

Crafts and SMEs call for VET systems better aligned with labour markets needs

Brussels, 9/11/2020 – SMEunited reiterates its call for ambitious policies, investments and actions for modern, flexible and excellent Vocational Education and Training (VET) systems, at the occasion of the European Vocational Skills Week (9-13 November).

“SMEs are continuously confronted with a **lack of skilled staff**. We should guarantee that vocational training delivers on the skills needs of our Crafts and SMEs”, stated SMEunited President Alban Maggiar. “The best way to do so is by work-based learning. Accordingly, apprenticeship should be promoted for young people to acquire the adequate basis.”

“For a successful digital and green transition, we need to ensure that our graduates have the right skills to enter the job market and that our workforce is upskilled or reskilled” he adds. “More concretely, SMEunited emphasises that **initial and continuous VET** must become more digital and fit for the future. This is possible when teachers and trainers are properly prepared to deliver digital learning”, explains A. Maggiar.

“Crafts and SMEs require **concrete support and incentives** to invest in upskilling and reskilling of their workforce. There is a growing need to cope with rapidly digitalising labour markets prompted by the COVID-19 crisis and the green economy” insists A. Maggiar.

In addition, SMEunited underlines that the skills needs of Crafts and SMEs can be better assessed by **involving stakeholders at local and regional level** (e.g. SME organisations, Crafts Chambers, sectoral social partners, companies, VET providers). Social partners play a key role to update VET curricula and better align learning outcomes with new labour market needs.

Finally, President Maggiar highlights “it is key to offer upskilling and reskilling opportunities **to entrepreneurs**, as they will lead their companies in the twin transition.”

“Robust skills will make the difference in the future. The new European Skills package and the Osnabrück Declaration are the tools to **translate objectives into actions** in the years to come. We will have to work together to reach these targets, in a strong partnership at all levels” concludes Mr Maggiar.

Read more in our Position Papers: [European Skills Agenda](#), [VET Recommendation](#)

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EDITORS' NOTES: SMEunited is the association of Crafts and SMEs in Europe with 65-member organisations from over 30 European countries. SMEunited represents national cross-sectoral Craft and SME federations, European SME branch organisations and associate members. Combined, we represent more than 12 million enterprises with around 55 million employees across Europe. SMEunited is a recognised employers' organisation and European Social Partner. SMEunited was formerly known as UEAPME. www.SMEunited.eu | Twitter: @SMEunited