



IS THE EUROPEAN SINGLE MARKET SME-FRIENDLY? WHAT DO SMEs ACTUALLY NEED?

BUSINESSEUROPE CONFERENCE

21 February 2017

Venue: Permanent Representation of the Netherlands to the EU
4-10, Avenue de Cortenbergh, 1040 Brussels

Programme

The conference will be moderated by: **Brian Maguire** (EBX Media)

9.00 - 9.15 Welcome and introduction

Welcoming words by **Stephan Raes**, Head Economic Department, Permanent Representation of the Netherlands to the EU

Introduction by **Marta Marti Carrera**, serial entrepreneur and Chair of BusinessEurope's Entrepreneurship and SME Committee

Address by **Christian Cardona**, Maltese Minister for Economy, Investment and Small Business, and President of the EU Competitiveness Council

9.15 - 10.00 Single market barriers: how do they impact my business?

Speakers will give examples of real market barriers they face in the everyday life of their business, and discuss ideas on how to have a better functioning single market for goods and services.

Ole Kamp, Plant Director at Steelcon, Europe's leading manufacturer of steel chimneys, will show the challenges that Steelcon faces due to the complexity associated with the recognition of skills and qualifications across Europe.

Philippe Portaler, Director Internal Market & Standardisation, ORGALIME – the European Engineering Industries Association

Discussant from DG Growth, European Commission: **Hans Ingels**, Head of the Unit "Single Market Policy, Mutual Recognition and Surveillance"

10.00 - 10.40 SMEs entering the digital world: how to make it, not to break it?

Speakers will discuss the digital economy, including topics such as how SMEs can be stronger using e-commerce, the need for geo-blocking rules to be in line with SME realities, and digital innovation hubs as accelerators for SME growth.



Anna-Lena Bohm, CEO of UniGuide AB and Vice-Chair of BusinessEurope's Entrepreneurship and SME Committee, will show best policies to boost SME online trading of services and products

Alberto Baban, President of Piccola Industria Confindustria and President of VeNetWork S.p.A., will explain how to support the digital transformation of SMEs and accelerate their innovation and cross-border business.

Discussant: **Robert Strauss**, Head of Unit "Service policy for consumers", DG Growth, European Commission

10.45

Conclusions by moderator

10.50 - 11.20

Coffee break

11.20 - 12.00

Let's talk policy: how can we boost SMEs cross-border activities?

Irmfried Schwimann, Deputy Director-General of DG Growth, European Commission

Véronique Willems, Secretary General of UEAPME - the European SME Association

Markus J. Beyrer, Director General of BusinessEurope

(Debate including the audience)

12.00 - 12.40

Burdensome and complex taxation: how to go about it?

Speakers will discuss how to lower barriers to trade and investment linked to taxation, paying attention in particular to the recent or upcoming European Commission proposals in the area of VAT .

Donato Raponi, Head of the VAT Unit in DG Taxation and Customs Union, European Commission

Kristian Kuktvedgaard, President of BusinessEurope's VAT Working Group, will put the question whether we are ready to remove the barriers to trade linked to VAT, and create a forward-looking, SME-friendly VAT system compatible with new business models.

Xavier Benoist, Senior Vice-President of Babilou

12.40 - 12.45

Concluding remarks

Markus J. Beyrer, Director General of BusinessEurope

Marta Marti Carrera, serial entrepreneur and Chair of BusinessEurope's Entrepreneurship and SME Committee

12.45 - 13.30

Networking lunch
