 

**WORKSHOP / ROUND TABLE**

***“Migration, refugee policy response***

***and their implications on SMEs and entrepreneurship, jobs and growth”***

**Brussels, June 13th 2017 –**

**The European SMEs Academy Avignon in partnership with the Economic and Social Committee,** promote a Workshop/Round Table with representative of European and National SMEs organizations from Italy, Germany, Austria, Spain, Greece, Civil Society Organizations and EU Social Partners, Foundations and National and Regional Authorities.

**The meeting will be opened by the President of the European Economic and Social Committee, Mr. Georges Dassis followed by an opening speech of the President of SMEs Academy Avignon Mr. Panagiotis Gkofas and CNA V. President Mr. Giuseppe Oliviero *(Italian National Confederation SMEs and Craft).***

**The objective of the workshop - round Table with EU and International Institutions, is to *increase and raise awareness on how to strengthen collaborations among Social Partners, Civil Society, Academic and research networks. Through the interactive dialogue among the participants, several issues and practices will be discussed: partnerships/platforms and SMEs practices, pilot programs, sector specific studies and reports in view of more comprehensive EU observatory reporting on entrepreneurship, migration and interconnected refugee policy responses.***

***An overview of available business and social data/ trends will be reported from CNA- IDOS Report 2016 (Joint Research Report on migration and SMEs): emerging obstacles and possible solutions specific to migrant entrepreneurship, sector skills and competences .***

**SME Academy Avignon was established by UEAPME and some of its member organisations (CNA, GSEVEE)** to act as a think tank and scientific body to help Craft and SME associations in their policy work as well as create a network of researchers, Foundations and public/private actors working on strategic challenges(trade & standards, consumption models and global value chains, digitization and innovation, demographic changes, sustainability, smart regulation and social dumping and others) relevant for SMEs bridging with EU Civil Society Organizations and Social Partners.

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| PRESS RELEASE |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE |

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:**

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**BACkGROUND INFORMATION**

In the last decades immigrants proved to be a driving force for the European entrepreneurship. They started-up a growing number of businesses (at even higher rates than natives) and gave rise to new sectors by stimulating demand.

Even during the current economic downturn in Europe immigrant entrepreneurs have continued to create new businesses and jobs –during both the favorable periods and the more problematic ones –, thus becoming a counter-balancing factor enabling stabilization.

In 2015 immigrant entrepreneurs in the EU-28 were 2,085,300, with an average increase of 52.6% over the course of 10 years (more than 700,000 in absolute numbers) and accounting for 6.3% of the total of 32,931,100 self-employed workers in the EU-28. They are divided in 1,099,900 EU and 985,400 non EU-citizens,

In Italy, for example, immigrants-owned businesses became a wide spread social phenomenon since 1998 and in December 31 2015, according to Unioncamere, there were 6,057,647 enterprises officially registered and 9.1% of them (550,717) were immigrant-owned enterprises.

Such a growing and strengthening entrepreneurship could represent a bridge of union between Italy or Europe and the immigrants’ countries of origin, thanks to both remittances (which contribute to the well-being of their families) and the creation of businesses in the countries of origin themselves (mainly consisting of commercial exchanges of Italian goods).

A third opportunity is that origin countries can become, as often it actually happens, market for EU goods and services, whose international trade is favored by foreign entrepreneurs active in EU.



**EUROPEAN SMEs ACADEMY AVIGNON**

The strategic objective of Avignon Academy for SMEs and craft is to promote research and training activities in order to strengthen the representation of SMEs organizations and the development conditions of SMEs with the support of Academic network and independent Foundations, to improve the capacity of SME organizations as “bridge maker” EU/International with Civil Society Organizations, to increase the participation in the social dialogue and least development regions at EU and international level, in the globalization processes that affect SMES organizations and to upgrade their capacities and competencies in order to promote a multi-level role of European SMEs organizations by development and international institutions.

* EU Research and development impact on micro, craft & SMEs, innovation transfer to SMEs organizations in multiple competitive sectors of the EU micro and craft;
* Improvement of participation of SMEs in the use of Structural Funds;
* Improvement of the participation of SMEs towards the change of sustainable development;
* Trade and internationalization, development of the private sector in third markets;
* Internal Market EU acquis enforcement and cross border cooperation within EU Cohesion Policies;
* Partners search and Education and Training the trainers programs, EU scientific community programs in the energy efficiency and energy services, green economy and related employment programs for micro, craft & SMEs organizations and multiple sectors of specialization;
* Social and economic dialogue training programmes for interested micro, craft & SMEs organizations and CSOs;
* Dissemination and information EU/International campaigns in collaboration with other EU actors;
* Other relevant areas of common interest and/or on request of the Parties.