

DIGITALISATION OF SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED ENTERPRISES: HOW TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE



DATE & TIME

Date: 16 October 2019
Welcome drink: 18h00
Event: 18h30-20h00
Cocktail reception: 20h00-21h00

WHERE

The Office, Rue d'Arlon 80, 1040, Brussels

PROGRAMME

WELCOME:

Patrizia Hoogstraaten, Vice-President of EuroCommerce and General Manager Vakcentrum, responsible for SMEs

KEYNOTE SPEECH:

Petri Peltonen, Finnish SME Envoy

PANEL DISCUSSION:

Ivan Štefanec, Member of the European Parliament and President of SME Europe

Jasmin Battista, DG CNECT, European Commission

Birgit Winn, Head of Digital Projects, Hospitality.Digital, METRO AG

Alexandre Nilo Fonseca, President of ACEPI (Portuguese Digital Economy Association)

Mira-Maria Kontkanen, Advisor, Federation of Finnish Enterprises

Marta Mikliszanska, Public Affairs Expert, Allegro

Moderation: **Michael Acton**, Mlex Market Insights

CLOSING REMARKS:

Henrik Reimer, Head of Office, SME Connect

ABOUT THE DEBATE

The digital transformation of the economy is underway, offering new market opportunities in Europe and all over the world. This technological shift is fostering both innovation and exchanges across EU borders, as well as the opportunity to secure a share in the emerging markets for current and future products and services.

Within this context, micro as well as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are of strategic importance as they create two thirds of jobs in the private sector and contribute to more than half of the total added value generated by businesses in the EU. As the latest Annual Report on European SMEs states, the re-emergence of SMEs has continued over recent years, as this sector made a significant contribution to the recovery and subsequent expansion of the EU economy by accounting for 47% of the value added generated by the non-financial business sector between 2008 and 2017, and for 52% of the cumulative increase in employment in the sector.

However, SMEs are not taking full advantage of digitalisation offered by advanced technologies and innovative business models yet. They are faced with several challenges, from market access, to fully benefitting from public and private finance, the need to scale up, as well as to handle both data management and cyber threats. It is therefore crucial that the regulatory framework, SME instruments and programmes, such as the Digital Europe funding programme of the European Commission, ensure fair access to the single market and stimulate innovation. In addition, strengthening the regulatory framework of the Digital Single Market for SMEs should also include a constant reflection on existing policies and the need to further adapt them to the challenges of a fast-changing and increasingly competitive global environment.

Please confirm your participation at brussels@metro.de until 9 October