

# Finding Your Way

around the small business agenda in Brussels

FSB EU Newsletter May 2011 Issue 9

## 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!



Giles Chichester MEP speaking at an FSB reception in the European Parliament



Andrew Duff MEP shows his support for the FSB's written declaration



FSB meets with new leader of Conservative MEPs Martin Callanan MEP

## Micro firms still hit by a raft of EU regulations as moratorium on regulation begins

The FSB is warning that micro firms will still be hard hit by the large number of regulations that come from Europe, as the moratorium on regulation begins.

The Government has put in place a moratorium for micro firms on all new domestic regulations for the next three years. But ahead of the Common Commencement Date on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> April which sees all new laws and regulations come into force, the FSB is concerned that micro firms are going to be hit hard by new regulations that come from Europe – 72 per cent of the total cost of UK regulation now originates from Brussels. [More](#)

## Confidence bounces back but job creation remains weak, says FSB

The FSB's 'Voice of Small Business' Index for the first quarter of 2011, has shown that small businesses' employment intentions weakened even though business confidence has improved since the end of 2010.

At the end of 2010 a balance of -2.5 per cent of businesses thought they would have to make cuts to their employment levels. However, -6.5 per cent actually decreased headcount during the quarter – showing that businesses are having to make tough decisions. [More](#)

## FSB Demands UK Exemption from EU plans to standardise trailer size

The Commission is proposing to introduce, under its system of Whole Vehicle Type Approval, a four metre height limit on new trailers purchased within the EU. If the proposal is implemented and the United Kingdom is not granted an exemption, the current double-deck fleet would gradually be phased out and this country denied the economic and environmental benefits it offers. This proposal will have a wholly disproportionate impact on the United Kingdom as tall lorries up to 4.9 meters in height are almost unique to the United Kingdom. [More](#)



The FSB's Tina Sommer, speaking at the European Spring Briefing

## FSB asks for flexible procurement rules

In a [response](#) to a consultation on the review of EU procurement rules, the FSB says the current rules are too strict and a more practical and flexible set of rules would be welcomed. However, more flexibility should be coupled with a higher level of transparency.

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## European Commission energy taxation proposal

The Commission has presented its proposal to overhaul the rules on the taxation of energy products in the EU. Representing over 2,000 smaller farmers, the FSB is seriously concerned that the Commission seem to have unfairly singled out rural communities for harsh treatment. The FSB is worried that these proposals will hit hardest some of the most vulnerable sections of our economy, namely farmers and rural businesses. The FSB therefore urges MEPs and the Council to reject these proposals. [More](#)

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Sietske de Groot speaking at a public hearing on European contract law

## FSB speaks at public hearing on contract law

The FSB was invited to speak at a public hearing on contract law organised by the European Conservatives and Reformists in the European Parliament. The FSB has previously calculated the costs for small businesses if they have no choice but to comply with the law of another member state when trading cross-border. Therefore we supported Commissioner Reding, also present, in her intention to find a solution to overcome this barrier in the Single Market through an optional EU-wide 2nd regime.

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The FSB's Tina Sommer meeting with the SME Envoy at the FSB's London offices

## Tina Sommer speaks at European Spring Briefing

The FSB's Tina Sommer chaired a session on small businesses at a [conference](#) organised by the Parliament Magazine, the European Commission and the European Parliament offices in London. The outcome of the discussion was clear: small businesses should get bank loans much easier. To facilitate this, banks should be regulated, for example by splitting retail banking and speculation. [More](#)

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## SME Envoy visits FSB

The new European SME Envoy, Daniel Calleja Crespo, recently met with the FSB. At the meeting the FSB raised a number of issues including the accumulative effect of costs and burdens of European legislation on small businesses. [More](#)

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The FSB and ESBA campaigning in Strasbourg for a reduction in the administrative burden on small businesses

## New consumer rules disastrous for small businesses

The European Parliament and the Council are negotiating on rules that will update consumer law. Some of the provisions are clearly causing problems for small businesses. For example, the retailer has to refund the postage costs on a cancelled item delivered to a customer with a value in excess of €40, and member states can still require businesses to comply with their country's consumer laws. The FSB is strongly urging the Government to oppose these changes when voting over the proposal.

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