



Finding Your Way

around the small business agenda in Brussels

FSB EU Newsletter November 2010 Issue 6

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 John Walker and Richard Hyslop With Barbara Weiler MEP at the VISA late payment event



Dutch MEP Dennis de Jong shows his Support for the FSB's written declaration



Vicky Ford MEP with FSB Policy Chairman Mike Cherry at the Conservative Party Conference

MEPs vote to increase maternity leave

MEPs voted during the October plenary session of the European Parliament to increase maternity leave to 20 weeks, from the current EU minimum of 14 weeks, all on full pay. The FSB campaigned against the increase and was delighted that the overwhelming majority of UK MEPs from all political parties voted against the increase. These proposals are now before the European Council. The FSB has not given up its campaign and last week had the following [letter](#) and [article](#) published in the national press. [More](#)

MEPs approve rules on late payment

Caught between contracting markets, late payments, increasing overheads and a sharp decline in access to finance, many viable small businesses have failed recently. With this in mind the FSB is delighted that MEPs gave strong backing to proposals establishing a general payment deadline for public authorities and businesses at 30 days. Business-to-business payments may be prolonged beyond 60 days provided that the creditor expressly agrees and the conditions are not 'grossly unfair' to them.

The FSB does however have concerns as to how these proposals will work in practice; a small business with one or two large contractors is unlikely to take action against them, for late payment, in fear of losing their business in the future.

FSB calls for action, not words from the EU

The FSB and ESBA have joined forces with a cross party group of MEPs to table a written declaration in the European Parliament on the regulatory burden of SMEs.

The total cost of regulation on the EU's 23 million SMEs is estimated at 123.8 billion Euros. It takes each SME on average seven hours a week to comply with this administrative burden. Partly as a result of this 1.7 million SMEs fail every year in the EU, that's nearly 5,000 every day. We are therefore urging as many MEPs as possible to support our written declaration.

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



The FSB's Martina Murphy and Tina Sommer with Marina Yannakoudakis MEP and Andrea Češková MEP

ESBA named “European Trade Association of the Year”

The FSB's European umbrella organisation ESBA has been voted Top European Trade Association of the Year.

The votes in the [European Public Affairs Awards 2010](#) came from top Public Affairs Professionals and business representatives from every sector and from right across Europe. This award recognises the achievements of Patrick Gibbels (ESBA) and Sietske de Groot and Richard Hyslop from the FSB. Working together on a daily basis FSB and ESBA ensure that the concerns of Europe's SMEs are at the top of the political agenda in Brussels. This is important, as there are some 23 million SMEs in the EU, providing roughly 75 million jobs and accounting for over 99 per cent of all enterprises.



Baroness Ludford MEP visiting the FSB's stand at the Liberal Democrat Party Conference

What do women *really* want?

The FSB joined forces with Marina Yannakoudakis MEP to discuss the issues surrounding flexible working and female entrepreneurship. Speaking at the event were a number of female entrepreneurs, politicians and employment law experts. The FSB was represented by Tina Sommer and Martina Murphy, a member of the Employment Committee. The FSB is now working with Marina Yannakoudakis MEP and the European Commission on a number of initiatives to highlight the barriers to female entrepreneurship.

FSB discusses CAP in Brussels

Representing some 2,000 farmers, the FSB is taking a keen interest in the 2013 review of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Recently Linda Walton, Chairman of the FSB's Rural Affairs and Tourism Committee was in Brussels to set out the FSB's position on the CAP and how we would like to see the CAP benefit smaller and more diversified farmers in the future. While in Brussels, Linda met with the European Commission, The United Kingdom Representation, MEPs and the Brussels office of the National Farmers Union.



ESBA named “European Trade Association of the Year”

FSB continue to fight for self-employed lorry drivers

Earlier this year MEPs voted to regulate the working time of self-employed lorry drivers. This is not the outcome that the FSB had campaigned for. However we are not giving up the fight! We have had a [letter](#) published in the press signed by over 100 MEPs and business leaders. Most recently, we delivered a similar [letter](#) to Henrik Hololei, Head of the Cabinet of Commissioner Kallas, this letter was signed by MEPs and business leaders from across the EU.



Tina Sommer delivering letter on the working time of self-employed lorry drivers to Henrik Hololei, Head of Cabinet for Commissioner Kallas

Letter from Brussels: Arlene McCarthy MEP

The Small Business Act was introduced across Europe in 2008. Two years on, Arlene McCarthy MEP explains why the governments of EU member states must think small first. [More](#)

More politicians back FSB campaign

Philip Davies MP has become the latest politician to sign up to the FSB's “Stop the Blockades” campaign. To find out more about the campaign and to sign our petition [click here](#).

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