



# Speeding up the recovery

## Conclusions of the General Assembly – 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021

The economic impact of COVID-19 resulted in an unprecedented economic recession with a tremendous decrease in economic activities and significant income losses. This is especially the case for self-employed, SME owners and their employees. Progress in vaccination and a good European coordination with the implementation of the EU covid certificate will allow the economy to recover.

The recovery must contribute to remodel our economy in light of the green and digital transition. Policy measures must strengthen the capacity of SMEs to innovate and invest and must avoid new regulatory burden to allow for a successful recovery and transition.

Therefore, entrepreneurs from around Europe, gathered in the SMEUnited General Assembly, call to speed up the recovery by ensuring access to finance, investments in skills and infrastructure and facilitating entrepreneurship. In addition, SMEUnited asks for a business friendly environment, which allows SMEs to tackle the challenges ahead and to contribute to the twin transition:

- **Recovery:** The National Recovery and Resilience Plans have to include the **necessary reforms** to improve investment attractiveness, the quality of public services and the efficiency of administrations. A strong **Single Market** is a precondition for a swift recovery and a successful transition. Moreover, innovative tools included in the Industrial and the SME Strategy should facilitate the creation of businesses opportunities and jobs. The Recovery and Resilience Facility, other European Programmes and prompt payments should provide the required **financial resources for viable SMEs** to recover, to innovate and to invest. Moreover, banks require the right regulatory framework to continue financing SMEs. In addition, insolvency legislation must provide business owners with a real and swift **second chance**.
- **Green transition:** The “**Fit for 55 Package**” has to provide an enabling regulatory environment for the green transition which ensures competitiveness, a level playing field, predictability for investors and encourages innovation. The green transition must be gradual, fair and inclusive for SMEs.
- **Skills:** Finding **skilled workers** continues to be a challenge throughout the recovery. Life-long learning and continuous training are key factors to increase the employability of people all along their careers and the competitiveness of companies. Various ways to organise life-long learning are best designed and implemented at national, regional and/or sectoral level **in close cooperation with social partners**.
- **Fairness** when it comes to relations with platforms and access to data as well as (digital) taxation systems is crucial for the growth of SMEs and future oriented business developments.
- **Smart regulation** is a precondition for SMEs to thrive. SMEs are concerned that new regulatory burdens will hold back the recovery and hinder an effective transition to a green and digital economy. The bureaucratic burden of every proposal should be analysed systematically, making use of the SME test and the One-in-One-Out principle.

**It is time to move from words to action.** The ambitious European goals are made reality on the ground by SMEs. Crafts & SMEs are the heart of Europe, we must provide them with the appropriate framework and give them the chance and resources to put these objectives into practice.