

# How to support the internationalisation of SMEs and microenterprises

## Press release

14<sup>th</sup> October 2016

The European Parliament's Policy Department A: Economic and Scientific Policy organised a workshop on "How to support the internationalisation of SMEs and microenterprises" for the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE). The workshop was chaired by Mr Paul Rübig MEP and took place in the European Parliament, Brussels on 12<sup>th</sup> October.

The workshop's objective was to open the debate on the barriers, challenges and opportunities for European SMEs serving markets outside the Internal Market, and EU instruments supporting them in this endeavour.

The workshop consisted of a series of 7 presentations by external experts from the European Commission, academia, business associations and SMEs. The first three presentations covered the following issues in particular:

- The **main challenges, barriers and drivers in SME internationalisation**. This included consideration of the extent to which *challenges* such as access to innovation finance or underdeveloped international business networks, and regulatory barriers, but also the *drivers* such as integration into global value chains vary depending on company size and industry.
- Speakers stressed the importance of business networks in industry clusters to pool resources and devise strategies for entering new markets outside Europe. It was suggested that the public sector link up with industry associations to support the creation of such networks. The integration into global value chains and the difference between participation as an importer and as an exporter was also highlighted. Moreover, the link between innovation and internationalisation was explored.

The second set of presentations focused on:

- The **implementation and effectiveness of the different EU support instruments** within scope in promoting SME internationalisation, such as COSME and Horizon 2020 and the participation rate of SMEs in these programmes.
- **Challenges to encouraging SME participation** in different EU support instruments, such as levels of awareness, and administrative hurdles in applying for different EU funding programmes.
- One arising conclusion is that existing measures add value but need to be made more coherent and accessible, for example by setting up a common web portal to help increase SME participation.

The outcome of the discussions will feed into the EU's strategy on SME internationalisation and contribute to more targeted and effective EU support to SMEs in this regard. A more detailed report summarising the outcome of the discussions will follow shortly.