increase the bureaucracy to a level that is impossible to be handled by small and medium enterprises. Gerhard HUEMER therefore asked to always

consider the “think small first principal”.

Bendt BENDTSEN MEP, the First-Vice President of SME Europe, called for deregulation and stressed once more the important role that micro enterprises have for Europe's economy. He also addresses the topic of limited capital on the market. He was concerned that sound investments don't happen at the moment because of a general uncertainty among investors and that this problem must be tackled as soon as possible.

SME Europe Vice President Salvador SEDÓ I ALABART MEP lead through the event and moderated the following discussion.

WORKING BREAKFAST “CAN WE FINALLY ACHIEVE ROAMING FREE EUROPE?”

The former Polish minister of digital affairs, Dr. Michal BONI, underlined that the time to change the system is now. He admonishes that the changes are neither prompted yet nor will be rapid in development. The change has to be sustainable for the operators and the clients. Only sustainability can create fair conditions and avoid maladaptation.



The process has to be harmonious on every level. He wondered who has the judicial and the administrative responsibility for the different authorities to improve business and client condition. To support his point of view he proclaimed a slogan for the changing:

“We have to go step by step not rounds in circles.” With his final words he quoted a statistic that says, a rise of 2% GDP of the local nations is possible up to the Year 2020 if the roaming costs will be lowered down.

The Head of Unit Regulatory Coordination and Users Commissioner Vesa TERÄVÄ mentioned that the roaming is just 5 % of the regulatory mobile device use. The challenge is to be sustainable for all different operators and clients. The law changing process should also be a protection of the small operators. The fragmentation of the market requires working together as one single actor.

The Senior Policy Officer of BEUC – The European Consumer Organization- Mr

Guillermo BELTRA was the next speaker. The BEUC association represents 40 companies. Mr BELTRA is optimistic to cut the roaming costs and referred to the last roaming regulation. He pointed out, that half of the mobile clients are afraid of the roaming costs, and over 50% refuse to roam. With the Logan “roam like home” he wants to lower the costs in all European member states to communicate in all countries. “We turned into a digital society and data is even more important”. Data became a new topic of the regulation. He also wants to achieve a transnational roaming reduction in the next 10 years.



WORKING BREAKFAST “MODERN PARCEL SERVICES FOR SMES”

On Tuesday February the 18th 2014 SME Europe of the EPP organized a Working Breakfast” on “Modern parcel services for SMEs”



The event was moderated and hosted by Martin KASTLER MEP, rapporteur on Parcel Services and Ecommerce, Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety.

The Welcome and opening speech was held by Honorary President of SME Europe Dr. Paul RÜBIG MEP, Member of Committee on Industry, Research and Energy.

Stating that cross border Ecommerce increased by 20% in the last year and will quadruple over the next years, he thinks that, cross country parcel service, which is connecting all 28 EU member-states, is one of the pillars of the EU. Taking into account that charges for a parcel crossing a border, which is very often a shorter distance than a delivery within a country, are 3 to 5 times higher than charges for a domestic delivery, e-commerce and

cross border parcel service should be one of the top 5 priorities of the EU.

One of the Keynote speeches was held by the Marketing Director of International Post Corporation, Herbert GÖTZ. He made us aware that the postal industry is facing a difficult time resulting in job losses all over Europe. The real key is to find one of the limited options for growth in the industry. One of them being Ecommerce. B2C (private consumers buying online) has an annual two digit growth rate globally. This new market demands new methods and services from the suppliers. The second Keynote speech was presented by the Head of Unit for On-line and postal services from the European Commission, Werner STENGG. He said that it is important to support Ecommerce since consumers will buy more, suppliers will sell more and postal service suppliers will deliver more, hence supporting

the economy. The commission has set objectives for the future. They set transparency a priority. The consumer should have delivery related information e.g. how many orders were aborted due to delivery and who the competitors are. They try to implement a service where customers are able to choose the mode of delivery “you should not be running after your parcel, but the parcel should run after you”.

The Keynotes were followed by impulse statements from Pablo ZALBA BIDEGAIN MEP, member of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, EP, and Salvador SEDÓ I ALBART MEP, member of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, EP, both vice-president of SME Europe.

The speeches were followed by a lively discussion by the audience.

WORKING BREAKFAST “THE FUTURE EU CLIMATE AND ENERGY POLICY: POLITICAL AMBITIONS VS. REALITY”

On March 4th 2014 SME Europe together with the Austrian Chamber of Commerce was organising a Working Breakfast on “The future EU Climate and Energy policy: Political Ambitions vs. Reality” in the Salon de Membres of the European Parliament.

Dr. Paul RÜBIG MEP opened the event by stating that beside the other three aims of the European Energy plan, namely reduction of CO2 emissions, a rise in the quota of renewable energy and more energy efficiency, there should be a fourth one: an increase of the industry quota to 20% of the national GDPs.

Eric MAMER, assistant Chief of Cabinet of the Commissioner for Energy Günther OETTINGER, presented the viewpoint of the Commission. He highlighted that in many economic sectors the level of CO2 emissions has to be reduced, mentioning transport as an example, where a reduction by 20% has to take place until 2020. For industry, where a reduction of 25% until 2020 is aimed by the Commission, this means that many investments are necessary. He estimated that 40 billion € would have to be used to achieve the necessary technical changes for reducing CO2.

The Minister of agriculture, environment and water economy

of Austria, Andrä RUPPRECHTER admitted the high importance of discussion between all involved stake holders in these areas. He criticised the still high dependency on fossil fuels, highlighting the importance of a successful energy turnaround but also warning against a renaissance of nuclear energy or a return of coal power stations

Dr. Hans-Peter MAYER MEP added to the speech of Mr RUPPRECHTER, that although he supports the energy turnaround he is concerned about the means employed to achieve that goal. He warned against too much speed in bringing about the energy turnabout and pointed out that the climate and energy benchmark have to be possible to achieve.

Rudolf ZROST, chairman of the industry division of the economic chamber of Salzburg, represented the economic viewpoint on this matter. He emphasised that at the current state of technical development the proposed further reduction of CO2

is technically impossible. Industry will need many exception from the current proposed legal framework to continue working effectively and competitively on the international market.

Jürgen HABENBACHER of the Wienerberger AG mentioned the importance of energy and climate policy for the business location Europe. Currently the benchmarks set by the Commission are too high, which is why industry is dependent on an exception to be able to function.

Judith MERKIES, MEP added to the nuclear debate, stating that although the Netherlands and Germany are currently reducing their nuclear power plants, the development in the Eastern European countries goes into the opposite direction.

The presentations were followed by a lively discussion.

WORKING BREAKFAST “FUTURE OF POST AND E-COMMERCE”

Our Working Breakfast “Future of Post and E-Commerce”, held on Thursday, 6th March 2014, brought together important stakeholders who actively discussed the future of e-commerce in Europe focusing on its impact on parcel services.

SME Europe Honorary President and member of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, Dr. Paul RÜBIG MEP, did the honours of introducing and moderating the event. He particularly emphasized the importance of a well-organized relation between the two service industries, due to their interdependent position within the European market.

Dr. Herbert GÖTZ, representative of International Post Corporation, summarised in his keynote speech the current situation on the market and

suggested issues to be addressed in order to assure a growing market that response well to customers’ needs.

Another keynote has been given by Michel BARNIER, European Commissioner for Internal Market and Services. The essentiality of reconciling SMEs with consumers and the promotion of such an “ecosystem” defined by stability was the main focus of his speech.

Finally, Róza Gräfin von THUN und HOHENSTEIN MEP, Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, foregrounded several

challenges that still need attention during her impulse statement. According to Mrs THUN issues concerning barriers, price differences and market complexity are of high significance in this regard.

The speeches were followed by a discussion and a Q&A session including all participants.



WORKING BREAKFAST “E-COMMERCE AS GROWTH FACTOR FOR SMES”

A second Working Breakfast entitled “E-Commerce as Growth Factor for SMES” has successfully been held on the following day, Friday, 7th March 2014. Nadezhda NEYNSKY MEP, SME Europe President and Co-founder and member of the Committee on Budgets, initiated and introduced the cornerstones of the discussion.

Subsequently SME Europe welcomed Dr. Paul RÜBIG, Honorary President of SME Europe and member of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, to moderate the breakfast. DR. RÜBIG did so by reminding the participants that Europe needs to follow technological developments in order to stabilize and enhance its market.

Sue DUKE, Head of Public Policy Google, gave a valuable contribution to the discussion. Not only did she demonstrate Google’s efforts to assist SMEs and start-ups through the provision of free and user friendly online services but she also addressed the problem that “customers are online, but businesses aren’t”. Moreover, she suggested possible solutions, in particular the raising of awareness to entrepreneurs that establishing an online presence is a very efficient yet uncomplicated and fast task, which will

result in more company value, greater visibility and therefore more potential to succeed within the European market.

The discussion was followed by three impulse statements. Iuliu WINKLER MEP, Vice-President of SME Europe and Member of the Committee on International Trade, was first to give his input emphasising the general importance of e-commerce for the successful future of European SMEs.

His speech was followed by Eva MAJEWSKI, Chairman of European Democrat Students, who draw the participants’ attention to the importance of education – for young and more experienced entrepreneurs alike – and stating that “if you cannot get education, education must come to you”. She finalised her valuable input by advocating same regulations and financial requirements for all SMEs in Europe and call Europe to “be sold as one product”.

Salvador SEDÓ I ALBART MEP, vice president of SME Europe and member of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, led the discussion to an end by emphasizing that the Future of SMEs lies online while calling for more transparency and better access to the market for both, consumers and SMEs. The speeches were followed by a discussion and a Q&A session including all participants.

WORKING BREAKFAST “FREE TRADE AGREEMENT BETWEEN USA AND EU”

SME Europe of the EPP and MEP Albert DESS invited to a working breakfast on Wednesday, 19th of March, to discuss the Free Trade Agreement between the United States of America and the European Union (TTIP), with the focus on chances and risks for agriculture and trade.



Klaus KEHREIN from the German permanent representation, Head of Division for Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection, gave an introduction to the topic. Firstly he wanted to mention that Germany, as an exporting economy is highly in favor of Free Trade, while he also wanted to highlight the risks. Among others he mentioned the use of chlorine to sanitize chickens. He thinks that chemicals should not make up missing hygiene.

Then keynote speaker Frank HOFFMEISTER, deputy chief of staff of the EU trade commissioner DE GUCHT, gave his view on the matter. He informed the audience that the Free Trade Agreement between the USA and EU is the biggest Trade Agreement of all times and that we should use the momentarily good atmosphere to work it out. The

European council is unanimously for the agreement and even the US with its government lead by democrats, which are usually against trade agreements, is in favour of it.

After that, Udo HEMMERLING from the Deutscher Bauernverband (DBV), deputy general secretary, made an impulse statement. He said that Russia has been the biggest export market for German farmers so far. Taking into account the recent development, trade with Russia could get more difficult in the future. Hence, we need to look for new markets and the Free Trade Agreement with the US could open those new markets.

Dr. Thomas MEMMERT summed up the recent opinions and added specific new aspects. He talked about the known problem that the U.S. are not respecting

the geo-regional descent seal. This seal guarantees the genuine origin of the product and it is also trademark protected by European laws. For the Americans the regional seal is just a method of the specific production (for example: Gouda, Parmigiano Reggiano or Champagne)

Furthermore, he warned the audience and the representatives of the EU Commission not only to focus on the bilateral Trade agreements but also keep the multilateral (with the WTO) in mind.

The event was closed with a lively discussion.

WORKING BREAKFAST “SURFACE ENGINEERING”

SME Europe organized in cooperation with CETS a Working Breakfast on “Surface Engineering - European SMEs for a Global Sustainable Manufacturing Future” on Wednesday, March 19th 2014, in the European Parliament’s Salon des Membres.



Dr. Paul RÜBIG MEP, EP Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, moderated the event and welcomed the guests with a reminder that the EU wants an industry participation in the GDP of 20% by 2020. He also pleaded for a Europe which is more attractive for investments and proclaimed that the future of Europe is highly dependent on the wellbeing of SMEs.

The keynote speaker Dave ELLIOTT, president of the European Committee for Surface Treatment (CETS) opened his speech with an explanatory note on surface engineering, emphasizing the new products made possible by it. He commented that current issues like energy efficiency and photovoltaic cells could be facilitated and improved through surface engineering techniques. The next speaker, Malcolm HARBOUR MEP, recently elected MEP of the Year 2014, EP Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, continued the discussion with elaborating on the connections between chemical components and surface engineering. The current problem of the industry stakeholders is the uncertainty

about which substances will be declared hazardous in the future legislation periods.

Following, Joanna DRAKE, Director of SMEs and Entrepreneurship in the DG Enterprise and Industry of the European Commission, provided the Commission’s view for the discussion. She repeated the need for more clarity, stability and certainty for legislation in this area especially in connection with

the terms industrial renaissance and green economy.

Rosalinde VAN DER VLIES, Deputy Head of Cabinet of Janez Potočnik, European Commissioner for environment, added to the Commission’s viewpoint of the matter. She highlighted the importance of dialogue between all stakeholders in the area and that environmental protection and industrial growth should not be seen as opposites but as complementary to each other.

For the closing Dr. Paul RÜBIG MEP emphasized the need for a win-win situation for industry and environmental protection to achieve the industrial renaissance as well as a sustainable environmental future.

An animated debate followed the speeches, in which Johannes LUSSEK, Head of Board of the Collini group, gave a practical example of the difficulties envisaged by entrepreneurs trying to do industry in Europe.



NEW INITIATIVE “POWERHUB ALPES-ADRIA” OF ELISABETTA GARDINI MEP, SENATOR OF SME EUROPE

The Region of Northern Italy (Trento – Veneto – Emilia Romagna), Switzerland, Austria and Southern Germany (Bavaria – Baden Württemberg) can without any doubt be referred to as “Europe’s Powerhub”. To ensure the prosperity of the region, Mrs Elisabetta Gardini MEP, Senator of SME EUROPE, started an initiative to bring together scientists, politicians and entrepreneurs to define a common path for the future of the prosperous region and to secure the success for the next generations.

According to MEP Gardini we are facing different challenges with similar problems “in the various parts of the region, in both, business sectors as well as in political systems. To tackle these challenges we have to find common answers within our region. This is the main idea of this project. SMEs and especially microbusinesses have to be the focus of this practical-oriented European initiative.”

First Step: The opening conference of the “Powerhub Alps-Adria” initiative was held in Abano Terme (Padua), consisting of two panels. Amongst other Economiesuisse, Wirtschaftsbeirat Bayern, AISVEC,

Wirtschaftsbund Austria, European Economic Senate, Taxpayers Association of Bavaria, Wirtschaftskammer Österreich, Foraus (Swiss Think Tank) partnered this conference.

Mrs Elisabetta Gardini MEP opened the event and welcomed the audience with the message: “European Regions have to deepen their cooperation and to work closely together!”

The first panel on Energy and Infrastructure was moderated by Mr Francois Bauer from Economiesuisse. Chairman of Transport and Traffic, Chamber of Commerce

Steiermark, Mr Franz Glanz, opened with an impressive presentation of one of the modern transport hubs of the region (based in Austria) where he analyzed the problems in the traffic network connecting Austria to Italy and Germany. Following this, a high-tech project was presented by Mr Stefano Fattor from Climate House Bozen. He stretched out the importance of energy efficiency for the future of Europe and indicated that regional SMEs should urge the governments for more investments in this field. Dr Horst Heitz, Executive Director of SME EUROPE, pointed out the importance of energy security and the political challenges for multinational





infrastructure projects. Moreover, he also invited SMEs to take part in such initiatives. Dr Ingrid Valentini-Wanka from the Austrian Embassy in Rome agreed with Dr Heitz about the vital role of SMEs in attracting more support and gaining acceptance for infrastructure projects in the civil society. Another important point for Dr Valentini-Wanka was to challenge politicians to fight administrative burdens so that such projects can be faster realized.

The second panel covered finance and fiscal policy. Dr Heitz moderated an intensive discussion between the speakers and the audience. Mr Michael Jäger, Secretary General of the Taxpayers Association of Bavaria and Mrs Patrizia Marte, President of AISVEC, held very insightful lectures about the financial and fiscal policy situation in the regions. Mr Jäger outlined that more competition for taxes can increase the dynamic of the Alps-Adria region and the fight against late payments of the governments. Mrs Marte was of the same opinion and added that SMEs need a better and easier access to funding and credits. Mr Luigi Togn underlined these positions with his practical examples of Confidustria Trento. Vice President of LVH Bolzano, Mr Martin Haller, then set the focus of the discussion on administrative burdens being the biggest problem for start-ups and innovations. In the end there was a strong link to the first panel and Dr Valentini-Wanka's conclusion. Mr Graziano Tilatti, Chairman of Confortigianato Firuli Venezia Giulia, closed the discussion by summarizing the

panel and stating that the conference has shown that administrative reforms are one of the most important keys to boost the economy of the region.

Senator Elisabetta Gardini closed the conference with the words: "The first step is done, but we have a long way to go. I'm looking forward to create ideas and actions together with all stakeholders, which are willing to work on this project. For that I ask all participants to inform their network about this initiative, so that we get

an input from all parts of this innovative region."

In the future the initiative is planning to hold conferences, release publications and develop a guideline for the region's future. The EXPO Milano 2015 will be used to introduce the initiative and its working groups to the general public. From that point on the working groups will start their research and development.

TIMETABLE for the Initiative

1. The first board came together at the conference "The Future of Europe's Powerhub" on April 11th 2014 in Albano Terme.
2. Once the board is complete, it will start to recruit members. Membership is open to any person willing to contribute to the goals of the initiative. The board will guide the process of forming working groups. It is the board's duty to ensure that the initiative operates under the principle of cost efficiency.
3. Under the patronage of the Italian Presidency of the European Council of the European Union a second conference will be held in Brussels in November 2014 to present the initiative to the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Permanent Representations of the Member States.
4. At the beginning of the EXPO Milano 2015 the working groups will be presented (May 2015) and will commence their work immediately.
5. Depending on the progress made, first results may be presented at the end of the EXPO Milano 2015 at the end of October 2015.

Contact: If you are interested to take part at this initiative or you need more information, please contact the SME EUROPE: office @smeeurope.eu

MEP AWARDS 2013/2014

We want to congratulate the winners of the Parliament Magazine MEP Awards. We are proud to work with you and are looking forward to future cooperation and teamwork with you.



On Tuesday, 25th June 2013 the Parliament Magazine MEP awards were presented. SME Europe Honorary President, Dr. **Paul RÜBIG** MEP, Member of EP Committee on Industry Research and Energy was presented with the Research and Innovation award.



On Tuesday 18th of March 2014 the Parliament Magazine MEP awards were presented. SME Europe Working Group Chairman **Gräfin Róza von Thun und Hohenstein** MEP, won in the category "Internet Policy".



Vice President of SME Europe and Chairman of the Working Group "SME Health" **Alojz Peterle** MEP won in the category Health for his outstanding contributions in this field.

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WILFRIED MARTENSW

Wilfried Martens devoted his entire life to politics: as student leader, youth activist, President of the Flemish Christian Democrats, Prime Minister of Belgium, President of the European People's Party and European statesman.

Throughout his life, as a student leader, Prime Minister of Belgium, leader of the EPP Group in the European Parliament and President of the European People's Party, Wilfried Martens faced countless daunting struggles. The strength of his convictions and his commitment to the values he held dear meant that he always, without exception, overcame them. This is reflected in the title he chose for his book: "I struggle, I overcome".

The EPP was his vocation. Over the course of 23 years, he worked tirelessly to promote and consolidate the EPP's position as Europe's strongest political party. He was a man who believed in dialogue. A conciliator. A mediator. He used these qualities, together with his deft political skills and good judgment, to strengthen and extend the EPP, geographically and ideologically, beyond its traditional base. He opened up the EPP to people's parties, conservative and liberal parties, while reinforcing the programmatic basis which underpins the EPP's core, Christian Democratic values. In the process, he made the European People's Party Europe's largest and most united political family.

President Martens was a missionary for democracy. He was at the forefront of ensuring that those who had suffered under the tyranny of communist regimes would be welcomed as new partners in the European project. In later years, his travels took him further east, where he



became a respected voice for justice, democracy and European values.

He was a strong advocate for a federal Europe. He will also be remembered for his role in building a European political

system and contributing to a European demos, where people gather to create a better future for all Europeans. This will be considered as his outstanding contribution to our great project.

President Martens remained committed to promoting his steadfast conviction that "Europe is the solution" until the end of his life. As he takes his place in the pantheon of Europe's founding fathers, it falls to those inspired by him to continue the work he dedicated his life to and build upon the positive legacy he leaves behind.

Wilfried Martens 1936-2013

**PRIME MINISTER
OF BELGIUM**
1979-1981, 1981-1992

**PRESIDENT OF THE
EUROPEAN PEOPLE'S PARTY**
1990-2013

**CHAIRMAN OF THE EPP GROUP
IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**
1994-1999

**PRESIDENT OF THE CENTRE
FOR EUROPEAN STUDIES**
2007-2013

Joseph DAUL

*President of the European
People's Party Chairman of the EPP
Group in the European Parliament*

NEW POLISH VERSION OF WILFRID MARTENS BOOK

“Europe. Nobody said it would be easy“

A Polish-language version of the autobiography of the late Wilfried Martens, former President of the European People’s Party, which was published by Unicorn and translated by Jerzy Samborski in the eve of the European Parliamentary elections.

President Martens, who died October 10 2013, is widely regarded as one of the founders of the European Union. He served as Belgian prime minister nine times and was long-standing leader of the European People’s Party. He had planned to attend the official launch of the Polish edition of his book on 16th September last year, at the 3rd European Congress of Small and Medium-size Enterprises in Katowice where it was planned as the extraordinary high-light of the whole event but the health problems forced him to cancel the trip three days before the event.

The original, English version of the book “Europe. I Struggle, I Overcome” with the foreword by the German Chancellor Angela Merkel, was enriched by the preface by Jerzy Buzek, former Prime Minister of Poland and President of the European Parliament, who describes it as a “Fascinating Modern History handbook”.

In the authors’ own preface to the Polish edition he thanks both, Jerzy Buzek for his very cordial introduction of [himself] and of [his] book to the Polish readers, and Jerzy Samborski, President of UNICORN, for his initiative of publishing [his] book in Polish.

He hoped that it will bring the ideal for which [he has] devoted whole [his] life, the idea of common, federal Europe, closer to the Polish people, and that despite the fact that **nobody says, it will be easy**, it still shall encourage them to take the same path, as [he has] taken. In the expanded and updated chapter on Poland, Martens writes

about Solidarity and martial law in the early 1980 s, and mentions names of Lech Walesa, Wojciech Jaruzelski, Mieczysław F. Rakowski, Donald Tusk, Jerzy Buzek and Waldemar Pawlak. He also underlines important role of Polish MEPs (like Jacek Saryusz-Wolski) in building new Europe and in enhancing position of Poland in the world.

The book goes behind the scenes and gives an insider’s view of the jockeying for influence and for senior positions in EU organizations by parties and countries. Martens describes in detail how José Manuel Barroso worked his way to become the president of the European Commission, how Silvio Berlusconi and Forza Italia rose to prominence in Italy, and why Jacques Santer was forced to resign as head of the European Commission. Martens also recounts his endless skirmishes with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and the dominant position of Germany as EU member states struggled to protect their national interests.

The book recounts the distance Martens covered during the course of his career, which took him from his home village Sleidinge near Ghent (liberated in 1944 by the Canadian and Polish soldiers of General Maczek Polish Armoured Division) to top posts in Belgium and the EU. According to Martens, he always had to struggle and overcome adversities. In Belgium, his home country, Martens was respected by the king, leading politicians and ordinary citizens for his remarkable ability to reach a compromise. But at the same time, his unconventional private life exposed him to attacks in the

press and from conservatives. The most controversy surrounded his marriages. He married his third and last wife, Miet Smet, former minister of his cabinet, in a church ceremony in April 2013 who accompanied him at his last voyage in Ghent cathedral six months later.

Martens will be remembered as a staunch advocate of close integration of states within the EU and as a pragmatist who demanded subsidiarity on all levels of public life. Martens’ faith in these goals and his perseverance in pursuing them gave him strength as he carved out a career in his conflicted homeland and on the international arena.

In the world of European small and medium-size entrepreneurs, he will be remembered as a strong supporter and friend of SME cause.

Warsaw, 10th January 2014

LEARN FROM THE BEST – BY DR. PAUL RÜBIG MEP

Entrepreneurship going international: Erasmus for young entrepreneurs - new programme to foster entrepreneurship in Europe

Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs (EYE) is a cross-border exchange programme, which gives aspiring entrepreneurs the chance to learn from experienced and successful entrepreneurs running small or medium sized businesses (SMEs) in other countries.

“The idea is like in the journeyman years (Wanderjahre) in the medieval times, when young people were setting out on travel for several years after completing apprenticeship as a craftsman.“, states Paul RÜBIG, Honorary President of SME Europe and initiator of the programme. Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs was established to give new entrepreneurs the opportunity to exchange knowledge and business ideas with an experienced entrepreneur. Initially a pilot project and was finally incorporated in the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme of the EU (COSME) for the period of 2014-2020. Since 2009, more than 1,600 business exchanges have been successfully organised, involving more than 3000 entrepreneurs.

“2.5% of the COSME Envelope (2.3 Billion Euros) will be dedicated to fostering entrepreneurship. EYE enables new entrepreneurs to acquire the skills needed to run a small firm, which will ease a successful start of a young business. At least 10.000 young people a year should be able to profit from such an experience“, emphasizes Paul RÜBIG.

During a stay of up to 6 months, which is partly financed by the European

Commission, they can experience on-the-job training in a small or medium-sized enterprise. Host entrepreneurs can benefit from new perspectives and ideas from motivated young entrepreneurs. The scheme provides a platform to exchange skills and knowledge, learn about new markets and cooperate with foreign partners. Owing to the numerous positive aspects the programme has to offer, many host entrepreneurs continue welcoming young entrepreneurs after the first exchange. New entrepreneurs and host entrepreneurs are supported by local Intermediary Organisations (ISs) – such as chambers of commerce. To further develop the programme there is a need for more national contact points and a greater alliance with existing structures, such as Enterprise Europe Network.

„The main objectives of the programme are to increase the number of start-ups, foster cross-border transfers of knowledge and cooperation between small firms, create jobs and help small firms innovate and go international. Especially in Eastern and Southern Europe, where youth Unemployment is very high, this is a really interesting offer to connect with possible suppliers,

customers and intermediaries in other European Countries.“, Jerzy Samborski, President of UNICORN, Vice-President of SME Europe.

The Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme creates significant added value to the businesses of both host and new entrepreneurs. It is a win-win collaboration whereby those involved can become acquainted with new European markets or business partners and different ways of doing business.

JERZY SAMBORSKI

EUROPEAN SME CONGRESS IN KATOWICE – THE BIGGEST EVENT OF SMES IN EUROPE

3500 participants from 35 countries, 56 events – conferences, seminars, round-tables, workshops and discussion forums, 190 speakers. Under patronage of the European Commission's President José Manuel Barroso, European Parliament's President Martin Schulz and President of Poland Bronisław Komorowski personal participation. With active participation of the members of the European Commission (and – at the same time – of the SME EUROPE): Commissioner Antonio Tajani and Johannes Hahn as well as of dozens ministers, parliamentarians and the highest rank officers from administration and industry sectors. But first of all – the representatives of micro, small and medium enterprises from all parts of Europe.

This was a scene of the third 2013 edition of the European Congress of Small and Medium-size Enterprises in Katowice, organized from 2011 by the Regional Chamber of Commerce in Katowice on the initiative of its President Tadeusz Donocik. Important role in its designing and launching played former President of the European Parliament MEP Jerzy Buzek and former Deputy Minister of Poland Janusz Steinhof. Also author of this article, as a President of UNICORN and vice-president of the SME EUROPE actively participates in the works of the Programme Council of the Congress from its birth three years ago.

The European SME Congress in Katowice became a unique business summit assembling not only the representatives of the SMEs but also big companies, scientific world, business environment institutions, local governments and the authorities of the government administration. For three days – 16-18 September 2013, the City of Katowice was the capital of a small and medium-size entrepreneurship, the forum of multiple debates and discussions on the present state of the SME sector

in Europe and indication of directions needed for its further development.

Similarly to the previous editions of the Congress, the final effect of the conducted debates was elaborated in the form of recommendations containing the submitted postulates. This collection constitutes a guidepost for the creation of better conditions for the development of the biggest economic sector and leveling the barriers making impossible the SME's entrance onto the foreign markets.

The proposed recommendations were formulated in the groups according to particular problems in identical schemes: diagnosis of the present state, recommendations and addresses.

Special role of the SME EUROPE

The proof of deep conviction to the Congress' importance was the presence of MEP Nadezhda Neynsky, SME EUROPE President at the 1st inaugural Congress in 2011. After second, successful edition of the event the SME EUROPE recognized the European Congress of Small and

Medium-size Enterprises in Katowice as an important international forum for the main stakeholders of the SME sector in Europe and, consequently, on 20th February 2013 the General Assembly of SME EUROPE proposed to the Organising Committee of the European Congress of SME in Katowice establishment of the formal, institutional relation by nominating its Vice-president Jerzy Samborski to the function of the Liason Officer serving between the two organizations.

In her letter to the European SME Congress in Katowice, MEP Nadezhda Nyensky, President of the SME EUROPE, said: We believe that the SME EUROPE – through its Liason Officer – could be a perfect extension arm for the Congress to transfer its recommendations to the European Parliament and also to monitor their implementation to the European Parliament's agenda.

This proposal had been warmly accepted by the Board of the European SME Congress in Katowice and it was publically repeated by Nadezhda Nyensky at her speech during the Inaugural Session of the

Congress, in the presence of all delegates, including President of Poland Bronisław Komorowski and Commissioner Antonio Tajani. The following day the Agreement of Cooperation between the European Congress of Small and Medium-size Enterprises and the Small and Medium Entrepreneurs of EUROPE was signed.

This fact has become a recognition of the SME EUROPE as an important international organization and the bridge between European SMEs and the European Parliament.

The Agreement states that the purposes of the cooperation between European SME Congress and SME EUROPE are as follows:

- to shape EU and Member States policies in a more SME friendly way
- to provide best framework conditions for SMEs to grow
- to bring a new spirit and a fresh entrepreneurial wind into the political debate.

To achieve these goals, the SME Congress mandates SME EUROPE with the task of monitoring the implementations of the recommendations issued by the

Congress by the European Union central institution, particularly by the European Parliament.

From its side:

SME EUROPE accepts this mandate and commits itself to prepare the Report on the Implementations of the European SME Congress' Recommendations by the European Parliament; the SME EUROPE President shall present the Report to the Congress every year.

Recommendation to the European Parliament of the 2014 European SME Congress (to be monitored by the SME EUROPE)

At the end of November 2013 The Recommendations were published and distributed to all 2014 Congress' participants by the Board of the European SME Congress in Katowice:

Diagnosis of the present state of affairs

There is a lack of a proper law - making system and consistent economic policy in Poland. There is no

political will to undertake legislative works concerning economic self-government. The tax system is unintelligible and unfriendly for taxpayers. Entrepreneurs encounter multiple bureaucratic obstacles. The Single Market is still divided in multiple areas, which constitutes a restriction for small and medium - size enterprises. Cooperation of SME with science is still too weak. Access to financing innovations is limited, which is the cause of poor competitiveness on the global market.

Recommendations

1. The need for reforms to strengthen and stabilize the conditions for micro, small and medium - size enterprises, and grant new quality to the economic order in our country.
2. The need for creation of legal conditions for further development of companies and creation of new workplaces; the need to reinforce the consistency of the law, its foreseeability, internal compliance and greater participation of citizens, experts and social organizations in evaluation process of the effects of legal regulations.
3. Establishing a dialogue between

entrepreneurs and politicians in the law - making process.

4. Economic order requires efficient judiciary; administration of justice should serve the citizens; therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the mechanism of law enforcement by improving the judiciary and creating new foundations for actions of public prosecutor's office.

5. Creating a clear tax ordinance, simplifying the tax system, increasing the pressure on a discipline and timely settling of matters by tax organs, and reinforcing the civil rights. Adaptation of the labor code to the reality of small and medium - size enterprises, which are most often family companies, also taking into consideration the possibility to reconcile all of the parental and business functions.

6. Creating the conditions for small and medium - size enterprises for local and international cooperation, as well as operation within chambers and clusters; cooperation of business, science, administration and local self - government.

7. The need for undertaking legislative works concerning economic self - government.

8. Allocating public funds to research, popularization of their results and the development of innovations.

9. Implementation of modern

solutions in old branches, supported by raise of funds for research and the development of innovations.

10. Finding effective legal and organizational solutions in order to reduce the costs of functioning of a company.

11. Promotion of enterprising attitudes.

12. Developing and building long - term relations between business and banks.

13. The need to search for the new forms of innovative financing - sources of hybrid capital and joint partner initiatives.

14. Pressure on protection of intellectual property.

15. Changing and modernizing visa law for the development of tourism and creating the conditions for international cooperation.

16. Accelerating the implementation of a digitization process.

17. Signing an agreement on monitoring the implementation of the recommendations.

Apart from the European Parliament the Recommendations were sent to: European Commission, European Economic and Social Committee, Government administration. Also to: self - government administration, chambers of commerce and similar economic organizations, enterprises,

higher education institutions, research and development organizations, public business environment institutions.

SME Congress Monitoring Working Group

According to the Agreement, on Monday 22th September 2014, at the Opening Session, the president of SME EUROPE shall present to the General Assembly of the European SME Congress the report on how much attention was paid to the Recommendations by the European Parliament. It seems that that the best way to accomplish the task of monitoring the works of the European Parliament in relation to the recommendations and preparing the report, would be setting up the Working Group consisting of some MEPs, members of the SME Circle.

As far as the Recommendations themselves are concerned, they can be used as the best and most updated programme for the upcoming European Parliamentary Elections for the candidates who will be seeking support from micro, small and medium-size entrepreneurs.

PORTRAIT OF JOSEPH DAUL MEP

After the demise of former European Peoples Party president Wilfried MARTENS Joseph DAUL, member of the French party Union for a Popular Movement and member of the European Parliament since 2004, was elected for EPP Presidency with 112 out of 124 votes in November 2013. DAUL already became Member of the European Parliament in 1999. Immediately preceding the Presidency he held office of the Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament, replacing Hans-Gert POETTERING in 2007.

Born on 13 April 1947 in Strasbourg the politician took over the family's farm at the age of 20. Coming from an agricultural family DAUL has always been closely involved in the farming business. He already became member of the Centre National des Jeunes Agriculteurs (CNJA – National Centre for Young Farmers) as a young adult and took part in the farmer's trade unions movement. After completing his education and professional training he was appointed national Vice-Chairman of the CNJA in 1976. Becoming a member of the Committee of Professional Agricultural Organizations (COPA) and the European Economic and Social Committee in Brussels, he started to advocate for the agriculture business on regional, national and EU level. In 1997, when the 'mad cow crisis' shattered Europe, Joseph DAUL was chair of the National Federation of Beef Producers in France and the 'beef group' in Europe. Together with national and European authorities he contributed greatly to managing the crisis.

Due to his high commitment in his hometown and beyond he was elected as mayor of Pfettisheim in 1989. After holding the office for

12 years he decided to dedicate his political career to his work as a member of the European Parliament, which he was elected to in 1999 for the first time. DAUL actively engaged in the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, where he was appointed Chairman in the beginning of 2002. Within this position Joseph DAUL had a great share in the reformation of the Common Agricultural Policy in 2003. Besides his role as Chairman of the Conference of Committee Chairmen he took over the position as Chairman of the EPs Committee on Agriculture in 2004 where he remains member until today. Furthermore, he is substitute member of the Committee on International Trade and of the Delegation to the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly. After his election as Chairman of the EPP Group in the European Parliament in 2007, DAUL was re-elected in 2009 and 2011.

As Chairman of the European Parliamentary Association Joseph DAUL advocates a more interactive dimension of the EP, allowing MEPs to foster professional relationships going beyond the political dimension. In the course of the economic crisis, DAUL contributes to important

policy initiatives. With diplomatic sensitivity he is actively involved in negotiation with political leaders of different EU Institutions and Member States to find a common solution to overcome the crisis. Within these discussions he repeatedly highlights the importance of SMEs as the first source of employment in Europe. According to Joseph DAUL "SMEs are the engines of innovation and unlocking their potential will give us growth and much needed jobs for citizens."

PORTRAIT OF THE EPP CANDIDATE FOR THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION JEAN-CLAUDE JUNCKER

Luxembourgish politician Jean-Claude JUNCKER, known as passionate European and navigator through the Euro crisis, has been elected by the EPP to be its candidate for president of the European Commission. JUNCKER who was also one of the signatories of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, looks back at a strong European career and could take over one of the highest offices in European Affairs after the elections in May this year.

JUNCKER started his political career in 1974, when he joined the Christian Social People's Party before going to Strasbourg for studying law. After concluding his Master of Law degree JUNCKER went back to Luxembourg and was sworn into the Luxembourg Bar Council. Nevertheless he has never practiced as a lawyer. When he returned to Luxembourg he became Parliamentary Secretary of the CSV from 1979 – 1982. Following this, JUNCKER took over the office as Parliamentary Secretary for Labour and Social Welfare under the cabinet of Pierre WERNER. He first got elected into the Parliament in 1984, when he directly served as Minister for Labour and Budget. Subsequently he was Minister of Finances and Labour from 1989 – 1994. In 1991 he was actively involved in the reformation of the Luxembourgish tax system. Besides formulating and signing the Maastricht

Treaty in 1994, he also made it possible that Luxembourg, as one of the first EU Member States fulfilled the in Maastricht agreed convergence criteria. In January 1995 Jean-Claude JUNCKER became Prime Minister of Luxembourg, an office he held until December 2013. Having served as Prime Minister for 18 years, he was longest serving head of an EU government and longest serving democratically elected leader of the world. In addition to his function as Prime Minister, Juncker served two six-month terms as President of the European Council; once in 1997 and in 2005.

Beyond his engagement in Europe, Jean-Claude JUNCKER also served as governor of the World Bank from 1989 – 1995. Following this he assumed the role of governor of the International Monetary Fund and the position as governor of the European Bank for Reconstruction

and Development. Moreover, JUNCKER played a significant role in handling Europe's debt crisis. He was appointed chair of the Eurogroup from 2005 – 2013. Within this position he managed to keep the Member States of the Eurozone together. In recognition of his European commitment, Jean-Claude JUNCKER has been presented with a number of international political awards.

PRESENTATION OF DR. PAUL RÜBIG'S BOOK

Europe needs Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurship needs freedom! A European strategy to foster Entrepreneurship and business creation demonstrated

Small and medium-sized entrepreneurs are the back-bone of European Economy as they provide about 2/3 of jobs in the private sector and generate about 80% of tax income for the governments. Their adaptive structure is of high value in times of economic hardship and so we politicians should commit our work to them, cutting red tape hindering their flourishing. The book "Entrepreneurship needs freedom" published by Paul RÜBIG MEP and Honorary President of SME Europe is intended to be a practical guide of European Union Initiatives for SMEs and tries to explain the legislative procedure of the European Union, especially within the context of the European Parliament lying behind those initiatives. This book gives a detailed explanation on the process of drafting - negotiating and implementing legislative proposals on a European level as the author believes that these processes should be more present to the public.

The European economy is going through challenging times, with falling industrial production and increasing public debts. We are still facing a lack of entrepreneurial spirit in Europe, some burdensome regulatory and administrative requirements, such as the European Chemicals regulation (REACH).

Another challenge for the entrepreneurial world is the second chance. In an environment where failing is not seen as part of the learning process, it is hard to get access to finance and Europe can already see the results. In terms of innovation and competitiveness we are falling behind the U.S., Japan and South Korea. Upon this background, the commission has chosen the support of SME development to be on his main areas of action.

The EU decided on a growth strategy, Europe 2020 that highlights the importance of improving the business environment through smart, sustainable and inclusive regulations. Correspondingly by defining goals in the area of education, research and innovation, more decisive movements towards a low-carbon economy and more emphasis in job creation and poverty reduction. Small and Medium Entrepreneurs will be able to benefit from this new frameworks and deliver new and innovative solutions to serve the European economy.

The book explains, by the example of successful SME legislation, how the importance and direct involvement of the European Parliament increased throughout the history of the European integration. Today, the European

Parliament is an integral part of the legislative procedure of the European Union. Therefore the authors see it as highly important to make these processes better known among entrepreneurs to raise awareness of possibilities they have to make their voice heard as well as opportunities a European legislation can offer them.

The book will mainly shed light on the ordinary legislative procedure within the Parliament. In order to guarantee the practical applicability of the book the authors chose to present this part by the example of the competitiveness program for small and medium-sized enterprises (COSME) and focusing on the decision making in the European Parliament, how compromises between political groups are found and how votes work, and paying minor attention to the process in the Council.

This book was named a proof for the author's commitment for SMEs on the European Stage, showing that the involvement of the European Parliament is important to make the voice of our entrepreneurs being heard on European level.

SME CIRCLE

The SME Circle is a parliamentary Intergroup that consists of MEPs that are especially concerned and active in the promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises.



Bendt Bendtsen



Dieter-Lebrecht Koch



Daniel Caspary



Alain Lamassoure



Gunnar Hokmark



Elisabeth Jeggle



Andreas Schwab



Markus Pieper



Christian Ehler



Frank Engel





Hans-Peter Mayer



Karins Kirjanis



Cristina Muscardini



Sidonia Jedrzelewska



Herbert Dorfmann



Karl-Heinz Florenz



Angelika Niebler



Sirpa Pietikäinen



Hermann Winkler



Werner Langen



Othmar Karas



Ioannis Tsoukalas



Peter Liese



Poseł Kaczmarek



Markus Ferber



Françoise Grosselet

SME GLOBAL



SME Global is a network of politicians around the world who support small and medium-sized enterprises at a global scale. It was founded in 2003 jointly by PAUL RÜBIG MEP and the former Australian Prime Minister John HOWARD as the business branch of the International Democrat Union (IDU), the global alliance of center-right parties.

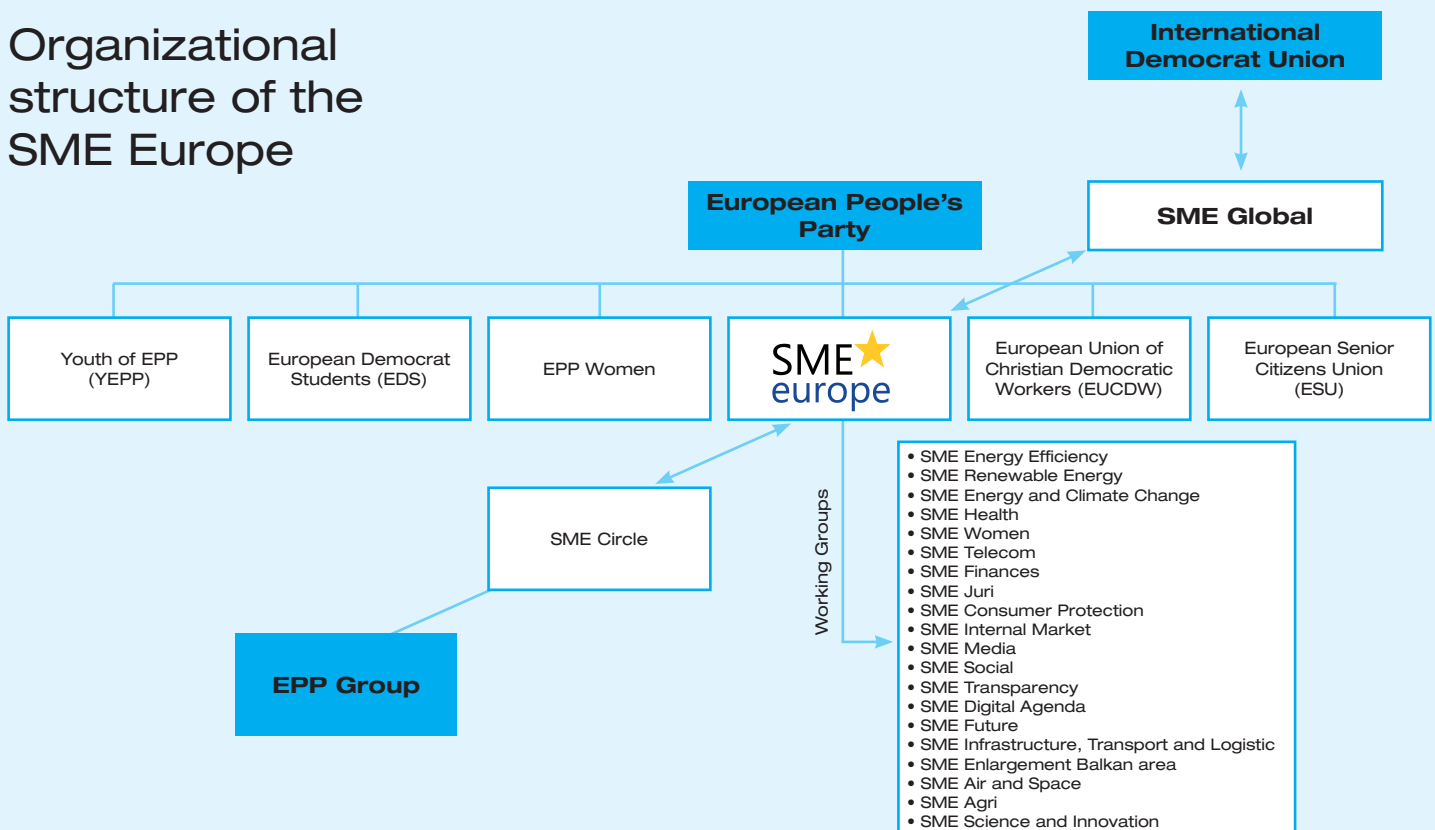
By exchanging information of best practices of SME related policies, it aims at influencing the political agenda of decision-makers. Special focus is hereby put to free trade. Despite significant improvements by multilateral and bilateral trade agreements, most governments still impose some protectionist policies in order to support their local economies. They do this by applying tariffs to imports and subsidies

to exports, as well as by imposing non-tariff barriers, such as licenses, standards and special bureaucratic requirements. On the short-term, such policies can benefit single stakeholders punctually, but in the long-term it hinders economies and their citizens to harvest to full potential of prosperity. Free trade allows consumers to purchase goods and services at lower prices, thereby substantially increasing their

standards of living. Furthermore, history has proven that free trade helps us to spread our values of freedom and rule of law in other countries, while helping people in the poorest regions of the world to escape from their desolate economic environment. By influencing the mindset of politicians and whole institutions we are convinced to have a significant impact on future debates in this area.

MEMBER ORGANISATIONS AND ORGANISATIONAL CHART

Organizational structure of the SME Europe







Cloud



On-premise



Mobility



Social



Big Data

The Revolution in Software Integration

What was impossible is now possible. What was too expensive is now affordable. Connecting Software turbo boost your business processes. Connect, synchronize and migrate from any software to major applications.

Are you ready for the revolution in software integration?

Find out more: www.connecting-software.com



Software made in Europe

Microsoft Partner

- Gold Application Development
- Gold Collaboration and Content
- Gold Data Platform
- Gold Messaging
- Gold Small Business
- Silver Application Integration

