



Bundesministerium
für Wirtschaft
und Energie

Sigmar Gabriel

Bundesminister für Wirtschaft und Energie
Mitglied des Deutschen Bundestages



MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉCONOMIE, DE L'INDUSTRIE ET DU NUMÉRIQUE

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Josè Manuel Soria López

Il Ministro de Industria, Energía y Turismo

Reinhold Mitterlehner

Minister für Wissenschaft,
Forschung und Wirtschaft

Federica Guidi

Il Ministro dello Sviluppo Economico

26 May 2015

Ms
Elzbieta Bienkowska
Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry,
Entrepreneurship and SMEs
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels
BELGIUM

Copy to:

Mr
Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President of the European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels
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Mr
Jyrki Katainen
Vice-President of the European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels
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Dear Commissioner Bienkowska,

Small and medium-sized enterprises, which represent 99 % of businesses and employ 2 in every 3 employees, are and will continue to be the backbone of the European economy. Nevertheless, while SMEs have surpassed their pre-crisis level, the conditions of their development remain challenging, which makes a European targeted policy framework all the more necessary.

In order to successfully pursue their activities, SMEs need a business environment that provides sufficient access to financing, notably in the venture-capital field, new markets, a skilled workforce and aims at cutting red tape. Furthermore, it is important to motivate people to become entrepreneurs and turn their business ideas into innovative products and services which keep competition alive.

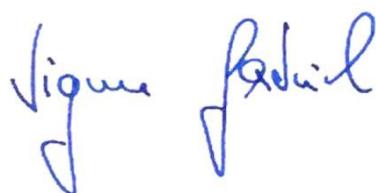
The Small Business Act (SBA) ensures a suitable framework for a business-friendly environment of this kind that takes into account the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises across all sectors, based on the principle of “think small first”. Since 2008, the SBA has provided the foundations for making “think small first” the guiding principle across all policy areas. While this process is well-advanced in some areas, there are others where this is less so. We therefore consider it crucial to strengthen European SME policy and to create a new momentum by further developing the SBA – a step that we feel would accomplish a great deal.

During the course of last year, many proposals regarding the further development of the SBA were sent to the Commission by relevant stakeholders, notably through the SME Envoys network. In particular, the unprecedented number of responses received by the European Commission further to its public consultation on the future of European SME policy underlines the stakeholders’ strong support for further action in favour of SMEs in areas such as reduction of the administrative burden, access to finance, access to markets and skills development. These responses now need to be swiftly fed into a new Communication on the SBA 2.0 in order to raise the profile of the “think small first” principle.

It is with concern, however, that we have seen that the SBA 2.0 no longer seems to be on the Commission's list of priorities – e. g. it was not included in the Commission's work programme for 2015. In our view, the absence of a commitment from the Commission regarding any future steps concerning the SBA sends out the wrong message and disappoints expectations when SMEs are at a pivotal moment.

We therefore call upon you to work towards keeping SMEs visible on the European agenda and towards extending the SBA in order to embed the “think small first” principle more efficiently in European and national public policies. It is in all of our interests to create the right environment for dynamic, competitive and innovative SMEs to thrive. If we fail to create such an environment, European businesses will not be able to reap the benefits of a return to sustainable growth and to keep up with their competitors on global markets.

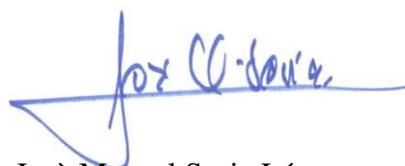
Yours sincerely,



Sigmar Gabriel



Emmanuel Macron



Josè Manuel Soria López



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Federica Guidi