

Transatlantic Economic Council

EU-U.S. Workshop on Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)

Washington, DC

December 3-4, 2012

The Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC), reaffirmed at its last meeting in November 2011 its commitment to pursue the on-going collaboration on ways to increase trade and investment opportunities for U.S. and EU Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

As part of this cooperation, this week, the European Commission's Trade and Enterprise Directorates, together with the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR), the Department of Commerce (DOC), and the Small Business Administration (SBA) organized the Transatlantic Economic Council's 4th EU-US workshop on SMEs. This two-day workshop brought together over 90 participants, including U.S. and EU government officials as well as representatives of small business from both sides of the Atlantic.

At the meeting, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on promoting cooperation between the business support networks Enterprise Europe Network and International Trade Administration was signed. This MoU grew out of the TEC US-EU SME workshops that began in 2011 and follows on from the objectives described in the Letter of Intent signed by European Commission Vice-President Antonio Tajani and Acting Secretary of Commerce Blank in May 2012. It outlines specific areas for cooperation including the promotion of SME events and business partnering activities, participation in sectoral or thematic seminars and the exchange of information on SME networking opportunities.

In addition to the MoU, participants also addressed other policies to support SMEs, in particular:

1. Crowd funding promising in improving access to finance: Financing new investments is a challenge of SMEs on both sides. Crowd-funding is increasingly used for start-up company funding, inventions development and scientific research. Discussions on crowd-funding highlighted the importance of this new development regarding access to finance for start-ups and SMEs in general. Participants underlined that a legal framework around some forms of crowd-funding like provision of equity and lending would be necessary and further exchanges of information between the US and EU authorities would be beneficial in that sense.

2. Improved information on standards for products on the other side of the Atlantic: Both sides are exploring the option of a web-based one stop shop, which would inform about relevant standards for market access to certain product groups, entering either the U.S. or the EU market following the successful EU China standard web portal [CESIP](#).

3. Options for reinforced co-operation on intellectual property rights (IPR) were also discussed.

4. Discussions highlighted existing programs promoting entrepreneurship to incite more Europeans and Americans to become their own boss, in particular those targeting **youth and women SMEs**.

5. Policies to promote SMEs by providing them a joint infrastructure (ICT, research, financing and IPR) in regional and sectoral **clusters** were discussed, such as by the European Cluster Collaboration Platform. .

To conclude the workshop, a roundtable with SMEs and business associations was organised to exchange on how to further develop the transatlantic market place and the role of EU-US cooperation on SMEs internationalisation. In this context the signed Memorandum of Understanding on closer cooperation between the Enterprise Europe Network and the Department of Commerce International Trade Administration has a great potential to play.

More information about the EU-US trade relationship and TEC can be found in DG Trade's website, by clicking [here](#).

DG Enterprise "going global" information can be found [here](#).

Background - Scale of EU/U.S. commercial and investment transatlantic contacts:

On both sides of the Atlantic, SMEs account for much more than 90 percent of the total number of businesses. The similarities are striking in contribution to innovation, turnover and employment (2/3 of new employment in the U.S. in the last 15 years generated by SMEs).

- In goods and services: EU and U.S. are mutually the **biggest trading partners** with more than 650 billion euros of annual trade, or 1.8 billion euros per day.
- The **EU goods exported to the U.S.** are about three times higher than those to China and seven times more than to Japan.
- The **overall investments in stocks are above 2 trillion euros**.
- **15 million jobs** are linked to the transatlantic economy.
- Total **U.S. investments in the EU are three times higher than in all of Asia** while EU investment in the U.S. is eight times higher than our investment in India and China together.