



## SME2B Business Forum Europe 2024:

# Building a European Economy of Trust

**How Europe can enhance its Potential, regain Competitiveness and secure Freedom and Wealth: an SME- and Mid-caps-friendly Roadmap for 2024-2030**

**3 September 2024**

**h. 14:30-18:00**



**Place: ACE Events, Av. de Auderghem 22 - Brussels**

The last year and months of the outgoing von der Leyen Commission were signed by **worsening economic data**, particularly of the locomotives of Europe's Economy, i.e. Germany and France. Calls for **safeguarding our wealth** and **regaining competitiveness** became louder and louder, with **European Entrepreneurs CEA-PME** opening the dances in **June 2023** with its [Manifesto for a Realistic Industry Policy](#), then with [Europe Unlocked](#)'s call for more competitiveness in January 2024, on initiative of the Swedish Business Federation and involving many business organisations from Northern, Central and Eastern European countries and crucial economic sectors, and finally with the [Antwerp Declaration](#) launched by the big industry in February 2024. Yet slightly different among each other, they all **underline the urgency to set new priorities for the New European Commission Agenda** for the period 2024-2029, in particular for a **more business-friendly environment**, a **stronger and more effective Single Market**, **significantly less bureaucratic burden and reporting obligations**, **more free trade agreements** and in particular **lower energy prices**. Only in this way, the slow and inevitable **economic, social and political decline of Europe** would be able to be stopped and reverted.



But beyond former Commission President von der Leyen's pledge to reduce "bureaucratic burden by 25%", we have seen practically only **more legislation bearing reporting requirements** being approved right before the elections during the Belgian presidency (s. **CS3D, AI Act, EUDR**, etc.), and we did not see moves to offer better investment conditions to European companies.

The **European real economy**, which are mainly the **SME and Mid-Caps** represented by European Entrepreneurs CEA-PME, intends to **propose and discuss on 3 September 2024 in Brussels** during its annual SME2B Business Forum an **organic approach to necessary reforms**. The focus of such an organic approach would be to build a **European Economy of Trust**.

This Economy of Trust would mean, e.g.

1. **EU- and national lawmakers trust in SME and Mid-Caps** and their capacity to create added value with the highest efficiency possible without intended harm to the community;
2. **EU-Member States trust each other** and the common *acquis communautaire*, formulated and agreed upon together, allowing to recognise many national and regional procedures, certificates, titles and authorisations "**once only**" in the whole **European Single Market**;
3. **SME and Mid-Caps trust in the future of Europe** and in its **possibility to reach** – with the **least obligations** and at the **lowest costs possible**, and particularly with **growing economic output** – **ambitious climate goals** reducing further our **already very low contribution to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions** in the world's atmosphere.

If we want to **raise the level of trust** expressed in our legislation and procedures, we definitely need to reduce the level of excessive control, limits raised and obligations loaded on the back of companies. The backbone of Europe's economy otherwise risks to break. Europe shall not be anymore the **champion of regulation**, but the **champion of enabling economic and individual freedom**.

Only in this way we will allow the EU to reach its main goal of **safeguarding our wealth**, securing the necessary resources for our welfare state and for the green transition. And only in this way, we will reconquer the **trust of citizens and companies** into our common institutions.

The SME2B Business Forum Europe 2024 "**Building a European Economy of Trust**" organised by **European Entrepreneurs CEA-PME**, on 3 Sept. 2024 in Brussels intends to spell out what more trust means, how it can be achieved and in particular what company owners expect from the new Commission and Parliament in the next 5 years.

## **Tuesday, 3 Sept. 2024**

h 14:30 Registration of participants, welcome coffee

h 15:00 **Opening Addresses / Keynotes**

**Mr. Christoph Ahlhaus**, President European Entrepreneurs CEA-PME and Executive Chairman of Der Mittelstand.BVMW e.V. (D)

**Mr. Enrico Letta**, President of Jacques Delors Institute, Author of the "*Much More than a Market*" Report 2024 about the European Single Market (Video Message)

**Mr. Hubert Gambs**, Deputy Director General of DG GROW



- h 15:30 **Launch of the Real Economy Working Groups of European Entrepreneurs CEA-PME** on Sustainable Growth, International Trade, Labour Shortage, Security & Defence Industry, and Digitalisation for SMEs  
*Moderator: Mr. Stefan Moritz, Secretary General, European Entrepreneurs CEA-PME*  
**Entrepreneurs** participating to the Working Groups:  
**Ms. Gabriela Hrbáčková**, CEO of Hofmann Wizard s.r.o., Board member of AMSP (CZ)  
**Mr. Peter Lieber**, CEO of Sparx Systems, President of ÖGV (A)  
**Mr. Bonifacio Garcia Porras**, Head of Unit SME Policy of DG GROW
- h 16:15 Coffee Break
- h 16:30 **A new Growth Agenda for Europe and the European Mittelstand: How to support the key driving forces guaranteeing Europe's wealth**  
*Moderator: Mr. Stefan Moritz, Secretary General, European Entrepreneurs CEA-PME*  
**Mr. Tomasz Zjawiony**, Director Industrial Development Agency JSC Poland, Vice-President European Entrepreneurs CEA-PME, President of CCI Katowice, Vice-President of Polish Chambers of Commerce and Industry  
**Mr. Kieran O'Keeffe**, Executive Director of Europe Unlocked  
**Mr. Stephan Blahut**, Treasurer of European Entrepreneurs CEA-PME, SecGen ÖGV (A)
- h 17:15 **Building Trust in International Relations: Broadening the EU-African SME Alliance with New signatories**  
**Mr. Cristian Camisa**, President of CONFAPI (I)  
**Ms. Hildegard Bentele**, Vice-Chair of the Committee on Development DEVE in the EP (CDU/EPP)  
**Mr. Kebour Ghenna**, CEO Pan-African Chamber of Commerce & Industry  
Adding new signatories to the EU-African SME Alliance, such as:  
- Mr. Pol Deturk - Ondernemers voor Ondernemers (B)  
- Mr. Godfried Nelson Agyemang - SME and Start-up Centres Ghana (GH)  
- Ms. Ayele Sikavi Gabiam - Lady Agri Impact Investment Hub (B)  
- Ms. Tiekie Barnard - Shared Value Africa Initiative / Shift Impact (ZA)  
- Mr. Tomasz Zjawiony - CCI Katowice (PL)  
- Mr. Sebastiano Toffarelli - European Digital SME Alliance (B)  
- Mr. Peter Lieber - Österreichischer Gewerbeverein ÖGV / Austrian Business Association (A)  
*Moderator: Ms. Giorgia Morossi, Operations Manager, European Entrepreneurs CEA-PME*
- h 18:00 End of the SME2B Business Forum Europe 2024
- h 19:00 – h 22:30 **SME Summer Party 2024 at [La Bouche à Oreille](#)**