



"How to support businesses in the digital age – SMEs go digital"

Extraordinary meeting of the Employers' Group Bureau

Panellist bios



Devin BICER

Advisor for Economic Policy, Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ)

Mr Bicer studied in Austria, the US, the UK and France. He holds a master's degree in European economic policies from Sciences Po Paris as well as a bachelor's degree from the Vienna University of Economics and Business. To date, he has worked at the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (UEAPME) and has undertaken traineeships at the European Commission and the United Nations. Currently, Mr Bicer works in the Economic Policy Department of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, dealing with European economic policies and future trends.



Alfred FREUNDLINGER

Deputy Head of the Department for Education Policy, Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ)

Mr Freundlinger studied technical physics, pedagogy, journalism and communication sciences in Vienna where he obtained a doctorate. Following this, he pursued an academic career working at the Institute for Research on Qualifications and Training of the Austrian Economy (ibw) and as a lecturer in vocational education at the University of Vienna. Since 2001, he has been working for the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, where he advises on apprentice training. Since 2014, he has been deputy head of the Department for Education Policy.



Violeta JELIĆ

President of the Single Market Observatory, European Economic and Social Committee

Ms Jelić has been general secretary of the Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts since 2012. She is in charge of organising and coordinating the Chamber's system and bodies, cooperating with state authorities and government bodies, chambers in the country and abroad, and international institutions and associations. She manages the work of the Office of the President and the Chamber Office. Since 2013 Ms. Jelić has been a member of the EESC Employers' Group (ECO, INT and NAT sections) and since 2015 she is Vice-president of the EESC Employers' Group.



Jacek KRAWCZYK

President of the Employers' Group, European Economic and Social Committee

Vice-president of Confederation Lewiatan, the largest organisation of private sector employers in Poland. Between 2010 and 2013 he served as Vice-president of the EESC with responsibility for the budget. Former CEO of several banks and companies listed on the Warsaw Stock Exchange. Former chairman of supervisory boards of companies from various branches of the economy: IT, transportation, insurance and aviation. As well as holding a law degree from the University of Warsaw, Mr Krawczyk is also a graduate of the HEC in Paris and INSEAD in Fontainebleau and an Eisenhower Fellow.



Predrag NIKOLIĆ

Advisor to the President of the Serbian Chamber of Industry and Commerce

Mr Nikolić graduated with a master's degree from the faculty of management at the Emory Business School in Atlanta, USA. He has held leading positions in various sectors, including pharmaceuticals, credit insurance and a music label. Since 2015, Mr Nikolić has been the advisor to the president of the Serbian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. In 2018, he became the head of the Center for Digital Transformation Ltd. He is responsible for developing and implementing new digital chamber services and focuses on process knowledge systems (PKS).



Ulrike RABMER-KOLLER

Vice-President of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber and President of the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (UEAPME)

Ms Rabmer-Koller holds a master's degree in business administration from the Johannes Kepler University in Linz, Austria. She is the owner and general manager of "Rabmer Group", a family business and SME operating internationally and active in the area of construction and environmental technology. Since 2015, Ms Rabmer-Koller has been vice-president of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber. Furthermore, she was re-elected in 2017 as president of UEAPME, the European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises. Since 2018, she has been a member of the European Commission's High Level Roundtable on "Industry 2030".



Alma-Joy RIDDERHOF

Programme Manager at the European Commission - DG CNECT

Ms Ridderhof works in the eGovernment and Trust unit of DG CONNECT. She is currently working on the implementation of the eIDAS regulation on electronic identification and trust services, particularly in the private sector. Previously, she worked for the European Commission on data policy and for the Dutch government on the implementation of the eIDAS regulation.



Christian RUPP

Special Representative for Digitisation, Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ)

Since 1994, Mr Rupp has held various high-level positions in the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, the Austrian federal government and the Institute for Economic Promotion. Among other things, he was responsible for eGovernment during his time as federal executive secretary of the federal Austrian government and he was deputy director for communication and marketing at the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber. Furthermore, he is an international expert on digitisation strategies, advising, for instance, the European Commission and the UN, and is a member of a number of scientific advisory boards, e.g. the Bertelsmann Foundation. In addition, Mr Rupp gives university lectures on digital transformation and new public management, as well as on new media and information technology management. Currently, he is head of the SME Digital initiative and spokesperson for the federal platform, Digital Austria. Furthermore, he is the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber's plenipotentiary for digitisation.



Melina SCHNEIDER

Head of Taskforce on Internationalisation of VET (Vocational education and training), Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ)

Ms Schneider studied international business administration in Vienna and Madrid and participated in the European Voluntary Service in France. From 2009 to 2013, Ms Schneider worked as a policy adviser on education and innovation policy at the Austrian Permanent Representation to the EU in Brussels. From 2014 to 2017, she was responsible for European and international affairs and innovation policy in her capacity as a cabinet member of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy. Since October 2017, Ms Schneider has been head of the taskforce on the "Internationalisation of VET and skilled workforce" at the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber in Vienna.



Christa SCHWENG

President of the Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship, European Economic and Social Committee

Ms Schweng is a member of the EESC since 1998 and is the current president of the Section for Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship (SOC). Since 1994, Ms Schweng is a senior advisor to the Social Policy Department of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber. Since 1995, she is a member of the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health at work and of the Governing Board of the Bilbao Agency, where she is the employers' spokesperson. She is also a member of UEAPMEs' Social Affairs Committee. Between 2013 and 2015 she was president of the Labour Market Observatory. She obtained a masters in Law studies at the University of Vienna.