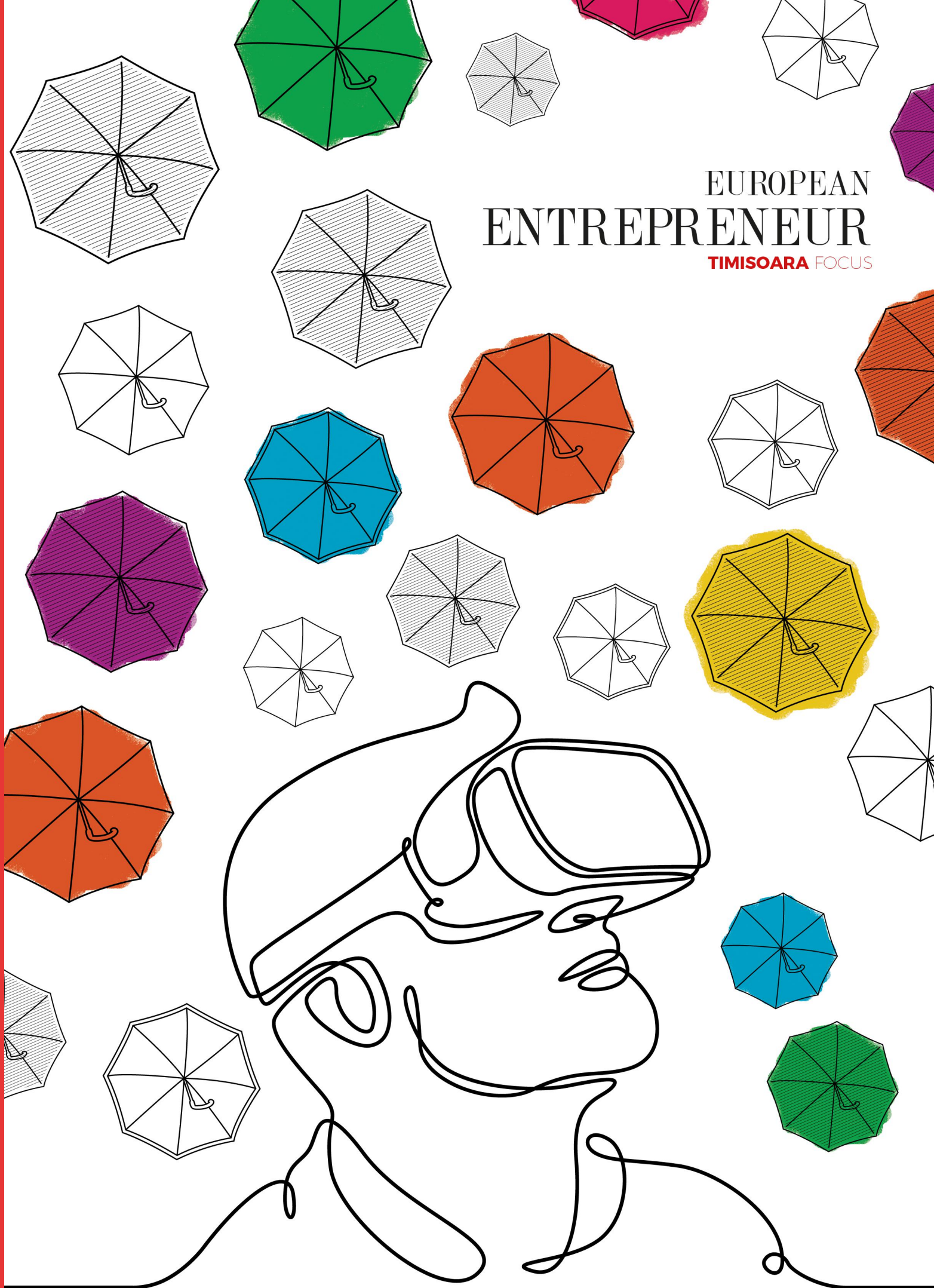


EUROPEAN ENTREPRENEUR

TIMISOARA FOCUS



«The edition features many distinguished experts and professionals from the field, while also highlighting efforts to bridge the gap between policy, technology and our citizens»



This special edition considers the dynamic evolution of our world towards the new paradigm of Industry 4.0, accompanied by the already ongoing digital revolution. For some decades already humanity has been moving towards a new information era, where in order to stay successful, one needs to adapt to a fast pace and constantly changing environment where yesterday's rules are no longer valid tomorrow.

The edition features many distinguished experts and professionals from the field, while also highlighting efforts to bridge the gap between policy, technology and our citizens. It emphasizes in particular a Conference on Innovation from Timisoara, Romania, which focused on the importance of the good cooperation and coordination of three pertinent layers; the triangle made up of academia, local government and business representatives has to intensify its network-based interactions and, through complementary engagements, lay the grounds for policies that will foster prosperity and a sustainable business conduct in this new era.

It is clear that the information revolution has brought along many desired, and undesired effects, with nonlinear and heterogenous developments that have impacted various levels of society in a differentiated manner. One thing is certain, the impact can be felt across the board, and adapting to the new circumstances is vital. Automatization, robotics and artificial intelligence are merely a few areas, without going into more opaque domains such as blockchain or quantum technology, where Europe needs to maintain a healthy and forward looking engagement, facilitating development and maintaining responsibility towards the consumers.

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EUROPEAN
ENTREPRENEUR

Challenging SMEs for Prosperity



Dr. Horst Heitz

Executive Director SME Europe of the EPP

The impact of digital transformation on our economies and lives is broadly felt and keeps growing. During the last 150 years, industrialization has allowed Europe to move from hand-production methods to machines. It brought progress that was never seen before, leading to a totally different system of wealth creation, values and, by consequence, social organisation. In the last 50 years, with the introduction of electronic and information technologies, production systems have made a qualitative leap. The speed of current technological breakthrough has no historical precedent. It is changing the way we see the world, the way we work, and how we behave and learn.

«If we are not successful in leading the way towards the digital revolution, especially for SMEs and e-startups, there will be more losers than winners in Europe»

The rise of industry leading platforms, supported by the explosion in the scope and depth of data available, accelerates and amplifies the impact that digital technologies are having. Automation through robotics and artificial intelligence (AI) could affect over half of current European jobs. We were witnessing the progress of industrial automation enabled by greater specialization and, by incident, the outsourcing of large parts of industrial production. By now, intellectual work is being affected by digital technologies in the same way. New forms of «on demand work» and business models are about to be developed. Now, blockchain will be the quiet transformation for next generation of small and medium-sized businesses.

The Digital Revolution is moving us towards a digital society. Not playing an active part in this process of change will leave us being losers in a globalised world. Technological and social changes have always been intertwined — we cannot have one without the other. As in previous revolutions, we will witness economic and social changes as well. Future prosperity will depend largely on how well society and governments master the digital revolution. Only by determining our own future can we integrate our values in the new global digital society.

For the European Union, economically speaking, it is essential to create an entrepreneurial framework in which big ideas can thrive and grow. SMEs provide 99 percent of European enterprises safeguarding over two thirds of the jobs in the EU. The digitalization of our SMEs and the promotion of European e-start-ups must be our top priority. If Europe is not successful in leading the way towards digital revolution, especially for SMEs and e-start-ups, there will be more losers than winners in Europe.

One of potential winners is Romania as it is progressing steadily on a correct path, facilitating growth and economic development, according to a fresh Credit Suisse report. The Timiș region, with its capital city of Timișoara, is a good explanation of this success. Since year 2000, its' success story started by using the opportunities of the new economy. High-Tech companies were attracted by moderate taxation, well-qualified employees and a smart bureaucracy. The good business environment created a healthy mix of small, medium and large companies. Today, Timiș has a highly-engaged SME community and an effective level of government and industry support. The results of these efforts are proved: Timișoara has less than 1% unemployment and a salary growth of 60%, when compared to a Austrian salary for the same job. However, this success story will have its continuation with investments into the infrastructure, education, modern bureaucracy like e-government as well as the living standards like culture and youth. As we all know, highly qualified people can only be attracted by a well-balanced salary- work and life standards. That also means more and more business cases for micro business like shops, restaurants, fitness clubs, cleaning services as well as self-employees like artists, craftsmen and so on.

«Romanians are progressing steadily on a correct path, facilitating growth and economic development, according to a fresh Credit Suisse report»

The digital industry may be very challenging for drivers of classical business sectors in the future. In general, the topic of digitisation will develop into an opportunity for many SMEs to advance or even survive in the future. Many medium-sized companies also have to reinvent themselves and find new ways to address their customers or offer new products that correspond to changing customer behaviours. Not all of the services and products will be required and, new ones have to be implemented. As with business to client relations, the business to business relations must also evolve. For a long time, the B2B sector has lagged behind B2C businesses when it comes to digital changes and innovation, but now it's time for change. This means mainly investment and readjustment of your own business culture. SMEs should not focus too much on technology, as digital change can only succeed with a cultural change and a changed view of customer needs.

The regions and SMEs have to learn to think much more global meanwhile the international business stakeholders must recognize that regions and SMEs are the basic of a strong and healthy economy. So, here we are at our new paths: a lot to learn and, a lot to change but also with a lot of space for growth. European SME will handle it, I am sure, but politics, administration and big companies have the duty to make this transition as fast and easy as possible.



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**YOUR VOICE
IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**



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«Shaping European Legislation to suit SMEs»

by Manfred Weber, Paul Rübig, Ivan Stefanec and Andor Deli.

“European business model is not about ‘big business’, it is about Small and Medium Entrepreneurs, the sector that results 90% of all businesses in the European Union. It is important to have a voice speaking up to them in Europe”

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«When it comes to trade, the EU is indeed a global player»

Interview with Iuliu Winkler, Member of the European Parliament and Vice-Chair of the Committee on International Trade
“The EU will strive for progress wherever the respective partner state is willing to engage transparently”

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«Industry, Entrepreneurship Road to success: The convergence of Education, Business and Local Governance?» -

was a subject at the conference hosted by the West University of Timisoara on October 11-13, centred on exchange of good practices used in the European Model of entrepreneurial development, with the accent being placed on a new cooperation opportunities.





European Political
Analysis Group GmbH

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Moderne Interessensvertretung stellt an Unternehmen und Verbände jeder Größe eine Herausforderung dar. Die Entscheidungswege sind mit der Europäischen Ebene komplexer geworden. Oft ist man zu spät informiert, eine umfassende Situationsanalyse wie auch eine die Strategieentwicklung überfordert und es ist kein etabliertes Netzwerk vorhanden.

Genau hier setzt die eupag GmbH an – die Beratungsagentur wurde vor 10 Jahren durch Corpsstudenten gegründet, mit dem Ansinnen durch fundiertes Wissen, moderne Methoden und seriöse Netzwerke seinen Kunden zu ermöglichen an dem legitimen Wettbewerb der Interessen im legislativen Prozess teilzunehmen.



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Timisoara Focus

a city at the forefront of medicine, technology and IT breakthroughs in the region. The moment has come now to recreate the history of the city in a new European scenario and to restore the middle-class values the city has always exported - cooperation and harmony, tolerance and civic responsibility, in a very contemporary context.



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«Tradition and Excellence for a lasting successful development»-

by Nicolae Robu, the Mayor of Timisoara, and Bogdan Cocian, Daniel Marcu, Sergiu Manea and Virgil Tornoreanu representing Timisoara's entrepreneurial sector.

“We support any initiative that proposes new innovations, by cultivating the resources we have, and we want to make sure that by obtaining European funds, these ideas will be put into practice”





Nothing is more powerful than an idea whose time has come

Our Corporate Principles The European Economic Senate (EES):

- is an economic body of successful European enterprises and personalities
- brings the knowledge and experience of its members into the policy-making process
- meets regularly for an intense exchange of views with leading representatives of the economic and political scene
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- advocates a culture of responsibility and trust
- promotes the principles of the social market economy

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Shaping European Legislation to suit SMEs

Our European business model is not about 'big business', it is about Small and Medium Entrepreneurs. Your sector represents 90% of all businesses in the European Union. Without SMEs we have no Single Market, and therefore no European Union. It is important to have a voice speaking up for you in Europe, as your sector does not always have the energy, space or capacity to engage directly in the European debate.

That voice is and always will be the EPP. We stand for creating a thriving environment for your companies. In our work in the European Parliament we believe that we need to create clear, unbureaucratic rules. The importance of reducing red tape cannot be oversized because the European Union is - wrongly or rightly - attacked by the anti-EU movements for being the main reason for the perceived bureaucratic monster which exists. This is why we insisted that the Juncker Commission cuts back on as many laws as possible, and does not legislate if it does not have to. We have to be European in big things, but local in small things.

As a political group, we want to help with access to markets, and more importantly, to help create better access to finance for the SME sector. In the aftermath of the financial and economic crisis of 2008, several initiatives have been put in place to improve SMEs financing in the EU. We know that this is only the start, and although our initiatives are positive, it is not enough. In the European Parliament, our Group has underlined on several occasions through oral questions and in debates, that more needs to be done to overcome the credit shortage endured by SMEs in Europe. This is not simple rhetoric, but it is at the core of our beliefs of what the European Union should be like. For SMEs to be able to grow, and to fully use the Single Market, they have to have access to capital. And only through a growing SME sector we will be able to face other challenges in Europe, such as unemployment, especially among our young people.

It is worth remembering that there is exactly the same number of SMEs in Europe, as there are unemployed people - forty million. If each company was able to grow enough to hire just one person, we will not have an unemployment crisis in Europe, we would have an employment deficit in Europe.

My Group is fully aware that many EU laws directly affect SMEs, which is why we fought for a stronger SME test in the Impact Assessment that the Commission is doing before proposing EU laws. This is to ensure that there will be no negative impact for future rules on SMEs.

During this parliamentary term we dedicated our attention to the following issues. We have designed our funding programmes to strengthen the SME dimension, such as for instance the EU research funding programmes Horizon 2020. Access to research and development funds benefits the SME sector proportionally far more than it does large enterprises who are by in large selffunding in R&D. During the negotiations on the Multi-Annual Financial Framework we have always prioritised progress on such issues.

Second, it was vital to look into the implementation of EU legislation in the Member States. Often the EU legislation is "gold plated" and stricter rules than required are imposed. This often leads to changes to the very aims the EU wished to achieve and created resentment to the EU institutions. I would argue that part of the misconception which existed in the United Kingdom prior to the referendum on Brexit is due to such nationally gold plated EU rules. This does not benefit the SME sector, and this does not benefit the EU either, because it continues to create gaps in the single market.

Third, most SMEs are family run businesses and we needed to push Member States, especially in the field of taxation and inheritance, to find ways in which SMEs could not only grow over a number of generations that the know-how and traditions that gives Europe its diversity could be passed on. The EPP is committed to the SME sector, because we believe that your businesses are at the heart of what Europe is.

«If each company was able to grow enough to hire just one person, we will not have an unemployment crisis in Europe, we would have an employment deficit in Europe»

A portrait of Manfred Weber, a man with short brown hair and light skin, looking slightly to the left. He is wearing a dark suit jacket, a white shirt, and a red tie with a blue and white circular pattern. The background is a solid blue color.

Manfred Weber

Member of the European Parliament, Chairman of the EPP Group



Our SMEs across the EU should know that they are highly appreciated

Bendt Bendtsen

Member of the European Parliament, President of SME Europe of the EPP

Our SMEs across the European Union should know that they are highly appreciated. Their role and importance for Europe should not be underestimated. In EPP, we work hard to give our SMEs the best possible conditions for growth, while it is a part of the mission of SME Europe to highlight this important contribution of SMEs.

In my home region of Funen, Denmark, the growth rate for SMEs is the highest in Denmark – likely because the importance of thriving SMEs is recognised. As Member of the European Parliament, I work daily to secure a fit-for-purpose framework for our SMEs – in legislation and in practice – so our SMEs can make the most of their potential.

We know that there are still many challenges to address and tackle to help our SMEs. This relates for example to rules for public procurement access for SMEs, VAT-systems, cross-border digital platforms, providing accessible financing tools dedicated to SMEs and breaking down barriers in the Single Market.

Clearly, SMEs have a fundamental role providing employment and sheer economic value for Europe as a whole. However, SMEs also hold the key to unlock many of the other societal challenges in the EU:

We know that growth in Europe's rural regions and local communities depends on SMEs and thereby influences the structural coherence of EU. Simply to ensure jobs in rural societies and combat rural depopulation. Our SMEs also have a valuable function in driving Europe's innovation effort and thereby future proofing our growth and development.

Recently, we announced the winners of the SME Star Awards to honour the many great examples of European SMEs leading the way in technological, digital and green solutions for the future. The awards highlight the many contributions of SMEs to Europe's grand challenges such as climate change, energy efficiency and sustainable transition.

It is crucial that we support these SMEs in scaling up, expanding their business and undertake exports - to the benefit of the SMEs as well as Europe as a whole. As politicians, we owe it to our SMEs to act responsibly and stimulate measures to boost growth and innovation - at European as well as at national, regional and local level. Only by doing so, will we secure a continued growth in Europe.



Dr. Paul Rübig

Member of the European Parliament, Honorary President of SME Europe of the EPP

SMEs in a present-day Europe

In Europe we face a period, where our form of democracy, based on a liberal rule-of-law state, is under attack. Not just from inside of Europe but also from forces outside of the European Union. This is a huge challenge for the way we want to organize our society in a peaceful way as democracy and rule of law are fundamental principles of European Union.

But not just these values are threatened. Also a third utmost important principle has not always full support – it's the principle of market economy with free trade.

One of the main factors of Europe's wealth and success.

Brussels is often criticized as being focused on big companies and international big corporations.

The opposite is true. And some facts help to get the whole picture:

99% of European companies are small- and medium-sized enterprises, so called SMEs. In Austria it is 99,7%.

They provide 70% of total jobs and create 60% of total economic value. SMEs are also the incitements of innovation and research.

Free Trade agreements support especially SMEs as they guarantee better access to global markets, lower costs, lower bureaucracy and less arbitrariness when it comes to legal systems outside of the European Union.

We can say: SMEs are the backbone of the economy in European Union. Our goal is, to shape the perfect frame for supporting these SMEs to develop and grow.

This can happen in various ways. Our members of SME Europe who are Members of European Parliament try to legislate in a way, that empowers SMEs to invest and to employ and that backs founders in their entrepreneurial spirit. The European Union supports innovation and research, that's why my focus in negotiating the EU-budget is laid on research, development and science.

«Brussels is often criticized as being focused on big companies and international corporations. The opposite is true»

«We always say that SMEs are the backbone of our economy. Then our goal is to shape the perfect frame to support these SMEs to develop and grow»

With Horizon2020 the European Union supplied the world's biggest framework program for research. Now we increase the budget for that program as we are convinced that research is crucial for developing innovations that secure our economic success. For me it can only be a first step as I support the conclusions of the working group led by Pascal Limy. He stated that it needs double as much research budget to establish the EU as Number 1 on global competition.

With Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs the European Union supports founders in their entrepreneurial spirit. Entrepreneurship is key to a successful future. We need more entrepreneurs, we need innovation and we need more people who decide to create jobs and innovative products and services.

Besides the importance of SMEs for the economic situation in a region or country and the huge investments they make when it comes to research and development, we should not forget the social aspects of SMEs.

Most SMEs are run by founders/owners themselves or as family businesses. That leads to stronger responsibility and care for a sustainable development of the company.

It is also proven, that employees of SMEs feel a stronger connection with the company. That creates not just a good work atmosphere but also a stronger feeling of togetherness. Not just in times of good progress, but also when it comes to periods of crisis.

Regions and countries with strong SMEs show better progress and development and more stable conditions in crisis times. An SME-based market economy combined with democracy and rule of law is the fundament for success and wealth. That is proven worldwide and seen wherever it is established. We as SME Europe will continue our support for these structures, for entrepreneurship, free trade and solid ground for our small and medium-sized companies.

Defining Europe's SMEs



Ivan Stefanec

Member of the European Parliament, Vice-President SME Europe of the EPP

Small and medium enterprises are changing over time. What was in the past a small manufactory that touched only a few hundred people can nowadays be a global player reaching millions of customers. This is possible thanks to the digital revolution, which has enabled small and medium-sized businesses to reach people around the world. Every entrepreneur today needs a good internet connection with which he can not only sell his products but also exchange experiences with other companies, educate and apply the latest techniques and solutions. Today's definitions of small and medium-sized businesses are no longer sufficient. We have to look forward, accept the technological progress and think about what the market will look like in several years and decades. Start-ups, digital ecosystems, the shared economy, and new forms of business are completely changing our view of common concepts.

Today, even a small business can, in symbiosis with other companies, bring the innovations and know-how, which in the past only large companies were capable of. The task of the state and of the European Union is to not hinder this progress, but rather to help and determine it in a direction that will benefit not only the private sector but also the whole society.

In the recent past, we have succeeded in our efforts in the European Parliament concerning the removal of some barriers in the digital market, and we will continue with these initiatives. Co-operation between European institutions, national governments and regional administrations is important because many SMEs have deep anchorages in the regions and are, among other things, holders of local traditions and important employers. The European Parliament and the European Union are creating a framework within which national governments and local administrations can improve the business environment and the position of SMEs. They can improve infrastructure, simplify administration and bring high-speed internet coverage to regions. Such cooperation, which will respect technological development and local traditions, will ensure that European SMEs will continue our rich cultural and technological tradition and at the same time will be the carriers of progress, innovation and new opportunities for the European economy.

The Role of Infrastructure in a present-day Europe



Andor Deli

Member of the European Parliament, Board Member SME Europe of the EPP

As member of the European Parliament and member of the Committee on Transport and Tourism from Hungary, I encounter the term infrastructure in almost every report I am working on. One of the many definitions of this term provided by Merriam-Webster's Dictionary describes «infrastructure» as «the basic equipment and structures (such as roads and bridges) that are needed for a country, region, or organization to function properly.» A spot on definition! Without proper transport infrastructure the European internal market would be crippled but also recent tragic events showed us that well-designed and properly maintained roads and railways are essential for our safety. Every country should invest in infrastructure as much as possible for the sake of providing better services to their citizens and companies. Also the European institutions should help and support each and every Member State to improve their infrastructure and they should prepare tailor-made solutions for every country. Moreover, the EU should already now provide more extensive support to the Western Balkans candidate countries too. Helping them develop their road and railway infrastructure and linking it as soon as possible to the main trans-European corridors is crucial for a faster development of that part of Europe. I was born and raised in Serbia, a country that is still not a member of the EU. By funding infrastructure projects in countries such as Serbia, the EU's overall visibility could be increased dramatically. Every bridge, road and railway built with EU assistance and used by the people every day are the best emissaries of the EU and its support.

Finally, let me draw your attention to an infrastructure project that is under construction linking Hungary and Serbia, Budapest and Belgrade with high-speed railway. The new line is supposed to be finished in around five years from now and when finished, it is going to drastically shorten the travel time. At the moment the journey between the two capitals takes more than 8 hours on a little less than 400 km. Although it is not an EU co-financed project, when finished, not only the passengers will benefit, but more importantly freight transport will get its fastest link between Central Europe and the ports of Greece, helping people and companies to develop and prosper.

When it comes to trade, the EU is indeed a global player

Iuliu Winkler

Member of the European Parliament,

First Vice-President SME Europe of the EPP



Iuliu Winkler, First Vice-President of SME Europe, is Member of the European Parliament since 2007. He is Vice-Chair of the Committee on International Trade (INTA) in the EP, Standing Rapporteur in INTA for China and Taiwan and Substitute Member in the Committee on Regional Development. Between 2004 and 2007, Iuliu Winkler was Member of the Government of Romania, as Minister Delegate for Trade. In 2007, he held the ministerial portfolio for Communications and Information Technology. Previously, between 2000 and 2004, he was Member of Parliament in Romania, in the Chamber of Deputies. Some of his most important files in the European Parliament have covered a regulation on supply chain due diligence requirements for imports of 'conflict minerals' and a report on the state of play of EU-China relations on trade and investment.

Mr. Winkler, you have been serving as a Vice-Chair in the Committee on International Trade for several years now. This committee has been dramatically gaining importance since the debates on TTIP, CETA, trade negotiations with Japan and China, the reforming of the WTO, etc. How challenging is this position for you in this context?

It has been a great honour for me to serve as the Vice-Chair of this increasingly important committee, which, in the aftermath of the Lisbon Treaty, is closely involved in the trade negotiations of the EU. I believe that in every challenge there is an opportunity, and this is what the EPP Group in INTA has been trying to showcase, I consider successfully, through its constructive engagement with stakeholders. Certainly, in the currently volatile global context, our trade dynamics are also strongly impacted, being faced with an alarming rise of protectionism and unprecedented threats to our global trading system; however, I see a positive trend in the EU, namely that we focus on those areas where we can deliver. This attitude brought us in the position to concluding agreements with Canada, Japan, drawing near with Vietnam, Singapore, and soon hopefully also with MERCOSUR countries, Australia and New Zealand, all while maintaining a positive and constructive stance towards efforts to modernise the WTO and reenergise the multilateral rules-based trading system.

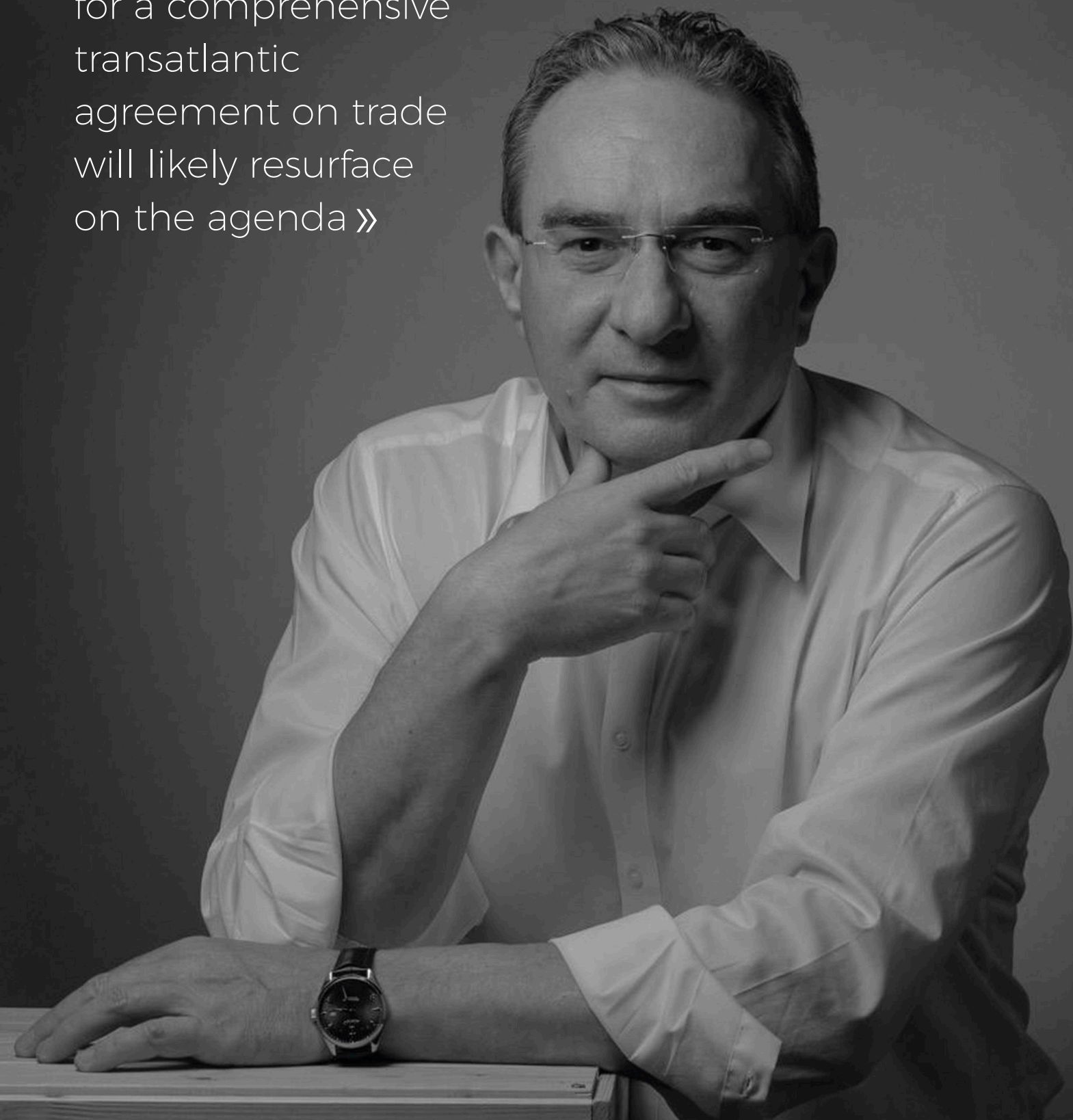
Current polemics on trade have highlighted certain systemic shortcomings of our trade policies, and one of my key aims has been to

contribute to efforts to facilitate a better distribution of the benefits, and also of the costs, of globalisation. I strongly believe that trade is an engine for growth, for jobs, and for innovation.

However, I have seen that one does not always have an equal distributions of the benefits of trade, be it on a geographic level, with some Member States recording more gains than others, or at a corporate level, with smaller businesses at times left to put up with complex requirements which are not a feasible way forward for European SMEs. This is why I always strive to include SME-friendly clauses and amendments in INTA files, while paying close attention to stakeholders from the regional and local level.

Another key matter remains a better implementation of agreements that have already been ratified. In the Commission's recent report on the evaluation of implementation of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), we see that the Preferential Utilisation Rates for EU Exports in 2016 have averaged at a rather modest 53%. This indicates that many businesses and economic stakeholders are not making full use of the preferential conditions brought about by the Common Commercial Policy. A first important step thus, where both the Commission and the Parliament have already started acting, should be to ensure a much better communication campaign to raise awareness about the potential benefits of trade, while also offering assistance to smaller businesses, which find it complex indeed to manoeuvre the various requirements necessary for eligibility in accessing preferential export quotas.

« If I would be an investor or an entrepreneur, with an outlook to the future, I would keep the U.S. in mind. Times will be changing and negotiations for a comprehensive transatlantic agreement on trade will likely resurface on the agenda »



The European Union was set to become a global player. Where in the world you see potential partnerships for the EU? Where should our businesses look? Perhaps you could give the reader a special inside or even a sneak peek.

I believe that when it comes to trade, the EU is indeed an important global player. This is not just due to its sheer market size and purchasing power, but also due to its role on the normative aspects of commerce and its regulatory power. As already mentioned, the EU will strive for progress wherever the respective partner state is willing to engage transparently and responsibly. We focused firstly on like-minded partners such as Canada, Australia and New Zealand, or strong international economic players such as Japan. Yet, the EU has much more to offer, and I look forward to us strengthening our ties with both close neighbours, under the European Neighbourhood Instrument and further-away partners in Asia, the Americas or in Africa.



Despite the fact that our relations with the U.S. are presently in a complex phase, primarily due to certain protectionist measures taken by the current administration in Washington, I would also not rule out the U.S. as a potential destination for businesses. Looking towards the future, the U.S. remains a natural partner for the EU, and the transatlantic relationship needs to endure as a global example of a solid, likeminded, strategic partnership. Therefore, if I would be an investor or an entrepreneur, with an outlook to the future, I would keep the U.S. in mind. Times will be changing, and negotiations for a comprehensive transatlantic agreement on trade and economic relations will likely resurface on the agenda.

Mr. Winkler, your country is Romania, but your heritage comes from a region with a mix of ethnic minorities. What does that mean to you personally?

The region I come from, Transylvania, means a whole lot to me indeed. Given the wide range of minorities, and ethnic backgrounds, I consider this region a mini-Europe wherediversity actually works. This has taught me since a young age that there is strength in unity, no matter our backgrounds,

and that working together can bring mutual benefits to all those involved. It is certainly not always a straightforward road, and it does not come without challenges and hardship; however, being convinced of the added value of good and sincere cooperation, the region is prospering, contributing to a better future for our upcoming generations. This important consideration to cooperation is something that I apply in my daily work, always striving to build bridges where the possibility arises.

As a member of the Hungarian community in Romania, often I am sad to observe backward steps in the several fields of interethnic relations in my region. This motivates me even more to engage with the younger generation, not scarred by my country's communist period and by the negative clichés towards ethnic minorities, which still exist in the Romanian society. The future belongs to the young generation and I am always confident that they will rise above prejudice, to build a new Transylvania, an equally loving home for all the communities that inhabit it.

You are well known as a diplomat. However, as a seller, how would you recommend your region?

Transylvania is a rapidly developing region in Central and Eastern Europe, arguably one of the best developed ones in Romania. I recommend Transylvania due to its preferential conditions in terms of factors of production, good academic preparation and hence qualified labor force, improving infrastructure and an increasingly favourable environment for young entrepreneurs. We also see in many cities in Transylvania that there is a strive to move up the value chain and focus more on innovation and R&D, with many universities being involved in kickstarting engagements with young entrepreneurs and start-up aficionados. I therefore consider that the region is still projected to grow for a considerable time, and investors going in with long term investment plans will enjoy prosperous economic returns for the mid- and even long term future.

Europe is one of the most innovative continents. Still. Do you see the risk that we might be losing the competition on innovation in the future?

I think Europe is continuously discovering those areas where it can bring added value. Certainly, in sectors such as robotisation, automated driving and Artificial Intelligence, the EU is well situated on the global arena, given its dedicated, highly skilled labor force, good incentive schemes, and excellent academic standards, to just name a few. However, let's be clear, there are many sectors in which the leading position belongs to others. That is why it is very important that the EU should continue to improve its relative position to the US, Canada and Japan. Let's also not forget that China is catching up rapidly. For this reason, but for many others as well, some present in the trade and investment domain, I believe that we need to assume a mutually beneficial cooperative attitude towards our Chinese partners, while sticking to our core values and interests. I believe that with a solid industrial strategy and a good coordination between the European, national, regional and local levels, we can strike a right balance for the prosperous future of our European Union.

Industry & Entrepreneurship – Road to success:

TIMISOARA CONFERENCE

The Convergence of Education, Business & Local Governance



Prof. Dr. Marilen Pirtea

Rector of West University of Timisoara

On October 11-13, 2018, the West University of Timisoara organized the conference entitled „Industry – Entrepreneurship – the Way to Success: the Convergence of the Education, Business and Local Governance Sectors”. The event was organized in cooperation with the SME Europe (Small and Medium Entrepreneurs of Europe), represented by its First Vice-President, Member of the European Parliament Iuliu Winkler.

The conference papers centered on exchange of good practices used in the European model of entrepreneurial development, with the accent being placed on new cooperation opportunities in view of setting up successful partnerships. The event aimed at identifying and boosting development potential of the Banat region, the topic discussed during the plenary sessions and the two panels. Apart from this, other topics were connected to Entrepreneurship 4.0 and entrepreneurial skills necessary for Romanian businesses to be successful and to the Smart Jobs Innovation Ecosystem, oriented towards how new jobs may be created and financed in Europe.

At a European level, successful cities and regions act as development and competition centers; they attract entrepreneurs and young people with an obvious potential. Success builds on harmoniously bringing together the three elements: education, business and local administration. The development trend of Timisoara and Banat is now directed towards increasing the number of smart jobs, as the region is already experiencing an upward industrial and economic trend. All necessary conditions are met in order to attract high value added investments, especially in the area of research, innovation and local factors for superior certification.

It is not by chance that such a conference was organized in Timisoara, a place where efficient development is based on the convergence of education, business and local governance. It is also not by chance that our university was involved in the organization of this event, since, as a multi-dimensional university, it constantly plays its dynamic role in the local community.

Our area, one that is multicultural by tradition and European by vocation, is located on corridor IV of Paneuropean transportation, at the intersection of East – West and South – North circulation axes, which connect the West Balkans to the center and the west of the continent. As one of the countries that have joined the EU more recently, it is thus certainly a strategic actor in the development of New Europe. Moreover, the fact that it is crossed by one of the main Middle East – Western Europe migration routes adds to its importance for the future European policy.

The conference participants were present at a university that ranks the first in the western part of Romania and among the first five universities at a national level. With 16.000 students and more than 1000 employees, it joins the other three universities in our city to make up a coherent metropolitan university center. In this institution, the Faculty of Economy and Business Administration is very active both in education and in research.

The fact that we organized in Timisoara a conference that seeks to consolidate business connections as well as the connections with the academia and the local administration is a strategic investment that we consider beneficial to the city, the area and the whole country in terms of economic growth, multicultural development, academic performance and European citizen spirit. We are honoured to have been both organizers and hosts of this conference, but we are also challenged by this position to meet the expectations of the new millenium public policies in Europe.

In 2016, Timisoara won the competition organized by the European Commission to nominate the city to become the European Capital of Culture in 2021. This means we are a bit more than two years away from the moment when Timisoara gets the attention of the whole Europe, when we expect the number of tourists from all over the world to multiply and our international visibility to increase considerably. The year 2021 will mark the entrance of our city and of the western part of Romania in a new development cycle, in tune with the rhythm of the most advanced European cities.

The value of the discussions during the conference „Industry – Entrepreneurship – the Way to Success: the Convergence of the Education, Business and Local Governance Sectors”, the importance of the topics addressed, the strategic implications of the conclusions formulated led to deeper knowledge and to setting up a more solid base for the development of our area, in the context of debates prior to establishing the framework of the 2021-2027 European financial planning. We were pleased to set important matters of the day at the core of the conference we organized at the West University of Timisoara.

We are looking forward to receiving our EU friends and partners as visitors of our university, a center of European values and knowledge.



Dr. Ingo Friedrich

President European Economic Senate

It is a great idea to bring together business representatives, local administration, academia and politicians in order to share best practices and consider a sustainable way forward. The focus of the conference in Timisoara is to some extent also on the consequences of the digital revolution. The related impact can be felt in all layers of society, and one of the side effects is a more rapid, and at times complex, non-linear development. There are related dangers too, as some communities have the perception that a dynamic globalized world is leaving them behind.

In our modern societies, information is one of the key currencies. The digital revolution has implications on the clustering of this information, bringing about difficulties in the harmonization of data and forming common positions, as so many different, at times even niche, points of view are represented, forming bubbles of information. One of the tangible effects is the multitude of political parties, some only being active on a rather limited number of policy areas.

There are also implications for journalists, advertising, marketing or distribution. Nowadays journalists can be their own publishers as information travels very quick, but this can also lead to unreliable information being promoted as 'expert opinion'. Promotion and packaging strategies need to be adapted as well, as the potential consumers now can be reached through a plethora of different means. Last but not least, we need to consider the challenges linked to artificial intelligence.

We have a lot of work ahead, but it is crucial that we get it right, for it will be the future generations that will suffer the possible negative consequences.



Michael Jaeger

Secretary General Taxpayers Association of Europe

Good academic standards and education are indeed key for our adaptation to the future. Business representatives, the academic community and the realm of politics, they all need to work together in order to bring about a better coordination of policy priorities, complementing each other and contributing to the understanding of the 'bigger picture'.

Our entrepreneurs need an effective digital infrastructure, a streamlined bureaucracy and hence faster decision-making, coupled with the availability of well trained and motivated labor force. This is why my main message at this Timisoara Innovation conference has been the importance of this triangle between business, local administration and academia, in order to make sure that society can supply in line with the demands of the future.

It is rather simple, just as it happened throughout our history, 'the fast is replacing the slow', and we need to stay ahead of the curve. Some people have the perception that they are losers of globalization; yet, if the above-mentioned triangle works efficiently, then much can be done to effectively integrate the local communities into the new paradigms of the industry 4.0 era.

One area that I would highlight is taxation. Just like many areas will need to be adapted under the new digital and economic environment, so will the domain of taxation. We need to create more incentives for investors, but also consider the possibility of a system of value added tax on machines. There are many questions and few answers for the future.

Entrepreneurship is however vital in this regard. In R&D therefore we need to create a better system of taxation, incentivizing capital investment where value-creation is high on the agenda.



Rolf Baron von Hohenhausen

President Bavarian Taxpayers Association

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Aerial view of a cloudy day above **Timisoara's** historical center taken by drone



TIMISOARA FOCUS

Geographically situated at the meeting point of many cultures, from west to east and from south to north, Timisoara has a history of being cosmopolitan and ecumenical, with over 30 cultures and ethnic community groups – including Hungarians, Germans, Serbians, Bulgarians having lived alongside each other for centuries. Orthodox, Catholics, Jews, Protestants, Lutherans, Reformists and other religions have freely worshipped together.

The place was an engine in the region which offered people the opportunity to move forward and let others do the same. Furthermore, Timisoara's diaspora has spread all around the continent, having the possibility to interact with the Europeans, by facing the same cultural challenges from a different perspective.

Throughout its history, Timisoara has been a city of little sparkles that started trans-continental transformations. The first city in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy to have street lights, and later the first city in continental Europe with electric street lights, the first newspaper in what is now Romania and the first newspaper in German in East-Central and South-Eastern Europe, the first public lending library and telegraphic and phone service in what is now Romania, the first cinema screening, the first public swimming pool and the first football stadium in Romania, and the only European city with three state theatres in three different languages. In 1989 the sparkle of the civic revolution toppled the communist regime in the country.

Nowadays, Timisoara is at the forefront of medicine, technology and IT breakthroughs in the region. Thus it is the moment to recreate the history of the city in a new European scenario and to restore those middle-class values the city has always exported, such as cooperation and harmony, tolerance and civic responsibility, in a very contemporary context where entrepreneurship is to be understood within a network, where religions learn values and spiritual energy from each other and real freedom is in culturally-diverse relationships. For the people of Timisoara, culture is the wave to speed up change at political, religious, economic, educational and social levels.

Since the 18th century up until the Second World War, the city was a powerhouse fuelling the economic development in the Banat Region with an echo through Central and Southeastern Europe. This drive was also powered by the city's openness to Western Europe, making Timisoara a quintessential European city. Thus, our surroundings are the whole of Central and Southeastern Europe. We approach them on three levels, representing the city's ties with Europe, the Banat region and Romania.



Timisoara & Europe

Szeged, Novi Sad, Graz, Karlsruhe and Mulhouse are among the most active twin cities of Timisoara. These partnerships enable us to spread our wings from the far western to the far eastern corners of the continent.

When it comes to the diaspora dispersed across Europe and the world, they still maintain their long-lasting connections with their hometown. Official statistics show that almost 110.112 people have left in the last 25 years, but in reality, these figures are likely to be much higher.

The first wave saw the emergence of the ethnic diaspora, who moved abroad in masses in the second half of the twentieth century. The so-called 'Banater Schwaben', more than 100.000 strong, are mainly German farmers and one of the most important communities of the Banat Region, along with the Romanians and Serbs. During the communist period and after the revolution they gradually left the country. In 1992, there were just over 13.000 Germans living in Timisoara, while at the 2011 census there were 4.193. The once-thriving Jewish community numbered 13.000 persons after the Second World War, while today there are only 600. The Hungarian ethnic group also decreased from almost 30.000 people in 1992 to half in 2011.

The Banater Schwaben hold regular meetings in Germany where they celebrate their common heritage and links with



Romania. Every year, they return to Timisoara to celebrate traditional holidays. The German and Hungarian communities established cultural institutions like the German State Theatre, the Hungarian State Theatre, the German Cultural Centre, the Austrian Library and the German Forum.

The second wave of emigration took place after the 1989 Revolution. Timisoara has seen its brightest young people and important workforce leave for Western Europe. Many Romanians from the Banat region are mostly trained professionals and skilled labourers, but also seasonal workers in Italy, Spain, Germany, and France. They will become our ambassadors for two reasons: they still maintain transnational connections with the family left at home, and in migration their local pride is reactivated and they become more civically oriented.

Timisoara within Banat Region

On the regional level, we have three frameworks which can help us build connections and which makes Timisoara an incubator for transnational and national collaboration projects.

Timisoara is situated in the far western part of the country, with a population of 319.272. Within a radius of 600 kilometres, there are seven major capital cities of Central and Southeastern Europe: Bucharest, Bratislava, Belgrade, Budapest, Skopje, Zagreb and Vienna. This will enable us to build valuable connections with these major cultural, political and administrative centres.

A second framework of cooperation is the Danube–Criş–Mureş–Tisza Euroregion (DKMT) of which Timisoara is part, being also the largest city. Covering 70.000 km², this stretches over the southeastern area of the Carpathian Basin, with a population of about 5.3 million. This also connects Timisoara to the Danube via the Bega Canal, a connection the city is trying to re-establish, not just on an infrastructural level, but also on a cultural one. That is why Timisoara was the host of the third International Danube Conference on Culture entitled Danube - The River as an Experience.

Timisoara is also the capital city of the historic region of Banat, which has a population of around 1.7 million. This has facilitated the collaboration in many EU-funded projects and the establishment of the Regional Office for Cross-border Cooperation in Timisoara.

Timisoara in Romania

Timisoara is at the centre of one of the eight development regions of Romania, making the city an important economic and cultural hub, attracting waves of internal immigration as well. Young people from neighbouring counties move to Timisoara either to study or to work.

1718

The opening of the **first elementary school** in the citadel of Timisoara

1718

The **first brewery** on the territory of present-day Romania

1728

Beginning of sewerage on Bega, **the first navigable channel** on the territory of present-day Romania

1745

The opening of the **first elementary school** in the citadel of Timisoara

1753

Permanent theater season - (third city in the Habsburg Monarchy, after Vienna and Budapest)

1760

First city of the Habsburg Empire with **streets lit by lamps**

1771

The first German newspaper in the South-Eastern Europe was published in Timisoara: the weekly Intelligenz-Blatt

OVER THE LAST THREE CENTURIES, WE ARE PROUD TO ACKNOWLEDGE 29 PREMIERES THAT HAVE MARKED TIMISOARA AS THE CITY OF NEW BEGINNINGS.

1815

The **first public library** from the Habsburg Empire, the Hungarian Kingdom and the Romanian territories, known as the Library of Josef Klapka

1818

For the first time in Central Europe, the **antivariolic vaccine** is administrated

1823

Bolyai Janos announces in Timisoara the discovery of the **first Non-Euclidean geometry** in the world

1847

The first concert of Johann Strauss outside Vienna

1855

The First city in the Habsburg Empire with **street-lighting on gas basis**

1884

The First city in Europe with **electric street-lighting** - 731 lamps

1886

The first ambulance from Hungary and Romania

1895

The first paved street
on the territory of present-day
Romania

1899

**The first electric
tram** on the territory of
present-day Romania

1983

in global premiere, **the first
railway and tramway
welding machine** is being
invented by Prof. Corneliu Micloși

1953

The first European city
with **three State
Theaters**: Romanian,
German and Hungarian

1969

Professor Ghemanescu publishes
the **first Encyclopedic
Functional Equations
Treaty** in the world

1989

The first free city in
Romania – fall of communism

1992

**The first laparoscopic
surgery** the first laparoscopic
total hysterectomy (in collaboration
with Kiel Clinic)

1993

**The first laparoscopic
total hysterectomy**
(in collaboration with Kiel Clinic)

1995

achieving in vitro fertilization
and human embryo transfer in
Romania; establishing **the first
Center of Laparoscopy,
Laparoscopic Surgery
and In Vitro Fertilization**

1996

The birth of the first in vitro
conceived human being in
Romania and the **first
embryo** transfer to the mother

2001

**The first information
kiosks network**
in Romania

2001

The first laser heart
surgery in Romania

2002

organizing **the first
international standard
triathlon** in Romania,
the Athletic Club Marathon

2003

National premiere in
**broadcasting on the
internet** the Local Council
meetings

2003

The first **transplant of
hematopoietic stem
cells** to regenerate heart muscle,
from Eastern Europe



Timisoara, Romania - September 23, 2017: Romanian woman sells traditional products at the „Fair of Craftsmen” organized by the City Hall of Timisoara.

Dynamics of an Emerging Regional Economy

Banat is the historical region of western Romania, located between the Danube, Tisa, Mureș and Carpathians. About two-thirds of Banat territory has joined with Romania, while one third has been granted to Serbia under the Treaties adopted in 1920. Banat Region also includes a small part of land between Mureș, Szeged and Beba Veche, which are currently disposed on the territory of Hungary. The Romanian part of the Old Banat Region stretches today on the territory of five counties: it includes the counties of Timiș and Caraș-Severin, the south territory of Mureș in Arad county, Orșova area from the Mehedinți county and several communes from Hunedoara county. Banat no longer exists as a distinct political entity since 1919, but the region continues to be considered a historical and cultural region of modern Romania. Its economic, cultural and spiritual center is located in Timisoara. Reșița, Lugoj, Caransebeș or Oravița are the cities that played a leading role in the history of the region. In recent years, the regional administrative role has begun to be replaced by the Western development region, which overlaps the Banat area.

Banat Region economic dynamics are the result of a whole set of factors, among which the most important are the higher level of labor qualification, the cosmopolitan mentality and multilingualism, characterizing an important segment of the region's population, proximity to the Western markets and important natural resources existing in the region.

Inheriting the important industrial tradition of Banat, which was considered to be a pilot-region for many innovative experiences in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the West Region was characterized in and before 1989 through a well-developed and diverse industrial infrastructure. Opportunities and challenges emerging immediately after 1989, as well as the most recent, associated with the integration of Romania into the European Union, have been an essential stimulus for the diversification and consolidation of competitive regional economic structures, oriented towards the requirements of the markets in Western Europe. An essential role in the structural transformation of the West Region has been played by foreign capital, which has found similarities between the mature markets from Western Europe and this emerging market mentalities and attitudes.

Undoubtedly, the cultural proximity to Europe of the West Region is also an expression of geographical proximity to the region. Located in about the same distance from Vienna and Bucharest, as a location in Europe, Timisoara, the capital of the West Region, has become, thanks to Timisoara Airport - Traian Vuia, the largest regional airport in the interior of the Budapest-Bucharest-Belgrade triangle, a place where you can fly fast to 20 destinations in Europe.

The traditional links with Central Europe, also expressed in the location of the Region on the pan-European corridors IV and VII of transport infrastructure are an advantage not only for investors interested in the exploitation of local resources, but also for those who want to use the West Region as a major logistical node for assembling products and exporting products to markets in Central Europe. In this respect, the Banat Region can be very appealing to investors who want to reduce the costs associated with transporting and assembling imported goods from the Asia-Pacific region to Central and Eastern European markets.

The famous Alba Iulia street decorated with umbrellas in **Timisoara** has become the city's hallmark and most recognisable location



Timisoara – a magnet city



Timisoara – the migration factor

According to a study recently held by the World Bank, after 2000, Timisoara became the city with the highest economic growth in the European Union, with GDP per inhabitant rising almost four times. In 2001-2011, Timisoara was the city in Romania that attracted the largest migration, beside Bucharest. “Several hundred thousand people would be willing to move to Timisoara if they were offered good conditions. Finding a job is not necessarily a problem. The main challenge is to reach the expectations of good quality indicators, said Marius Timisoara, but to find a good quality of life and so on”, said Marius Cristea, a senior expert of World Bank Expert on Urban Development at a meeting organized by the Intercommunity Development Agency - Timisoara Growth Pole.

As a matter of fact, 46% of the current population of Timisoara consists of people who have moved here from somewhere else. Annually, about 1,800 people decide to move to the suburbs of the city, the figure being extremely important not only for real estate developers, but also for future strategies of local and county authorities.

If the ascending trend of Timisoara will continue in the same way, the city could reach in a few years the metropolis status.

Timisoara – the best city for business

With almost 50 000 students, Timisoara is one of Romania’s most vibrant university cities. It is also the country’s only city that provides full education (from nursery school to university), in six different languages: Romanian, Hungarian, Serbian, English, French and German. Since the late ‘90s, Timisoara has attracted multinational companies from software development, financial services, near-shoring, industrial manufacturing and logistics. It has twice won Forbes Romania’s Best Roumanian City for Business distinction in 2013 and 2015. But this is not all. Timisoara, a dynamic multicultural city of over 400 000 inhabitants, is stated to be 2021 European Capital of Culture.

Rapidly - evolving infrastructure

Timisoara is directly connected to the A1 Highway. This aspect implies short travel. Budapest and Belgrade are a three-hour drive away, while Vienna and Bratislava can be reached in less than 5 hours.

The city’s fast-growing international airport hosts several airlines – Tarom, Lufthansa, Air Dolomiti, Wizzair, Blue Air, and Ryanair. These connect Timisoara to Bucharest, Munchen, London, Frankfurt, Paris, Brussels, Berlin, Amsterdam, Milan, and many other Roumanian and European destinations.

From an economic standpoint, the unemployment rate is extremely low, at only 1%.

Continuous economic development of the Banat Region in the Industry 4.0



Nicolae Robu

Mayor of Timisoara

«The key to the future is connectivity: Timisoara and the Banat region are already a valuable development pillar, with the potential to become an important economic incubator in Central and Eastern Europe»

Industry 4.0 raises new questions and challenges for the three sectors that we focus on, namely, the education system, business development and local governance, which supports every initiative that is favourable for our social, economic and political development. Entrepreneurship 4.0 puts emphasis

on the skills needed for businesses to be successful, in a sustainable way, in the dynamics of the new development paradigm. The key to the future is connectivity: Timisoara and the Banat region are already a valuable development pillar, with the potential to become an important economic incubator in Central and Eastern Europe. The Conference «Industry - Entrepreneurship. The Road to Success: The education – business – local government triangle» has raised the right subjects of discussions for Romanian businesses to continue to grow and know success, as well as the expansion and development of small and medium - sized firms, at international level.

Thus, in a less formal context, it allowed us to exchange ideas from entrepreneurs to political entities, and to experience and initiate together large projects that come out of the womb of each city, with a regional, national and European impact.

In order to achieve a better economic relationship between developing regions, the areas of interest that we outline include infrastructure, culture, education and industry. We are willing to build entrepreneurial partnerships, in order to exploit the best of our city's potential.

We support any initiative that proposes new innovations, by cultivating the resources we have, and we want to make sure that by obtaining European funds, these ideas will be put into practice.

First of all, because you cannot get a source of funding if you come only with a piece of such big project, you have to come with the whole. The European Union also has major, wide impact projects and can get money directly from Brussels. There are several sources of funding and we want to access them and start working effectively in the cities that make up and are the basis of the Banat Region.

Timisoara already has a strong position in the Romanian economy, it is recognized for its dynamism in the automotive and IT industry, but now the new chance is placed in the digital sector. Besides mentioning job creation, we need to facilitate research and knowledge-based jobs in the new digital economy.

Tradition & excellence for a lasting successful development



Bogdan Cocian

Chief Executive Officer of ELBA

«In 1884, Timisoara became the first city in Europe with electric public lighting. It is not a coincidence that the first company that produces lighting products came into being in this city and continued to be a benchmark for the Romanian companies with tradition»

Since 2012, Timisoara and Banat Region are known for the highest percentage of active population working in the industrial sector, within Europe. This is corroborated with a strong tradition for automotive sector - almost 20 years of strong delivery, but brings up several risks to the exposure of the industrial sector. Timisoara is also a well developed pole in IT and services – the third position after Bucharest and Cluj Napoca. Several initiatives for clusters, incubation centres, start-up accelerators have been conducted, in partnership with the local Universities and authorities, which are delivering high level skilled personnel. However, we are facing now, at both the national and local levels, several important challenges. We need to ensure the strong socio-economical stability, in order to have a much better support, at least at the same level as our competitors from the other EU countries and thus, generating the expected synergies.

For this, we need to find quickly alternative solutions, like enabling a controlled immigration policy, in order to ensure the required white and blue collar resources, so needed at this moment; we also need a strong investment in education at all levels, that cannot be done without a major change of approach and vision in the public administration; not the least, modernisation of the infrastructure and the predictability of the government policies are also key factors for the economical environment to continue and thrive at national and regional level.

In 1884, Timisoara became the first city in Europe with electric public lighting. It is not a coincidence that the first company that produces lighting products came into being in this city and continued to be a benchmark for the Romanian companies with tradition. All the transformations that ELBA went through were determined by objective conditions – the economic crisis, war, technological evolution, the development and complexity of the market demands.

Founded in Timișoara, with a tradition of almost 100 years, ELBA is the most important producer of lighting products and lighting systems in the country.

The well-earned prestige and solid reputation of the brand represent powerful drivers continually deliver innovative products and satisfy the market needs. ELBA actively participates at the everyday quality improvement, developing highly efficient lighting solutions in accordance with COP22 ambitions in terms of CO2 emissions. These guarantee improved energy consumption, safety and quality through the use of ecological alternatives.

In 2013, a key milestone in our evolution took place: the inauguration of the new production site - a modern building with all the required amenities and facilities.

The global economy trends and the major shifts in the lighting industry represent great challenges for the near future. ELBA concentrates all efforts towards transforming these challenges into profitable business opportunities. The vast experience and intense focus on adapting to the new business environment, make us confident that we will consolidate our position as leader at national level and continue the long-term development on the international market.

The Lower Austria Model: How can we develop small & medium businesses, by internationalising their extent



Daniel Marcu

Chief Executive Officer ecoplus International Romania
Lower Austria Economic Agency in Romania

«Since 2007, the year ecoplus International was founded, we managed to internationalize over 370 companies in Romania, where we offered over 300 jobs and concluded partnership strategies with the Timis Local Council»

Ecoplus International is a non-profit, government-funded agency, offering SMEs from Lower Austria a range of free bespoke services to support their export activities, capture new markets and found subsidiaries. For 10 years we have created strong economic relationships between small and medium businesses, or experienced entrepreneurs who want to start and or develop their business here in Romania or in Lower Austria.

Since 2007, the year ecoplus International was founded, we managed to internationalize over 370 companies in Romania, where we offered over 300 jobs and concluded partnership strategies with the Timis Local Council. Our initiative was recognized and awarded by the European Enterprise Promotion Award for supporting the internationalization of a business, in 2015 - 2020.

Through Industry – Entrepreneurship. Road to success: The education – business – local government triangle initiative, we aimed to raise the entire Banat region to a higher level and also to support emerging groups in the new market fields. The internationalization of businesses creates interregional cooperation; that offers multiple stability advantages that can also benefit from the local government support. Thus, we can say that this process combines the three poles we have in mind, namely: education – the sector where we have the chance to accumulate the knowledge necessary to build the foundation of a business, business and local government that offer the support in the development process of small and medium trades. This represents the pattern that can provide new jobs, leading to added value and economic welfare, not only for each individual company, but for the entire region.

Why Lower Austria? Because it is among today's top European business locations. Its geographic location alone is a bonus: Vienna at its centre and the high-growth markets of Central and Eastern Europe at its doorstep. Thanks to its political stability, dynamic growth, openness to investment, and the absence of bureaucratic red tape, Lower Austria is the land of ideas and their realization.

Other benefits would include the expanse of the transport axis, human resources, complete economic value chains, covered by regional businesses and major industry activity: mechatronics, (petro) chemical industry, wood industry, ceramic industry.

Moreover, more than 300 headquarters of multinational are situated in the Vienna region that is situated in Lower Austria. All in all, we have to understand that if we want to internationalize our company, by finding the right entity who opens up new doors for us to become as visible as possible, it is a far stronger chance to thrive on a higher level. A subsidiary in another country of interest, such as Lower Austria, can be a powerful asset in strengthening our extension on the market.

The partnership we provide between Romania and Lower Austria is the proof that the success in business is much greater when their main resources are capitalized and brought together in through a partnership.

Facing the challenges of 4.0 entrepreneurship & of the digitalization era



Sergiu Manea

Chief Executive Officer of Banca Comerciala

«Digital infrastructure represents a motorway. The only problem is that this motorway is not being used enough at the moment»

4.0 entrepreneurship is not something we aspire to, it is something that will keep us alive. Make no mistake: we are living disruption as we speak. We are at the very forefront of disruption, because, unfortunately, we either generate disruption or we are prisoners of it. Given nowadays' challenges, I believe we are actually in the middle of it.

We outline the importance of constant change, not only in terms of innovation, but also because the issue raised under these circumstances concerns the ethics of digitalization. It is probably too soon to address the necessity of having a code of ethics for digitalization and it will take us some time to understand how digitalization influences not only our behavior, but also our neurological pathways.

We insist on using technology, but where are we today? Innovation has already brought about vast opportunities and the democratization of technology creates huge opportunities for entrepreneurs. Europe should focus on creating the capital market union and on establishing a framework that encourages free initiative and fair chances.

We won't have a complex physical digital infrastructure in Central and Eastern Europe in the next 5 to 10 years, for several reasons. However, digital infrastructure represents a motorway. The only problem is that this motorway is not being used enough at the moment. Why? Some aspects need to be enhanced: we don't have digital states or digital engagements. The digitalization process is basically used at its full capacity by the private sector only, including business and entrepreneurial environments.

Even if this may seem like a proper, all-encompassing view of development, we must be careful to not miss the strong involvement of an emerging educated population in Europe. We must emphasize and recognize the values that foster innovation, and thus, create an even more competitive European Union, one that will be able to match strength with the US or certain Asian markets.

Creating landmark for European Capital Of Culture 2021



Virgil Tornoreanu

Managing Partner of Werk Property Group & Vox Technology Park

«We took the challenge of building more than just an office building - we set up a state-of-the-art business center that makes the perfect workplace achievable, right here, in Timisoara»

In the first half of 2018, Timisoara became the biggest regional office market in Romania, surpassing Cluj-Napoca for the modern office space inventory. According to real estate consultancy firm Activ Property Services, Timisoara has seen record office deliveries and rentals in the past two years.

With this in mind and in a city that is constantly expanding and creating new business opportunities, we took the challenge of building more than just an office building - we set up a state-of-the-art business center that makes the perfect workplace achievable, right here, in Timisoara.

From Timisoara To Vienna And Back.
The Man Who Develops Businesses For The Future In Timisoara.

“Timisoara is the Munich of Romania!” says Virgil Tornoreanu, the 48-year-old entrepreneur who built from scratch one of the most successful businesses in Timisoara.

“At a young age, I left my hometown and headed to Austria; made a big step that would change my life and vision completely. Forever in love with the city I was born in, I returned to Timisoara at the end of 2005, with the desire to make a change. My prior experience in constructions and IT blended in nicely and allowed me to develop a construction company which resulted in one of the boldest buildings in Timisoara: Vox Technology Park.”

The Next Generation Business Hub

“At a young age, I left Vox Technology Park, the 26,000 sqm office project in Timisoara, delivered in early 2018, is one of the most modern office buildings in Romania and also award-winner of Architecture Biennale 2018.

It offers innovative facilities, from biometric access, electrical vehicle loading stations, showers and changing rooms for the employees and the highest score ever awarded by BREEAM for a green real estate project in Romania – BREEAM Excellent Certificate, 85.6% overall score.

And as the entrepreneur says, Vox Technology Park is not be just a building but a business hub, a place where the young professional from Timisoara and start-up companies will thrive. “It is a project for the future, a place where innovation will meet with the most talented minds from our city, a place which will put Timisoara on Europe’s technology map.”



VOX
TECHNOLOGY
PARK



THE NEXT GENERATION BUSINESS HUB

More than just an office building – this is a corporate universe in a prime location, offering the ideal space for your thriving company, within a cosmopolitan business hub, destined to be a reference point for Timișoara's business life.

West University of Timisoara

After more than 70 years of existence, the West University of Timisoara is a bastion of higher education in Romania, one of the largest universities in the country, with around 15,000 students in the 11 faculties it has (Faculty of Arts and Design; Faculty of Chemistry, Biology, Geography; Faculty of Law and Administrative Sciences; Faculty of Economy and Business Administration; Faculty of Physical Education and Sports; Faculty of Physics; Faculty of Letters, History and Theology; Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics; Faculty of Music; Faculty of Sociology and Psychology; Faculty of Political Sciences, Philosophy and Communication Sciences).

The West University of Timisoara has a wide range of specializations and is an important player on the global education market, being a regional leader in this respect and having significant connections with the international academic community as well as with the economic and social environment.

Over the last years, the University has responded to changes in the national education policy, to demographic shifts, to a radically different economy and marketplace requirements, to emerging local and regional needs, and to new technologies. All these changes have led, in turn, to new expectations on the part of students, staff, and administrators. The University equips individuals with skills needed for effective contribution to society, in the eleven faculties that provide a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs.

The results obtained in many programs involving international collaboration - particularly in mobility programs - are indeed impressive and are among the most notable achievements of the University.

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The Department of Scientific Research and Academic Creation (DSRAC) provides support to the academic community to create a competitive research environment at national and international level that will transform the West University of Timisoara (WUT) into a center of excellence focused on knowledge provision through scientific research, development, innovation, artistic and academic creation. More than 60 research centers and structures operate at WUT.



Timisoara – the European Capital of Culture by 2021

The purpose of our programme for the European Capital of Culture is to generate, through culture, the energy that the individual needs to rediscover, the connection with the community and the willingness to take the future into her/his own hands. The concept of our programme is that by sharing your cultural identity and memories with others, or as we call it - Shine the light, you transfer human energy into the community and build a new sense

of citizenship, or as we call it - Light up the city. This new sense of European citizenship is inclusive, caring, responsible and also technology-minded, competent and confident.

In our work with the community during the last four years, we have identified those urgencies that reflect both the aspirations of the citizens and the problems which prevent the city from becoming the place its citizens want it to be.

Timisoara 2021

European Capital of Culture

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**SHINE
YOUR LIGHT -**

Shine your Light! is our participation strategy. It works with the principle of inspiration - a gentle push for engagement and yet, stronger than an invitation. Basically, the way we work is that artist-activists look over the shoulder of the individual to see what blocks him or her from releasing their inner energy in the community, and co- create authentic and powerful cultural interventions that try to take away those blockages. The artistic initiatives are able to stir the status quo, highlight dysfunctionalities ignored by decision makers, and propose experimental approaches to the challenges faced by society.

Light up your city! is our communication strategy. Reflection is the principle that works as an echo effect, that makes the messages more intense and repetitive, sent from Europe to Timisoara and bouncing back. As people in our city tend to pay more attention to the diaspora and the international media and social channels, we will send out messages that bounce back via the European network of our citizens, with a higher intensity for the local audience.

Shine your light - Light up your city! is our artistic vision. It is the overall integrating approach that initiates and accelerates the radiation from the source - the individual and her/his culture and experiences - to a target - the community - with intrusive effects in society, which remove passivity and release civic energy for engagement and art.

Our audience development strategy is to inspire through meaningful artistic works and projects, thus widening the individual's perspective and accelerating the embedding into the mainstream consciousness. Our strategy is to transform individual culture and memories from isolated bubbles into growing clusters of citizen action, by working with the direct connection between active audiences and active citizenship. As there is an increasing hunger for dialogue, debate, co-creation and interaction, our artistic programme offers a response through that type of cultural participation that increases the likelihood of broader civic engagement.

Examples in our programme include, but are not limited to, open and transparent consultations and decision-making processes for public spaces and services, a degree of trust and confidence to initiate citizen-led actions, funding mechanisms and new business models for citizen initiatives, accessibility of public spaces and services, educational programmes involving an intergenerational audience, exchanges with international art and cultural institutions.

The cultural strategy acknowledges the diverse and dynamic cultural activities which have taken place in the city. It realises the strong connections Timisoara has with the other cities in the region and it considers the strategic position of Timisoara in the heart of the Euro-region which includes parts of Serbia and Hungary.

Timisoara is the first city in Romania to have

such a long-term public policy document. Open Timisoara: cultural governance is based on participatory democracy, where the public sector creates a suitable environment for excellent cultural activities; Creative Timisoara: contemporary art is encouraged in an active manner with a special interest towards experimentation and interdisciplinary; Involved Timisoara: cultural unity and diversity live side-by-side and the city identity, in its continuous efforts to redefine itself, is rooted in the multicultural, multi-linguistic and multi-confessional profile of the city; Connected Timisoara: connected to the contemporary artistic movements in Romania and Europe; Responsible Timisoara: the natural and man-made heritage is protected, with good and generous public spaces offering a diverse cultural and artistic experience.

Our approach to involve the surrounding area is not merely based on geographical criteria. Instead we are planning to involve people who feel a deeply-rooted emotional connection to Timisoara. These are people apart from the diaspora; from nearby - the people living in the Banat region (presently stretching over three countries: Romania, Serbia and Hungary); and from here - the population of Timisoara. Europe relies on those cities where little sparkles can constantly generate trans-continental transformations. TM2021 aims to become an open experiment which overcomes the passivity in today's Europe. TM2021 stimulates the individuals' inner energy, which can shine through and unite their community, their city and the whole continent powered by culture.

How does SME Europe work?



SME Europe of the EPP operates for the rights of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in many areas. The first of our priorities is for our Board, Senators, and Chairs of our working groups to further develop and advise on EU legislation for the SMEs we represent. To achieve this, they look to the expertise of our national SME associations, within their own work circles, and to the experts and members from the small and medium enterprises. This unity and tight cooperation is highly important as the entrepreneurs are given an early heads up on legal developments through our own team, whilst we receive their own evaluations of the effects this will have on them. They often bring their own ideas regarding the obstacles and opportunities offered in SME legislation to the table, some of which are even not so obvious to us. This is because the SMEs we represent are operating on the ground and are engaged daily in commercial activities. In fact, SMEs have an important

effects bro mediatory role in today's society. As a result, they know the ught by legislation on their own businesses better than anyone, therefore we must always integrate their experiences and knowledge for the best results.

We gather information, opinions and positions both locally in Brussels and in the member states using our communication platforms, but more so by means of our events, in which varying stakeholders from the European Parliament, Commission and other institutional representatives on EU and national levels; as well as associations, academics, and of course our SMEs, interact with each other. It is during these events that opinions, knowledge and positions are fairly exchanged with the ultimate goal of developing a common solution or at least a better understanding of the different positions, challenges, and visions for the future. More often than not, this dialogue produces the launch of a new working group or project.

Such a project led in the partnership with SME Connect is The European SME Business Club which sets out to achieve a better understanding of the EU and supports SMEs in networking and usage of B2B amongst each other. The main focus of this initiative is not only on Brussels, but also the possible launching of conferences and events in different member states as well as building up an efficient business community and various regional clusters in order to provide a better networking and productive information exchange with political decision makers for SMEs. An additional objective of this project is to encourage financial support programmes to engage with the SMEs.

Another of these programmes is “Friends of SMEs” which serves as an information platform for programmes, projects, association initiatives, state bodies, businesses and academic institutions. Through the use of events, workshops and conferences, an information exchange is provided on all levels between the aforementioned groups.

A good example of a working group is the all-important “SME Start-Up”, which sets out to provide concrete help for the initial phases faced by young founders. The target is to improve legislation in this area whilst suggesting programmes and creating general awareness of the challenges faced by Start-Ups. The working group “SME Digital Agenda” on the other hand, has just one main focus, mainly the production of a viable position paper and the creation of a workplace in order to demonstrate the vastly different perspectives of the SMEs to the Commission. A whole chain of events to help achieve this goal have been suggested.

We at SME Europe want to have more of an educational and promotional role in cooperation with the European Union for



our SMEs through our mentoring programmes in Brussels. The goal is simply to ensure that manual labourers, retailers and restaurant owners for example, can develop a feel and understanding for Europe. They have the chance through us, not only just to meet representatives from all institutions, but also economic associations, company representatives and many more. If possible, programmes should be arranged to include SMEs from different regions where we could encourage our guests to use this chance to develop business relations and show them that Europe is not just about legislation, but the possibility of barrier free networking throughout the whole of Europe. Pragmatic entrepreneurs need to understand that it's not just all about legislation here in Brussels, but also concrete and practical chances.



Brexit: How to foster success and growth for Enterprises in Great Britain & European Union



On the 26th of April SME Europe, European SME Business Club in cooperation with the International Democratic Union (IDU), hosted a conference at the Portcullis House in London. “Brexit: How to foster success and growth for Enterprises in Great Britain and the European Union” brought together Members of the European and British Parliament, representatives of trade organizations, as well as business owners and high-ranked business operators.

The event started at Downing Street No 10 with a welcome from the British Prime Minister Theresa May, Minister of State for Trade Policy Greg Hands and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Cooperate Responsibility Andrew Griffiths. During the get-together, participants and British policy makers used the opportunity to exchange their views on the latest developments in the UK - EU relationship, contemplating a sustainable way forward.

After a short walk from Downing Street Number 10 to the Portcullis House, the conference went on with the panel discussions opened by Alec Shelbrooke MP, Vice-Chairman of the Conservative Party and Dr. Paul Rübig MEP, President of SME Connect. Both pointed out the importance of SMEs to the European Economy. Europe’s success is undoubtedly connected to the success of SMEs. To foster future success, a clear path is needed. This path needs to be implemented as soon as possible. The re-establish of a predictable legal framework and a possible change in tax policy for SMEs, from law makers of both sides, is furthermore needed.

Steve Baker MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Exiting the EU, presented his view on reasons for the happening of Brexit and spoke about the necessity, of creating a treaty that will not disrupt the UK-EU relationship a second time. Future trade needs to be as frictionless as possible, so a win-win situation can occur. SMEs on both sides, and therefore

both societies, will profit from a fair and good separation agreement. To secure that, this conversation between SMEs and policy makers is a perfect bridge builder.

The focus of the first panel was on competition, investments and financial services. Sir Geoffrey Clifton -Brown MP, IDU Vice Chairman, Deputy Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, talked about the intercedence of the UK and the EU. Having an agreement, that gives both parties access to the other market will benefit both. SMEs from the UK and from the EU have a significant amount of trade with each other, securing and expanding it is crucial for a prosperous economy. An agreement that aims to hurt the UK, will end up hurting the EU he argued. Maria Ritch, Vice-President of the Bavarian Taxpayers Association compared the Brexit Treaty with a divorce, that can hurt the children, if done wrong. The children in this analogy the citizens, expect a good deal that will make the continent a more prosperous place. However, she also pointed out, that if the UK wants a Free Trade Agreement +, they will also need to contribute to the EU budget. Ivan Stefanec MEP, Member of the IMCO and DSAS committee, Vice- President of SME Europe, focused on the importance of inner European trade and export. SMEs will suffer from a bad trade deal, therefore low/no tariffs are important. Besides a good agreement, the UK and the EU should increase their cooperation in all fields after Brexit. Even though the public discussion is often negative, he sees a positive development and good will on both sides. Ronald Kent, Managing Director of Capital Markets and Wholesale at UK Finance, specified the importance of the financial sectors in the supply chain of SMEs. London as a major financial center of the world, is crucial for the development of European SMEs. Therefore, access for both sides to the respectively partner markets is needed for a win-win situation. Furthermore, SMEs focus on daily business and don’t have the capacity for consultancies and lawyers, therefore they rely on good policy making. The following Q&A discussed the current uncertainty SMEs have and the necessity for a soft Brexit.



The second panel discussion featured research, innovation and trade. Iuliu Winkler MEP, Vice-Chair of INTA, First Vice- President of SME Europe, spoke about the need of overcoming geopolitics and moving to an era of connectivity of all sectors. Digitalization gives us the right tools to achieve this goal. In his view, Brexit disrupted many parts of Europe, economic and social. Rebuilding and advancing those parts is the job of politicians. Dr. Erik Sidney von Kroihner, Executive Councilor, Director International Relations & Government Liaison of Kapsch AG, sees the biggest problematic of Brexit in the uncertainty it created for the near future. The job of politics is to create an environment for businesses and industries to flourish. Therefore, a customs union is needed. A CETA type of treaty is not enough for the UK, it needs a further reaching agreement. Syed Kamall MEP, Member of the BCPR and DCAR committee, ECR Group Leader, talked about a mindset of “European Innovation” that needs to be achieved. Meaning, that it is indifferent where innovation is coming from. Innovation moves societies ahead. Creating an environment for innovation to increase, should be the priority in the Brexit negotiations. Both parties want to trade as much as possible with each other. He also added, that a big number of SME owners voted to leave the EU. In his opinion this was due to extra regulation caused by Brussels. To keep this in mind is crucial for the future success of Europe. The discussion moved on by points made by Srita Heide (CEO of Srita Heide International and Member of the European SME Business Club). As the CEO of an internationally operating SME she knows what kind of uncertainty the Brexit has caused. She is also aware of the position of the UK as a gateway to Europe for many non-European internationally operating SMEs. Consequently, only a good Brexit agreement can foster future prosperity.

The formal part of the conference was closed by Prof. Dr. Inese Vaidere Board Member of SME Europe, Professor of Economics at the University of Latvia and President of the Latvian Economic Development Forum. In her political conclusion she underlined the importance of needed clarity and mutual benefit. Furthermore, she talked about the importance of common European security and defence. Brexit should not affect this. Dr. Ingo Friedrich (Honorary Member of the European Parliament, President of the European Economic Senate and Honorary President of SME Europe) asked for less emotions and more rationality in the public debate about Brexit. He sees a Customs union as the best solution to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy for SMEs. He ended the conference by stating, that EU and UK need each other to keep up with the rising global competition.

SME Star Awards 2018

It all started one year ago with an idea. The idea to celebrate the tireless work of Small and Medium Entrepreneur in the EU and create an “Oscars for SMEs”.

The initiative came from the Board of SME Europe of the EPP and SME Connect, represented by acting Members of the European Parliament, remarkable and committed advocates for SME welfare through their entire career. It is them who observed best SME cases in their regions and nominated the most exemplary ones according to 12 adherent categories. We are thankful to all Members who answered our call as we have received several applications from Denmark, Italy, Portugal, Bulgaria, Austria, Latvia, Romania, Ukraine and Ireland. These nominees were judged on their attitude towards cross-border cooperation, competition, and of course whether the nature of their concept was deemed to have potential to be successful and make a positive impact on the EU economy.

During the Ceremony on **October 17th**, that took place in the **European Parliament**, the winners of categories in Environment, Start-Up, International, Innovation, Role Model, Micro Business, Neighbour, Agriculture, etc were presented and awarded by our esteemed Board Members.

SME Star Family Award was presented by Claudia Schmidt MEP to Lilla Racz, the owner of **Castle Hotel Daniel** – a Castle from 17th century in the middle of an area called the Land of Woods, is a hotel that used to be the castle of a noble family called Daniel. The owners have restored it and taken advantage of its historical value, offering authentic Transylvanian guest experiences by leveraging local values. The revitalization of a castle is a complex problem where architecture meets economy or culture, which can often be difficult.

Castle Hotel Daniel was nominated by **Iuliu Winkler MEP**.

Every winning SME was still competing for the main prize – the SME Star Awards Winner 2018 voted LIVE during the show. After the votes were counted, Manfred Weber, Member of the European Parliament and Chair of the EPP Group came on stage to announce the Winner. And it is our utmost pleasure to announce with him the SME Star Awards 2018 Winner Delacon Biotechnik GmbH! We sincerely congratulate Markus Dedl, the CEO and all team of this great SME! Well deserved! It was a project that made us proud! Proud of being Europeans! With SME Star Awards we hope to make a difference and create a magnificent occasion which will yearly bring SMEs into the Brussels spotlight and thus mobilizing SMEs to push themselves above and beyond. It is also an opportunity to celebrate our long term commitment to European SMEs.





We are building up a platform
paving a way to Brussels for SMEs throughout Europe



