

Cabinet Newsletter

Newsletter no. 42, 14 April 2011

Dear Reader,

At the beginning of this week, Vice President Tajani travelled to Budapest to participate in the Informal Competitive Council with the Ministers for Industry (11-13 April). On 12 and 13 April, in particular, discussions were devoted to industrial policy.



Antonio Preto
Head of Cabinet

During the plenary session of the meeting, on April 13, the Vice President gave a keynote speech on "*Stronger SMEs for a stronger Europe*". In particular, the VP's speech focused on the important role played by the Small Business Act (SBA) for European small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). He further exposed the main reasons for the Commission's recent adoption of a revised SBA and the actual new proposals.

The Small Business Act, adopted in December 2008, is a peculiar instrument for European SMEs. It contains a series of principles and legislative guidelines that both the Commission as well as the Member States have undertaken responsibility to uphold. The core principle highlighted by Vice president Tajani is "*Think small first*", referring to the importance of simplifying the existing legal framework to render the system more efficient.



The VP further clarified the three main reasons why the SBA was subject to review:

1. First of all, as any working programme, it needed to undergo an assessment. Before moving forward, it is always crucial to verify what has been reached. The VP gladly announced that so far all legislative initiatives put forward by the SBA have been adopted, but one: the regulation on the Statute for a European Private Company. To this hand, Vice President Tajani has restated the importance of moving faster also towards this goal.
2. Secondly, it was necessary to put forward new proposals for action, focusing in particular on the challenges faced by the SMEs. Constant innovation, international growth and long-term establishment in the world's most dynamics markets are goals that need continuous inputs to be reached.
3. Finally, a revision of the SBA proved to be crucial to ensure a high profile of European policy in favour of SMEs.



As to the actual new proposals put forward by the revised SBA, the Vice President highlighted, first of all, the internationalization of SMEs. The goal is to increase the number of European SMEs trading internationally particularly by incrementing services and avoiding overlapping with the initiatives already undertaken by the Member States.

Furthermore, the VP stressed the importance of placing SMEs at the core of the European innovation policy. The proposed actions are indeed oriented at assisting entrepreneurs and SMEs to put their ideas into practice up to the marketing stage. Besides, SME's access to eco-innovations and eco-markets will be enhanced, especially in the field of energy efficiency.

Another priority of Vice President Tajani is SMEs financing. To this hand, during his speech, he recalled the initiative *SMEs Financial Forum* by him launched. Such initiative has established an on-going dialogue between European SMEs, European bank associations and other financial institutions, with the goal of reaching practical solutions.

In conclusion, the revised SBA presents a series of new proposals to create the optimum environment for SMEs growth and support their internationalization. To this hand, Vice president Tajani announced the future establishment of an advisory group on the Small Business Act. Such group, composed of the Member States' representatives and professional organizations, will monitor the implementation of the SBA, ensure the dissemination of information and exchange of best practices.



Happy Easter to all and we will look forward to updating you after the holidays!