

SME Europe's Economic Leadership Forum
Coordinating and Leading the Economic and Political Debate
29 April 2025 | 09:00 – 13:00 | Registration 08:45 | with Catering
Building Feria Valencia | Room 2H | EPP Congress, Valencia

In Cooperation with  and 
 group in the european committee of the regions

AGENDA

09:00 Working Smarter Together: Strategic Exchange for Better Coordination and Communication

Welcome & Opening

- **Jörgen Warborn MEP**
President of SME Europe, Co-Chair SME Circle

Opening Statements

- **Marion Walsmann MEP** – *Co-Chair of SME Circle, Board Member of SME Europe*
- **Sari Rautio Member CoR** – *President, EPP Group in the Committee of the Regions (EPP-CoR)*

Presentation: A Systematic Approach to EPP Economic Policy

- **Markus Pieper (MEP 2004 – 2024)** – *Board Member of SME Europe*
- **Horst Heitz** – *Secretary General of SME Europe*

Debate With:

- Representatives of SME Europe Board, SME Circle Members, EPP-CoR Group Members, other EPP Representatives
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9:50 Group Picture / Coffee Break

10:00 Working Panels

Q&A With:

- Representatives of SME Europe Board, SME Circle Members, EPP-CoR Group Members, other EPP Representatives and Business Representatives
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10:00

Panel I – An Update: Cutting Red Tape & Stopping Bureaucracy in the EU

Speakers

- **Jürgen Warborn MEP** – *Rapporteur for the First Omnibus Simplification Package*
- **Aura Salla MEP** – *Vice President of SME Europe, Co-Chair SME Intergoup*
- **William Elofsson** – *Vice-Mayor of Gävle, Rapporteur on the Clean Industrial Deal, EPP-CoR Group Member*

10:40

Inaugural Keynote for the European Commission by Henna Virkkunen – *Executive Vice-President for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy*

10:50 Panel II – Staying a Global Champion: Research, Innovation, Start-Ups, Digitalization & AI, Green Transition

Key Themes: Research, Innovation, Digital Transformation, and AI, Green Transition, Global Competition/Trade

Panel Hosts:

- **Niels Flemming Hansen MEP** – *Vice President of SME Europe, Co-Chair SME Circle, Co-Chair SME Intergoup*
- **Marion Walsmann MEP** – *Chair of SME Circle, Board Member of SME Europe*

Speakers:

- **Henna Virkkunen** – *Executive Vice-President for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy*
- **Ekaterina Zaharieva** – *Commissioner for Startups, Research, and Innovation*

11:30

Panel III – Strengthening Europe's Position in Security and Economic Stability

Key Themes: EU Security Strategy, Economic Stability, Geopolitical and Hybrid Threats, Cybersecurity, The Mediterranean as a Strategic Region, Illegal Migration / Internal Security

Panel Hosts:

- **Riho Terras MEP** – *Vice President of SME Europe, Chair of SME Europe Defence Group*
- **Sunčana Glavak MEP** – *Vice President of SME Europe*

Speakers:

- **Andrius Kubilius** – *Commissioner for Defence and Space*
- **Magnus Brunner** – *Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration (TBC)*

11:55

Panel IV – Europe at a Crossroads: Adjusting to Global Trade volatility

Key Themes: Global Trade Order, Strategic Trade Realignment, Strategic Dependencies, Economic Sovereignty & Resilience, Geopolitical Tensions & Trade Fragmentation, Trade War, Global Trade Regime, Supply Chains, Tariffs, USA & China

Speakers:

- **Iuliu Winkler MEP** – *First Vice President of SME Europe*
- **Angelika Winzig MEP** – *Vice President of SME Europe*

12:15

Reflecting Interventions Speeches from the Business Sectors

12:50

Conclusion and Closing

- **Jürgen Warborn MEP** – *President of SME Europe, Co-Chair SME Circle*
- **Marion Walsmann MEP** – *Chair of SME Circle, Board Member of SME Europe*
- **Pehr Granfalk** – *Member of the Municipal Council, Solna, Political Coordinator of the ECON commission, EPP-CoR Group Member*

Lead Moderator Horst Heitz – *Secretary General of SME Europe*

13:00 End

Background & Outlook

At the EPP Congress, SME Europe is launching a **strategic platform in strategic cooperation with the SME Circle and the EPP CoR Group** to shape and lead the economic policy debate. This event will establish a long-term forum for European and national stakeholders to strengthen coordination, policy alignment, and communication, ensuring the EPP's leadership in economic matters.

As part of this initiative, SME Europe will organize an annual high-level forum, fostering structured dialogue, policy development, and strategic coordination. This will reinforce the EPP's proactive role in shaping the economic and political landscape of Europe.

Join us in building a forward-looking strategy that cements the EPP's leadership in economic policy and strengthens its global influence.

Curious about SME Europe? Come see us at the EPP Congress or connect with us online – website, LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook!



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