

SME7, under UK's Presidency of the G7, sets out agenda for small business, crafts, and the global recovery

Representatives of the leading small business and craft organisations from across the G7 met on 20 May to discuss mutual priorities and challenges facing their small business communities. Participants agreed to share our conclusions with the G7 Presidency ahead of the Summit on 11-13 June 2021.

Leading small business and craft organisations from across the G7 agreed on the need for collective action to:

Place small businesses at the heart of economic recovery plans. Small businesses across the globe are the bedrock of our economies, driving growth and creating jobs. They have been severely impacted by the economic effects of the coronavirus pandemic. As Governments look to drive the recovery and improve economic resilience, small businesses must be top of mind.

Support small businesses on their journeys to reduce carbon emissions. Small businesses are committed to playing their part in the transition to a low carbon economy and often lead the way in developing innovative approaches to reducing their climate impact and integrating sustainability into business practice.

- Environmental policies should empower and enable smaller businesses to play their part in the transition to a low carbon economy. This includes providing smaller businesses the necessary support to make the changes needed to reduce carbon emissions in ways that are appropriate for them, taking into account their investment capacity.

Address the digital divide. Small businesses are leaders in embracing the opportunities provided by e-commerce and new digital tools to reach new markets, improve efficiency, and grow. However compared to large organisations, which have greater resources and infrastructure, they often face significant barriers, such as limited access to data and to training. The digital transition has been accelerated by the coronavirus pandemic. We encourage the G7 Governments to take measures to enable smaller businesses to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the digital economy.

- Policy initiatives should focus on increasing cooperation around emerging technologies and enabling small businesses to invest in digital technology. They should also seek to level the playing field for all businesses, whether on the high street or online. This should include measures to ensure access to data and the fair taxation of businesses of all sizes that operate in the digital economy.

Champion a small business-friendly international trading framework. Over 90% of the world's businesses are smaller businesses. Nevertheless, smaller businesses are under-represented in the share of international trade, as they often do not have the resources to access other markets as large organisations do. Now is the time to place smaller businesses at the heart of global trade in the future.

- G7 efforts should include acknowledging the importance of smaller businesses for international trade; driving and further expanding initiatives that help smaller businesses access global markets; modernising and streamlining trade procedures and processes, including at the WTO; and making international trade agreements accessible to smaller firms.

Smaller firms are at the heart of our economies and communities. They will be key to global recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. We look forward to engaging with the G7 Governments to tackle these challenges collectively.



Organisations: CFIB (Canada), SMEUnited (EU), CMA France (France), CPME (France), ZDH (Germany), CNA (Italy), Confartigianato (Italy), Confcommercio (Italy), BCCJ (Japan), FSB (UK), BAB (USA & UK)