



Joint Press Release

European Digital Agenda: New EU-funded project aims to lower language barriers for SMEs

Brussels, 10th October 2011 - As part of the European SME week that took place in Brussels and in all 27 member States, UEAPME (the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises) and ACCA (the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) recently organised a high level conference on the benefits of the Digital agenda for SMEs at the European Parliament.

Hosted by Dr Paul Rübig, MEP, the event showcased and shared best practices, illustrating that the digital agenda can be used as a tool to support compliance, knowledge structuring and sharing, remove administrative burdens, help with cross-border trade and remove access to finance barriers for SMEs.

The event started with a series of case studies covering a broad range of issues for which the Digital Agenda is impacting SMEs. This included concrete examples of improved efficiency through cloud computing like the PROMIS[®] solution (www.promis.eu), a 'software as a service' supporting SMEs to be compliant with legal requirements, through integrated management, online collaboration, as well as knowledge sharing between associations, institutions and SMEs.

Caterina Berbenni-Rehm, CEO of PROMIS@Service in Luxembourg, underlined that PROMIS[®] is a generic framework to build and offer interactive services answering, partially or in full, major requirements of Digital Agenda 2020 like (i) sector and theme-oriented turn-key solutions for micro SMEs, with (ii) high level of trust and confidence based on security, high quality, trusted community building, (iii) offering a balanced regulatory framework with clear rights regimes, and (iv) a innovative Business Model, offering adequate protection and remuneration for rights holders.

She also highlighted the importance of multilingualism, presenting the PROMISLingua project (www.promislingua.eu), funded under the CIP-PSP Programme, which aims at translating, localising and rolling out the existing PROMIS[®] online quality management solution (at present available in English, German and Italian) in six additional languages (Spanish, French, Portuguese, Greek, Romanian and Hungarian), in order to deliver a cost-efficient and easy-to-use internet based service enabling SMEs to comply with Safety, Health, Environment, Quality and other Regulations at European and international level.

UEAPME is a strong and committed partner in the project, together with PROMIS@Service, INMARK, LINGUATEC, INOVAMAIS, INCDPM, ATLANTIS and R-TECH.

All participants also stressed that the Digital Single Market, which is still very fragmented, will be a decisive tool to enhance EU SME's competitiveness and allow

them to unleash their potential. It is already proven that SMEs are growing twice their size once they have embraced the Digital Agenda.

The CEO of PROMIS@Service finally underlined the very important role that intermediaries and advisers such as small business associations and accountants had to play in terms of supporting the uptake of innovation in SMEs, as well as raising awareness amongst the SME community.

Andrea Benassi, Secretary General of UEAPME, concluded: *“The main aim of our project is to lower language barriers for SMEs, stimulate new business opportunities and improve the quality and effectiveness of cross-lingual communication. Embracing the Digital Agenda and the opportunities it provides is increasingly fundamental for European small companies. We hope that PROMISLingua will bring ICT and SMEs one step closer, and we will work with our partners to achieve tangible and usable results.”*

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About PROMIS@Service:

PROMIS@Service Sarl, Luxembourg, is a young company helping European small organisations to deal with a complex regulatory environment, to structure processes and data systematically and efficiently, and to achieve *de facto* compliance with legal requirements and the major international Standards for Health & Safety, Environmental, and Quality management. We provide a way of tailoring knowledge to users' needs, through a low-cost, broad-scope, high-volume service. Our easy-to-use approach has started to attract major interest not only from associations and the SMEs themselves, but also from consultants serving SMEs. For associations and consultants, we offer an easy framework to structure their knowledge and to support their members and clients to achieve compliance and gain steady performance improvement. www.promis.eu

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About UEAPME:

UEAPME is the employers' organisation representing exclusively crafts, trades and SMEs from the EU and accession countries at European level. UEAPME has 82 member organisations covering over 12 million enterprises with 55 million employees. UEAPME is a European Social Partner. For further information: www.ueapme.com