



Finding Your Way

around the small business agenda in Brussels

FSB EU Newsletter January 2011 Issue 7

Welcome

Welcome to the FSB's EU Newsletter. This newsletter is a regular publication produced by the FSB's EU and International Affairs policy and campaigns team. This newsletter aims to give you a short summary of the FSB's activities in Brussels and the latest issues affecting small businesses. We hope you find this letter to be of use. If you have any comments please do not hesitate to [contact us](#).

FSB in Action!



The FSB's David Caro with European Commission Vice-President and Commissioner for Industry and Entrepreneurship Antonio Tajani



Mike Nattrass MEP shows his support for the FSB's written declaration



FSB member Ann Johnson discusses procurement issues with Malcolm Harbour MEP

Happy New Year!

FSB National Chairman, John Walker warns that the year ahead will be tough for small businesses but says that with the right measures in place, such as in exporting and targeted VAT cuts, small firms will help put the economy firmly back onto solid ground and tackle unemployment. [More](#)

Please support written declaration 88/2010

In the UK in 2009, according to the Office of National Statistics (ONS), 1,100 businesses went out of business every day. That is the highest level since ONS records began a decade ago. With each firm employing an average of four to five people, it means around 1.25 million people lost their jobs as a result of their employer's collapse. The ONS also said it is the first time that the number of business deaths has overshadowed the number of new businesses. Less than half the businesses set up in 2004 were still going by the end of 2009.

If we are to move our economies forward then we need to make it easier for people to start or grow a business, not placing obstacles in their way. If the burden of unnecessary regulation could be lifted from the EU's 23 million SMEs they would be free to get on with creating employment, opportunity and innovation. It is worth remembering that if only fifty per cent of the EU's SMEs employed just one extra person there would be an additional 10 million jobs.

We therefore call on MEPs to support Written Declaration 88/2010 on the administrative burdens of small and medium sized enterprises.

To find out more [click here](#) or to view our short film [click here](#).

EU proposal for 20 weeks of maternity leave at full pay rejected

Following a campaign by the FSB the EU Council of Ministers has now rejected the European Parliament's proposal to legislate for 20 weeks of maternity leave at full pay. They expressed concerns regarding the cost implications of extending paid maternity leave. As part of our campaign, the FSB set out our [position](#) in the [national press](#) ahead of the Council meeting. [More](#)



Marina Yannakoudakis MEP with FSB National Chairman John Walker at the FSB's annual House of Commons reception

FSB meets with Commissioner Antonio Tajani

The FSB recently met with the European Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry, Antonio Tajani. During the meeting we stressed the importance for access to EIB (European Investment Bank) finance for small businesses.

Regarding the review of the Small Business Act (SBA), the FSB urged the Commission to ensure that the existing SBA is fully implemented before introducing a number of new proposals. The FSB also took the opportunity to raise our concerns that many MEPs and Commission officials do not appear to be up to speed with the principle of 'Think Small First', a vital principle when dealing with legislation impacting on small businesses. Furthermore, the FSB said that the issue of female entrepreneurship should have a prominent place in the review of the SBA.



Diane Dodds MEP shows her support for the FSB's written declaration

Made in the UK – Small businesses and an export led recovery

Exporting has been hailed as a potential driver for economic growth in the UK over the next few years. However, one in three small businesses find red tape and bureaucracy one of the main challenges when exporting their products, a new [report](#) from the FSB has found.



The FSB's Richard Hyslop discusses small business issues with Richard Howitt MEP

FSB meets with Commissioner Michel Barnier

Following our meeting with Commissioner Antonio Tajani, the FSB met with Commissioner for the Single Market, Michel Barnier. The meeting was organised so that the Commissioner could gain an understanding of what small businesses wanted to see from the re-launch of the Single Market.

The FSB used the meeting to stress the need to make European funding easier to access for small businesses and finding different routes to market for that money other than through established banks. The FSB also raised the subject of smarter (and less) regulation.

Hungary sets out its ambitious EU Presidency Priorities

The draft Presidency programme has some very lofty ambitions ranging from climate change policy to making a success of the European External Action Service. The FSB hopes that the Hungarian Presidency focuses on creating a business environment in which small businesses can thrive. With this in mind the FSB was pleased to see from the Presidency programme that there will be a focus on the Single Market Act in the hope of stimulating job creation and growth through new legislation on taxation, counterfeiting and a revision of the Small Business Act. [More](#)



Vilja Savisaar-Toomast MEP shows her support for the FSB's written declaration

Hertfordshire members discuss transport issues with local MEP

Richard Asghar-Sandys, Chairman of Herefordshire FSB, hosted a meeting between Herefordshire coach operators and Philip Bradbourn MEP, who leads on transport issues in the European Parliament. Issues discussed at the meeting included: the working time directive, passenger rights legislation, driver qualifications and difficulties in recruitment.

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