

## **Business organisations voice strong support for a new EU SME Strategy**

### ***European business organisations and the European SME Envoy Network call for a dedicated SME strategy***

Today, SMEUnited, EUROCHAMBRES and BusinessEurope reiterate the call of the European SME Envoy Network for a new and dedicated European SME strategy, at a joint SME event in the European Parliament. Already in July, President-elect of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen took on this initiative and announced her intention to put forward a dedicated SME strategy as part of her agenda for Europe. This was echoed in the same month by the SME Envoy Network's call for a vigorous and forward-looking EU policy for small businesses. At today's event, participants exchange views about the main challenges ahead for Europe's SMEs and discuss priorities for the new EU SME Strategy.

On behalf of EUROCHAMBRES, CEO Arnaldo Abruzini underlined the high costs imposed on SMEs and the European economy through unnecessary bureaucratic and administrative burdens. He pointed out ongoing shortcomings in the application of the "Think Small First" principle across the institutions and called in particular for improvements in the quality of SME Tests on legislative proposals.

On behalf of SMEUnited, President Ulrike Rabmer-Koller pointed to the growing skills gap and skills mismatch as well as access to finance as the main challenges for SMEs to unlock their potential to innovate, to digitalise and to adapt to a circular economy. Promoting vocational education and training, increasing mobility and providing support structures at national and regional level to also enable traditional SMEs to digitalise and become greener are as important as increasing the capacity of banks to lend to SMEs and to develop capital markets accessible for SMEs.

On behalf of BusinessEurope, Chair of the "Entrepreneurship and SME Committee" Anna-Lena Bohm underlined that access to markets within and outside the European Union is a precondition for SMEs to succeed, to grow and create jobs. Therefore, further deepening of the Single Market and a stronger focus on implementation and enforcement have to be combined with international trade agreements ensuring fair and equal access for Europe's SMEs to third country markets.

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