

EU Open for Business – A New Compass for SMEs

26-28 May 2021



#EUOpen4Business

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Wednesday 26 May

10:00 - 11:15

Opening session: EU Open for business – helping SMEs find their right path

Are you looking to develop your business in a changing world? Wondering how the EU can help SMEs adapt, recover and succeed? Join our high-level experts to get an overview of EU programmes and advisory support on matters such as access to markets, partners and finance. You will also learn about the New Industrial Strategy of the EU and the EU's SME Strategy for a sustainable and digital Europe that will help SMEs make the twin transition towards a more sustainable and digital future. And last but not least, you will hear about the results of the EUO4B campaign.

Moderator:

- **André Meyer**, Policy officer - SME Policy co-ordination, European Commission

André Meyer is responsible for the SME Envoy Network and outreach coordination for SME policy since 2012. He joined the Commission in 1997 and worked in railway liberalisation, antitrust and merger control. From 2008 to 2012 he was responsible for the High Level Group for the reduction of administrative burden, the so-called 'Stoiber Group'.

André is a telecommunication technician by training and holds a law degree from the University of Salzburg, Austria.

Speakers:

- **Martine Diss**, Deputy Head of Unit – Promoting compliance, Single Market Enforcement, European Commission

Until March 2021, Martine was the Deputy Head of the unit responsible for Communication within Directorate General GROW. She covered in particular the EU Open for Business campaign that run from 2015 to 2020 in all EU Member States. She worked most of her career in the field of support to SMEs being in charge of both political and operational issues.

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- **Crispin Waymouth**, Policy officer - Industry Forum, Alliances and Clusters, European Commission

Since March 2021, Crispin has been the Deputy Head of Unit for the “Industrial forum, alliances, clusters” unit within the European Commission’s Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, bringing together a number of alliances, networks, events and financial programmes to support companies at all stages of their growth and to help them partner most effectively with each other, including the Enterprise Europe Network. This builds on four years covering the EEN as Deputy for SME Internationalisation and experience leading the Commission’s 2016 Start-up and Scale-up Initiative. Before this, Crispin has held a number of positions in the public and private sectors in Brussels, Washington, DC and London, including a large number of years covering EU, US and global financial market regulation.

- **Birgit Weidel**, Head of Unit, SMEs Unit, European Commission

Since June 2018, Birgit Weidel is heading the unit responsible for promoting the competitiveness of SMEs and designing SME support policies in DG GROW. Birgit joined the Commission in 2004. She has extensive experience in the internal market for goods and industrial policy. Before joining the SME unit, she served as Deputy Head of Unit in the advanced engineering industries, dealing with standardisation, digitalisation and trade negotiations. Previously, she worked as assistant professor at the Vienna University of Economics, where she conducted research on the external economic relations of the EU. Birgit holds a law degree from the University of Vienna as well as a master degree in European Community law from the College of Europe in Bruges.

- **Nicola-Elizabeth Morris**, Policy officer- Industry Forum, Alliances and Clusters, European Commission

Nicola Morris is a policy officer for Directorate General GROW of the European Commission, dealing in particular with strategy and governance of the Enterprise Europe Network.

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11:30 - 12:30

Webinar 1: Doing business in the EU – you have questions, we have answers!

Doing business in the EU or starting a business of your own is sometimes complicated and the rules can be complex. If you feel lost, join our webinar and learn about three EU tools that can help you today. You will learn about the 'Your Europe portal' where you can find relevant and reliable information about doing business in Europe. We will introduce you to 'Your Europe Advice', a service which provides free legal advice, and we will explain how 'SOLVIT' can help you find solutions when another EU country does not apply EU law correctly.

Moderator & Speaker:

- **Cristina Gimenez-Estol**, SOLVIT team member - project officer, European Commission

Cristina Giménez-Estol is an efficiency expert specialised in network's interactions and customer relations. Since 2011, she is member of the European Commission SOLVIT management team focusing on revising business processes and using expert's networks to ensure that Member States' authorities correctly apply EU law.

Speakers:

- **Patrick McCarthy**, Your Europe portal team leader, European Commission

Joined the European Commission as a translator in 2005. Responsible for the team running Your Europe, a multilingual portal with practical information for citizens and business (33 million visits in 2020).

- **Moritz Röttinger**, Manager of Your Europe Advice, European Commission

Moritz Röttinger is a lawyer specialized in EU law. With more than 27 years of experience in the European Commission, he has been the responsible manager for the Your Europe Advice service since 2010. Before he was working in the areas of EU enterprise policy, commerce and distribution and business-related services. Your Europe Advice is a free of charge advice service for citizens and businesses about personal EU rights. It exists since 1996, operates in all 24 official EU languages and replies to about 35.000 enquiries every year. Legal experts provide replies within a couple of days, max. one week.

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Webinar 2: EU financial support for SMEs – what is currently available?

Small and medium-sized enterprises play a crucial role when it comes to turning Europe into a digital and sustainable economy. But they have been hit particularly hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. How does the EU financially support SMEs to overcome the crisis and master the twin transition? Speakers from the European Commission and the European Investment Fund will present the EU's current and future financial instruments and programmes: COSME Loan Guarantee Facility and Equity Facility for Growth, InnovFin, the European Innovation Council, the InvestEU Portal, the Pan-European Guarantee Fund and the new InvestEU Programme.

Moderator & Speaker:

- **Hilda Juhász**, Policy officer, Access to finance, European Commission

Hilda Juhász is a policy officer in charge of stakeholder relations and communications in the Commission's Directorate General GROW. The unit she works for focuses particularly on access to finance, financial instruments and alternative financing.

Speakers:

- **Armando Melone**, Policy officer, Access to finance, European Commission

Armando Melone is a policy officer at the European Commission's Directorate General GROW, in the unit responsible for access to finance. Since 2011, he is in charge of designing policy measures and financial instruments aimed at improving SMEs' access to capital markets-based financing.

- **Lorena Androutsou**, Programme management agent, InvestEU Portal, European Commission

Lorena Androutsou (PhD) is working for the European Commission's Directorate General ECFIN - InvestEU governance and advisory, supporting the InvestEU programme implementation. She is dealing with the project management at the InvestEU Portal / European Investment Project Portal (EIPP).

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- **Katerina Borunska**, Policy officer, EIC Fund and R&I investments, European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA)

Katerina Borunska works in the newly established European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency on the development of financial instruments for innovative companies, including start-ups and SMEs. In particular, she is involved with InnovFin, the EU Finance for Innovators programme, including its advisory services and the future InvestEU Programme. Her unit is responsible for the European Innovation Council Accelerator.

- **Christa Karis**, Departmental Director – EIG-Head of Strategy and Business Support, European Investment Fund

Christa Karis is since February 2018 Departmental Director at the European Investment Fund, in charge of Strategy Coordination and Business Support in the Equity Investment and Guarantees Department. Before, she was in charge of Corporate Relations and Communications at EIF and had the key responsibility of maintaining and furthering corporate relations with, among others, EIF's financial institution shareholders, other IFIs and with industry associations of relevance to EIF.

Please note:

In light of the pandemic, the programme may be subject to changes.