

Finding Your Way

around the small business agenda in Brussels

FSB EU Newsletter March 2011 Issue 8

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!



Emma McClarkin MEP shows her support for the FSB's written declaration



Fiona Hall MEP shows her support for the FSB's written declaration

Small Businesses demand action, not words from MEPs

Three months ago the FSB launched their written declaration on the administrative burdens of small businesses. In that time we have had face-to-face meetings with 200 MEPs, we have taken a stand in Strasbourg on three separate occasions, we telephoned and have e-mailed MEPs, and we have produced bespoke literature and put it in MEPs pigeon holes. On our behalf a number of the tabling MEPs have also contacted their group colleagues urging them to sign. As a result of all this 212 MEPs supported our written declaration. Sadly this was 156 short of the total needed to have our declaration adopted.

All over Europe politicians and officials are talking about the importance of small businesses and how they recognise that the administrative burden falls hardest on the smallest businesses, yet when these same politicians were offered the opportunity to publicly pledge their support for reducing this burden, the overwhelming majority, 71 per cent, chose not to.

It is time MEPs stopped talking and actually started to do something about the regulatory burden. If the burden of unnecessary regulation could be lifted from small businesses, they would be free to get on with creating wealth, employment, opportunity and growth. 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.

FSB members discuss EU contract law with rapporteur

On 21 January FSB members in Yorkshire and the Humber met with Diana Wallis MEP who is the rapporteur on the proposal on EU contract law, existing in parallel with national contract law. The following week Mrs Wallis presented her report to the Legal Affairs committee of the European Parliament.

Speaking in committee, Mrs. Wallis cited examples given to her by FSB members she had spoken with. She stressed that it is vital for these businesses that an instrument of EU contract law should be simple and straightforward.



Diana Wallis MEP discusses EU contract law with FSB members



FSB member and founder of Workingmums.co.uk speaking on female entrepreneurship

Stakeholders meeting on the UK's implementation of the Small Business Act (SBA)

The FSB was invited to attend a discussion organised by DG Enterprise and Industry in London on SBA implementation. Topics included access to finance, broadband, small business support structures, female entrepreneurship, small businesses exporting and the “Think Small First” principle. [More](#)

Female entrepreneurship

The FSB is concerned that women-owned businesses only make up 29 per cent of self-employed people in the UK despite nearly half (46%) of the working population being female.

In a new [report](#), ‘Women in business – Female entrepreneurship: creating growth and dispelling the myths’, the FSB is calling on the Government and the EU to learn from the US and other EU countries to encourage female entrepreneurship by breaking down the barriers to self-employment, promoting alternative sources of financing, encouraging mentoring, and promote female entrepreneurship role models.

FSB member and founder of Workingmums.co.uk, Gillian Nissim, recently spoke at an event on promoting female entrepreneurship organised by Marina Yannakoudakis MEP.



Trevor Colman MEP and John Bufton MEP show their support for the FSB's written declaration

Paternity leave – let Member States decide

The FSB recently responded to a European Commission consultation on possible new EU measures in the area of paternity leave. The FSB is of the view that any decision on paternity leave – which is not currently regulated at EU level – must be taken at Member State level only. This would enable each country within the EU to find a solution that works best for them. [More](#)

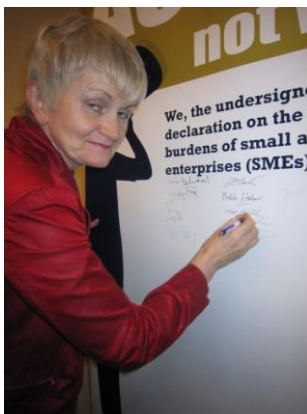
Working Time Directive (WTD) negotiations to resurface: the FSB's response

Negotiations to renew the WTD failed in 2009. Since then a couple of European Court judgments and a number of non-conforming Member States have caused the issue to be brought back to the table.

A first social partner-only consultation finished in June 2010. The FSB is not represented by a social partner at European level. However, we have sent our contribution to the Commission's latest consultation in February 2011. In its response the FSB called for flexibility with regard to the issues of on-call time and compensatory rest; an extension of the reference period for calculating working time to twelve months and to keep the opt-out of the 48 hour rule. The FSB would also like to see a solution for the interplay between annual leave and sick leave, which is now disadvantaging small businesses. [More](#)

Letter from Brussels – Strength in numbers

The FSB was a founder member of the European Small Business Alliance, which represents business bodies from 15 EU countries. Today it is a force to be reckoned with. [More](#)



Marian Harkin MEP shows her support for the FSB's written declaration



Timothy Kirkhope MEP shows his support for the FSB's written declaration

Contact Details

London

Federation of Small Businesses

2 Catherine Place

Westminster

London

SW1E 6HF

E-mail:

sietske.degroot@fsb.org.uk

richard.hyslop@fsb.org.uk

Website: www.fsb.org.uk

Brussels

Federation of Small Businesses

Logos Public Affairs Building

Rue D'Idalie 9 – 13

B-1050 Brussels

Belgium

E-mail:

sietske.degroot@fsb.org.uk

richard.hyslop@fsb.org.uk

Website: www.fsb.org.uk