



OECD Eurasia
Competitiveness Programme

DRAFT AGENDA

SME POLICY INDEX
EASTERN PARTNER COUNTRIES
2016

**Assessing the Implementation of
the Small Business Act for Europe**

Launch event

24 November 2015
16.00-17.30
Room CC4

OECD Conference Centre
Paris, France



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LAUNCH OF THE SME POLICY INDEX: EASTERN PARTNER COUNTRIES 2016 ASSESSING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SMALL BUSINESS ACT FOR EUROPE

■ OVERVIEW

The OECD, the European Commission, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the European Training Foundation (ETF) are organising together a launch event for the **SME Policy Index: Eastern Partner Countries 2016 – Assessing the Implementation of the Small Business Act for Europe**. The meeting will take place on **24 November 2015 from 16.00 to 17.30** at the OECD headquarters. The purpose of the launch event is to present the findings of the Small Business Act for Europe Assessment and discuss key developments and remaining challenges for the business environment – particularly, for SMEs – in EaP countries.

■ WHAT IS THE SBA ASSESSMENT?

The assessment monitors the progress in the implementation of the ten principles of the **Small Business Act for Europe** and measures convergence towards EU practices and standards. The SBA principles are designed to create a level-playing field for SMEs and to foster entrepreneurship and competitiveness.

The SBA Assessment provides policymakers with a detailed overview of SME policy performance and recommends improvements within each policy area. Moreover, it identifies strengths and weaknesses in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and support programmes, while comparing country progress to previous assessments.

In 2014-2015, the assessment was carried out for the second time in the Eastern Partnership region, following an initial assessment in 2012, which resulted in the publication of the **SME Policy Index: Eastern Partner Countries 2012**.

■ WHAT IS THE SME POLICY INDEX?

The SME Policy Index is a benchmarking tool for emerging economies to monitor and evaluate progress in policies that support small and medium-sized enterprises. The Index has been developed by the OECD in a joint effort with the European Commission, the EBRD and ETF in 2006 and applied to four regions in 32 economies (Western Balkans and Turkey, Eastern Europe and South Caucasus, North-Africa and the Middle East, Southeast Asia).

The SME Policy Index methodology has been revised in 2014 to better capture the intensity, quality and effect of policy, to provide more in-depth policy recommendations and to allow for international comparison.

■ WHO WILL PARTICIPATE?

The launch event for the **SME Policy Index: Eastern Partner countries 2016** will bring together representatives from the OECD, the European Commission, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and European Training Foundation (ETF) as well as key policy stakeholders from the EaP countries.

SME POLICY INDEX: EASTERN PARTNER COUNTRIES 2016
ASSESSING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SMALL BUSINESS ACT FOR EUROPE

Chair: Mr. Douglas Frantz, Deputy Secretary-General, OECD

16.00-16.20 Opening remarks

- Mr. **Douglas Frantz**, Deputy Secretary-General, OECD
- Mr. **Pierre Delsaux**, Deputy Director-General, DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, European Commission
- Mr. **Philippe Le Houérou**, Vice President, Policy and Partnerships, EBRD
- Mr. **Xavier Matheu de Cortada**, Head of Thematic Policy Unit, European Training Foundation

16.20-16.30 Key findings of the SME Policy Index: Eastern Partner countries 2016

- Mr. **Daniel Quadbeck**, Project Manager, OECD Eurasia Competitiveness Programme

16.30-17.10 Comments from Eastern Partner countries and OECD countries

High-level representatives from the six Eastern Partner countries and the OECD are invited to comment on the key findings of the report and share their views on the way forward for advancing SME policy development.

Tour de table of Eastern Partner countries (in alphabetical order):

- **Ms. Gayane Gevorgyan**, Deputy Head, SME Development Department, Ministry of Economy of Armenia
- **Mr. Natig Heydarov**, Lead Adviser, Ministry of Economy and Industry of Azerbaijan
- **Ms. Irina Kostevich**, Deputy Minister of Economy of Belarus
- **Ms. Irma Kavtaradze**, Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia
- **Ms. Lilia Palii**, State Secretary, Ministry of Economy of Moldova
- **Ms. Yulia Klymenko**, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine

Comments from OECD countries:

- **H.E. Mr. Jakub Wisniewski**, Ambassador of Poland to the OECD
- **H.E. Ms. Annika Markovic**, Ambassador of Sweden to the OECD

17.10-17.25 Open discussion

Open discussion of the main findings of the SME Policy Index 2016

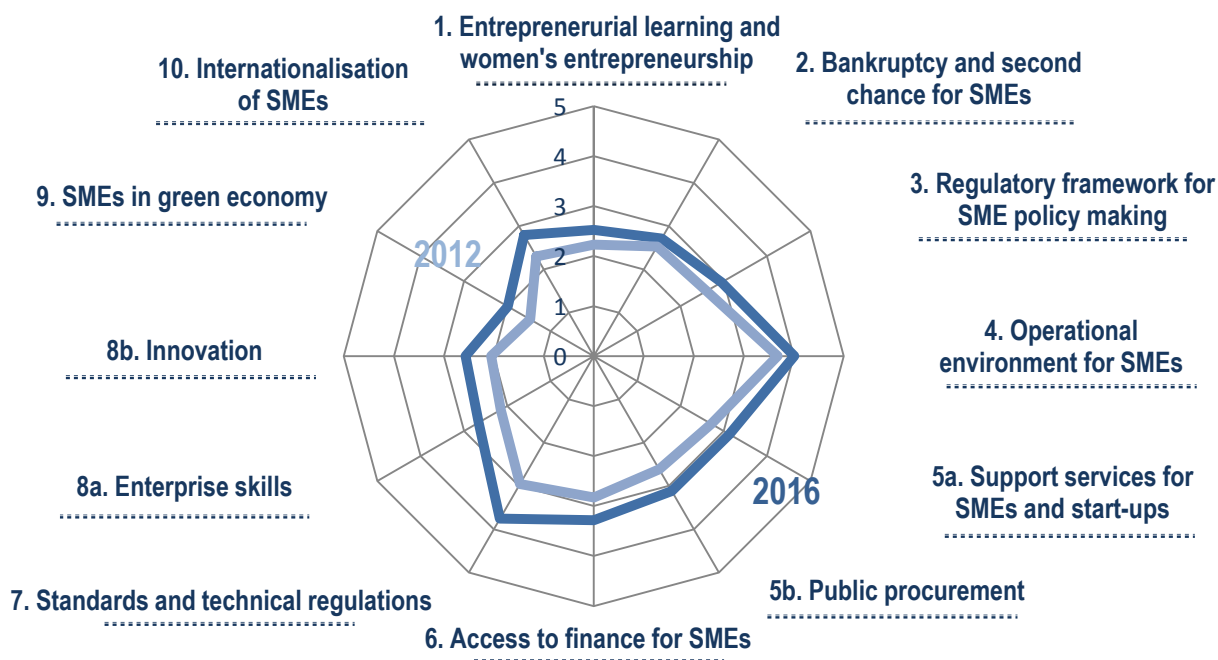
17.25-17.30 Conclusion by the Chair

SME POLICY INDEX: EASTERN PARTNER COUNTRIES 2016

ASSESSING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SMALL BUSINESS ACT FOR EUROPE

1

SBA RESULTS FOR EASTERN PARTNER COUNTRIES



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KEY MESSAGES

- Horizontal business environment reforms continue to be the area of strongest performance.** Most EaP countries have built a solid track-record in the design and implementation of business and investment climate reforms benefiting all enterprises regardless of their size, including simplification of business-related legislation, streamlining of technical barriers to trade and upgrading of quality infrastructure, and improvement of the legal and regulatory environment in the financial sector.
- Governments are paying growing attention to developing institutional frameworks for SME development.** There is an overall trend towards the introduction of the basic blocks of a strategic framework for SME support, including developing an SME strategy (e.g. Georgia and Moldova), improving the definition of SMEs (e.g. Ukraine, Azerbaijan) and establishing an SME support agency (e.g. Georgia).
- Targeted SME policy tools are required to further support SME growth across the region.** Most EaP countries have introduced new programmes to enhance SME competitiveness, including through support services for SMEs and start-ups (e.g. training programmes), specific instruments to encourage SME access to finance (e.g. credit guarantee mechanism, start-up finance), entrepreneurial learning and women's entrepreneurship initiatives (e.g. events for female entrepreneurs) and export promotion (e.g. export agency).

a. Strengthening the institutional, regulatory and operational environment for SMEs

- Build on progress in developing comprehensive medium-term SME strategies and, as fiscal resources permit, set up autonomous implementation agencies.
- Collect and disseminate better statistical data to support policy making.
- Bring regulatory impact assessment methodologies in line with international standards.
- Institutionalise public-private consultation mechanisms across the region.

b. Facilitating SME access to finance

- Address the current decline in lending to SMEs.
- Work toward a regulatory framework that facilitates banks' access to longer term and local currency funding and promote competition in the banking sector to encourage banks to offer more competitive rates and reach out to new segments.
- Support viable alternatives to bank financing by putting in place adequate legal frameworks for the provision of non-bank financial products and services.
- Promote financial literacy among the public and build financial management and business planning skills among small business owners.

c. Promoting skills and entrepreneurship development

- Integrate entrepreneurship into the national curriculum.
- Connect women's entrepreneurship more tightly with countries' growth agendas.
- Improve SME skills upgrading programmes, training needs analysis and quality assurance measures.

d. Enhancing SME competitiveness

- Make public SME support mechanisms more effective and better tailored to the needs of different SME segments and do more to promote the emergence of private markets for business support services.
- Adapt public procurement frameworks to promote SMEs' access to this important market.
- Broaden innovation policy beyond ICT, emphasising non-technological innovation and commercialisation.

e. Supporting SME internationalisation

- Step up export promotion and support by adding more sophisticated products (e.g. market intelligence and training), building capacity in export promotion agencies and increasing access to working capital.
- Continue aligning technical and quality standards with international and EU rules, supported by capacity building and outreach.
- Be more proactive in promoting the integration of SMEs into global value chains, such as by facilitating links between FDI and SMEs.