

newsletter



A message from the President

Dear ETPOA members,

It is my great pleasure to introduce the first **ETPOA newsletter** to you. Thank you to the many people who have contributed to the first edition. The idea is to publish it twice a year, before each General Assembly, to inform you of what we have been up to, what we are planning and to provide relevant information. Some recurring sections will be EU matters, new members' corner, interview with a Commission official and news.

We are happy to welcome ACCIÓ, the regional Spanish TPO for Catalonia, and Spirit Slovenia as our latest members. We are now **25 members in total** in the ETPOA family.

We are going through very uncertain times. The **Coronavirus crisis** has brought the vulnerability of human life to the forefront. I hope that all of you, your colleagues and your family are safe, but as we are a big family, I realise that there must be people among you who have lost someone close. If so, my heart goes out to you.

The coronavirus crisis has also been a hot topic of discussion in ETPOA. Our TPOCC Chair, Philippe Yvergniaux, took the initiative to launch an **ETPOA COVID-19 survey** on the impact of the coronavirus crisis on our organisations and the companies. The results are now available in this newsletter. The Board decided to open the survey to non-member national TPOs, so we can get an even broader view to share with external organisations, such as the Commission. Thank you, Philippe, for sparking this interesting initiative. A follow-up survey is in the works.

In the beginning of this year, we saw the startup of the new **Agrifood Promotion Committee** or **APC** for short. They elected a new Chair: Declan Coppinger from the Irish Bord Bia.

In October, the mandates of the current **Board and Head of Secretariat** will come to an end and we will organise elections for all these roles before the fall General Assembly.

We welcome your feedback to the first newsletter and look forward to learning what you liked and what we can improve on.

I look forward to seeing you, in person or virtually, during the Spring General Assembly this June.

Tonia Van de Vyver



President

Welcome a new member

ACCIÓ

 **Generalitat de Catalunya**
Government of Catalonia



Joan Romero,
CEO

ACCIÓ is the Agency for Business Competitiveness in Catalonia. Our different programmes promote internationalisation and innovation to 24,000 companies annually.

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Interview

with the EU Institutions



Interview with Giacomo Mattinò, Head of SME Internationalisation Unit, DG GROW



Brussels, May 2020

Interview conducted by:
Andrea Maccanico, EUIDC Chair, Italian Trade Agency

The European Commission launched the [Enterprise Europe Network](#) in 2008 building on the experience of the EU Info Centres and the Innovation Relay Centre Networks. It is co-financed under the European Union's [programme for the competitiveness](#) of SMEs (COSME).

We connect businesses to key strategic sectors and help Catalan companies and startups to boost their competitiveness. Our [network of 40 Trade and Investment Offices](#), covering more than 100 markets worldwide, promote the expansion of Catalan companies into new markets and the identification of global business opportunities. We also attract foreign investment by assisting international companies to connect and tap into the competitive advantages that Catalonia and Barcelona provide.

We decided to join ETPOA to interact with other countries and regions, share and learn about best practices amongst the leading TPOs, and exchange knowledge and collaboration opportunities. ACCIÓ has always had a collaborative approach in its many areas, and has also been an active member in international networks and associations. In fact, we were a founding member of the Regional Trade Promotion Organisations' Association.

We have a long-standing involvement with EU projects – we are currently engaged in 15 projects, in six of which in a coordinator role. We are also an active partner of the Europe Enterprise Network. In the area of Internationalisation we are currently involved in the projects RaiSE, INNCAT20-21, CATCIM20-21 and DRIVE INML. We will soon start a Poctefa project with Andorra, the Basque Country and France, with the goal of identifying and defining specific services for Internationalisation Hidden Champions. We have also participated in International public procurement projects and we actively look for new opportunities.

We believe in the value of partnering in trade promotion. ETPOA provides a platform for direct dialogue with the EU and for a shared voice in matters of common interest, with the goal of improving competitiveness and social wellbeing through international trade.

The EEN helps SMEs innovate and grow on an international scale and represents the world's largest support network for SMEs with international ambitions. It is active in over 60 countries worldwide, bringing together over 3,000 experts from more than 600 member organisations – all renowned for their excellence in business support. They offer personalised services to businesses, know their local business environment and have business contacts worldwide.

Network member organisations are selected through calls for proposals. Calls (See [closed calls for EU and neighbouring countries](#) and [open call for non-EU countries](#)) for EU and neighbouring countries eligible for COSME funding are closed for the current contractual period (2015-20). Organisations in non-EU countries can apply on a self-financing basis.

One best practice worth highlighting, as promoted by the EEN, is to offer local companies all of the services under one roof: from innovation to competitiveness and internationalisation. This has been implemented in some countries, with ETPOA Belgian members Flanders Investment & Trade and hub.brussels – who are also EEN members – as an example.

The **SMEs Internationalisation Unit** is managed by **Giacomo Mattinò** and ETPOA had the chance to discuss the COVID-19 crisis with him.

How are you going to organise the EEN crisis response in the following months? Have you already introduced mechanisms to face the crisis and directly support SMEs?

First, some general remarks to put things in perspective: we are building largely on existing EEN strengths and operating in the broader context of EC/DG GROW actions in support of businesses. These, as you know, can be grouped into two action plans: 1) actions to face the immediate emergency and, 2) actions for the exit and recovery phase (see also the Commission Communication on a European Roadmap towards lifting COVID-19 containment measures).

We are largely building on existing ongoing actions by EEN members and avoiding introducing unnecessary new layers of duties to EEN member organisations who are already working at local/regional/national levels. Basically, we are – with EASME – upscaling the recognized role of EEN in partnering, and ensuring that COVID-related files are prioritised and fast-tracked. There is a special role for EEN Sector Groups, in particular the Healthcare Group. We are also looking at adding a dedicated COVID option in the Partnership Opportunities Database.

The EEN launched the ‘Care & Industry together against CORONA’ platform, bringing together actors in healthcare, industry, academia and government in Europe to gather and showcase initiatives in various EU regions and share knowledge and best practices. It offers a marketplace to match offers and requests for products, services, partnerships, project cooperation and investment. EEN partners are ready to help identify potential partners, support SMEs and all actors to provide reliable proposals for cooperation.

We are also ensuring that EEN members get the information they need through a dedicated COVID-19 Network response Intranet page, and a dedicated Forum for EEN members for exchange of best practices and experiences. This includes links with official pages summarizing EU actions on COVID-19. We do not support SMEs financially, but rather the EEN is being fed information that can assist SMEs in tapping into EU dedicated actions (such as EIC for example).

ETPOA is measuring the crisis effect on TPO activities and SMEs, comparing emergency response in most MSs. Could you provide us some figures about the crisis effect on EEN and the DG GROW response mechanism that you have already imagined, or that you are going to introduce soon to help SMEs?

Our priority, as indicated above, is helping the EEN to best serve SMEs. As part of this, the Commission has put in place a comprehensive response mechanism for the exit strategy, as outlined in the reference Commission documents. These include, among others, ensuring the free movement of products, safety of supplies for COVID-response materials, public procurement measures... I cannot name all, it is quite a long list and it is best to look at DG GROW’s website. We are also putting in place a rapid alert mechanism to inform us of any disruptions to supply chains.

What is the role for coordination between MSs and DG GROW/EEN? What do you think would help most in managing the present crisis and developing a joint recovery strategy?

I can only give a personal opinion here but – as very often happens – what would help most is keeping each other informed and looking at how we can complement the work of each other. That means constant conversation rather than specific new measures.

Are you working on a post-Coronavirus recovery strategy for EEN? When will it be finished? Could you share some of the main points?

Our companies need a recovery, not the EEN! What we want to ensure is that the EEN plays as big a role as possible. In our recovery strategy, the EEN has a precise role together with other EU-wide business support networks. Therefore, we are concentrating right now on the EEN helping with the rapid alert function. Beyond that, we believe that the key elements already identified in our recent SME strategy: promoting the transition to sustainability and digitalisation and tapping the benefits of free trade, will be essential to the recovery. We are doing a lot of work with EEN experts to develop new sustainability advisors and other sustainability services.

What role do you see for ETPOA in providing ideas and/or practical support to the Commission?

On internationalisation, since I believe this would be of most interest to you, the Commission has adopted a Communication on the Global EU response to COVID-19, building on the idea that this crisis must be resolved at a global level.

The documents refer to supporting the private sector – in particular small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the self-employed – through guarantees, liquidity measures and technical assistance. The documents also include initiatives such as reaching out to EU businesses in partner countries to assess the possibilities of converting production lines in certain industrial sectors – such as the textile, automotive, cosmetics or detergents industries – to produce personal protective equipment, ventilators, soap and hand sanitizers and cleaners.

To achieve this, we are activating existing business networks, such as the European Business Organisation Worldwide Network and the EEN. ETPOA could be of help in each of these efforts.

How EEN contributes to the success of the Hungarian Export Promotion Agency (HEPA)

Entering new markets is always a challenging process, particularly for the limited resources of SMEs. To fulfil its mission, [HEPA](#) is constantly trying to establish partnerships and participate in international programmes that support internationalisation of SMEs. It is the leader of the [Hungarian EEN consortium](#), an alliance of five regional Chambers of Commerce and two enterprise development associations with 10 offices nationwide that exchange regularly on their experience and share the feedback, needs and expectations from their local SMEs. Through cooperation, the opportunities for companies to find new business partners are multiplied and this is in line with our goal.



By **Balázs Hendrich, CEO**



“Making the entrance into foreign markets cheaper and faster for all national companies, regardless of size or location.”

The Network provides business development services free of charge thanks to the financial support of the European Commission:

- ★ Tailor made advisory services to enhance the internationalisation of SMEs (e.g. go-to-market strategy planning, business partner search, financial planning)
- ★ Innovation audit to help companies identify strengths and areas of development including international benchmark analysis with recommendations

The added value of EEN services can be seen across all levels of activity. During each first meeting with a new client, HEPA advisors prepare a roadmap adapted to the goals of the company:

- ★ Partner search from a database to help companies promote their products and services.
- ★ Additional B2B meetings organised in parallel with trade fairs based on the EEN event calendar.
- ★ Access to a global pool of experts in logistics, taxation, IPR etc. and information exchange.

“Our goal is to provide a one-stop shop while supporting the whole lifecycle of products and services. Many of our clients are regular guests at our events. If they take with them 1 or 2 useful tips or contacts, it makes sense to them to participate again.”

The Hungarian internal market is about 10 million people. However more than 400 million potential customers can be reached in the European market. With one exception, HEPA's foreign offices are all outside of Europe. HEPA relies on the EEN network to cover the European Single Market. This is a perfect way to optimise resources:

- ★ Just in the last year, the HEPA EEN team has contributed through 19 cooperation agreements.
- ★ 230 companies have benefited from one-on-one advisory services.
- ★ 790 international B2B meetings were set up for Hungarian SMEs.

ETPOA Meetings

March

- ★ Meeting with Esteban Pelayo, Director, EURADA
- ★ First meeting of the APC to select the new Chair
- ★ Discussion between the APC and Christina Gerstgrasser, Head of Unit B1, DG AGRI, and Varvara Bektasiadou, Unit B1, DG AGRI
- ★ Alignment Committee of ETPOA gathering the Chairs of the three ETPOA Committees
- ★ Meeting with Vladimir Zuberec, Unit A4, DG GROW
- ★ Meeting with Sara Lanzilotta, Deputy Secretary-General, EEIA
- ★ Conference call with Emmanuel Noutary, General Delegate, ANIMA Investment Network

April

- ★ Follow-up conference call with Emmanuel Noutary, General Delegate, ANIMA Investment Network
- ★ Follow-up conference call with Barbara Weizsaecker, Secretary-General, EEIA, and Sara Lanzilotta, Deputy Secretary-General, EEIA.

May

- ★ Conference call with Arnaldo Abruzzini, CEO, Eurochambres, and Dominic Boucsein, Head of International Trade and Foreign Policy, Eurochambres
- ★ Conference call with Luisa Santos, Deputy Director General, BusinessEurope, and Daniele Olivieri, Senior Adviser on Entrepreneurship and SMEs, BusinessEurope.

Upcoming Events

- ★ June 10th, Board of Directors
- ★ June 11th, General Assembly
- ★ June 25th-26th, Working Group of Information Professionals in Athens
- ★ May 27th-28th 2021, ETPO Conference in Athens

The Agri-food Promotion Committee

Agri-food Promotion Committee: Kick-starting activities in corona-times



By Tania Gesto Casás
Policy Manager at
AHDB, Member of the
Steering Committee of the APC

The youngest of ETPOA's committees, the Agri-food Promotion Committee (APC), started operations in January 2020. Little could we all know at that time what the world would look like after only six months.

While the Coronavirus pandemic has had an undeniable impact on the agri-food promotion sector and, indeed, all across the economy in Europe and beyond, the APC has taken its first steps to support its members and achieve its objectives for 2020. This primarily involves maintaining the exchange of information among members, focusing on identifying the key areas of common concern and encouraging engagement with the European Commission and other relevant stakeholders to be acknowledged as the voice of the sector.

The APC activities kicked off officially at the very beginning of March 2020, when members gathered in Brussels for a first meeting and the election of its official chair, Declan Coppinger (representing Bord Bia, the Irish Food Board). He is supported in his role by four Vice-Chairs, Jeroen De Vuyst (Flanders Investment & Trade) for Trade Fairs, Tania Gesto Casás (AHDB) for relations with the other ETPOA Committees, Christophe Monnier (Business France) for common actions with TPOCC and María Naranjo Crespo (ICEX) for DG Agri's European programmes for Agri-food promotion.

This meeting offered our members the opportunity to engage in a discussion with representatives from the Directorate General for Agriculture of the European Commission on the EU Promotion Programme and the early impact of the Coronavirus pandemic.

With one of the main issues of concern for our members being the cancellation of trade shows they were planning (and often contracted) to take part in, together with the difficulties to implement promotion activities that normally require travelling and face-to-face interaction, the APC has focused its initial actions on providing a common platform to exchange information and views on alternative ways of working in these challenging times.

As the situation keeps evolving, so will our actions, proving the value of cooperation at the European level for our ever-growing membership.

The Trade Promotion Collaboration Committee



COVID-19 SURVEY

April 2020, Brussels

In March 2020, ETPOA conducted a survey on the impact of COVID-19 on exhibition participations and on crisis management and recovery measures by European Trade Promotion Organisations (TPOs). In total, 28 organisations responded, including 21 national TPOs from Member States.

Exhibitions play an important role in foreign trade promotion, as most respondents organise pavilions for companies to join. Altogether, ETPOA survey participants combined had planned on organising a total of 1,283 pavilions in exhibitions in 2020. But at the time of the survey, 255 were cancelled and 307 were postponed, affecting around 9,000 European companies, mostly SMEs. Since then, this number has increased further.

The survey shows that TPOs had to switch to teleworking, adapt their services by moving towards digitalisation, and use AI in order to support their SME clients. The specific responses cited include:

- ★ Increase the use of tools like webinars and virtual B2B events.
- ★ Move services online, like digital business matching tools.
- ★ Create Coronavirus webpages, helplines and chatbot services.
- ★ Launch communication campaigns to inform clients of the support services provided.
- ★ Offer reduced prices or free access to otherwise paid services.
- ★ Extend new or increased grants, or expedite payment of grants.
- ★ Provide e-commerce training.
- ★ Assist producers and importers of COVID-related products.
- ★ Strengthen tailor-made support to SMEs.
- ★ Use multiple sources for data collection and analysis.

During the recovery period, they will continue to build on these new initiatives, based on the needs of exporters and in consultation with them. Many survey respondents said they favored taking more actions in key markets and were rethinking their exhibition participation strategy. Understanding newly emerging value chains was also cited as important.

All ETPOA survey respondents wish to work together on a European level to devise recovery measures and solutions, beyond the national and regional ones offered by local authorities.

The survey was conducted by Philippe Yvergnaux, TPOCC Chair, Director of International Cooperation at Business France.

An Overview of the European Green Deal

What is the European Green Deal?

A summary of the EU Green Deal made by
Elena Velasco López,
ICEX SPAIN EXPORT AND INVESTMENT



Climate change is currently a burning issue posing an existential threat on a global scale. Without drastic action, our future wellbeing will be at risk. The European Union is already taking measures to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Those measures are summarised in the [‘European Green Deal’](#). An inclusive plan of 50 concrete synergetic actions across diverse policy areas and economic sectors aimed at turning Europe into the first ‘climate neutral’ continent before 2050. The European Green Deal is an integral part of the European Commission’s strategy to meet the United Nation’s 2030 SDGs along with the priorities announced by the European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, in her [political guidelines](#).

Von der Leyen has characterised the effort as equal to putting “the first man on the moon,” given its significance towards a new sustainable growth model. The European Green Deal has also been described by Commission Executive Vice President Frans Timmermans as “a way to reduce emissions, re-establish the health of the environment, protect animal species, create new economic opportunities and ameliorate the overall quality of our citizens’ lives.”

The goals of the European Green Deal

The European Green Deal aims at making Europe the global leader in climate change transformation. With a clean and circular economy model with zero emissions as its main objective, all the necessary economic resources required will be provided to facilitate the transition of the economy, reduce emissions and protect biodiversity. The objectives have been divided into:

- ★ 2020 climate and energy package
- ★ 2030 climate and energy framework

The targets for 2020 (subject to national capacities) aimed at reducing greenhouse emissions by 20% (compared with 1990 levels), and achieving a 20% improvement in energy efficiency. The 2030 targets aim at further reducing greenhouse emissions, raising renewable energy resources and improving energy efficiency.

Specific goals, specific actions

The European Union is taking actions that can be divided into categories:

European governance

Through [Regulation \(EU\)2018/1999](#) on governance of the energy union and climate action, the European Commission reinforced a proper and adequate governance system to reduce administrative burdens along with monitoring and mandatory progress reports. Additionally, it is planning to open a Just Transition Fund of 100,000 million euros, recently updated to 400,000 million euros (link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/health/coronavirus-response/recovery-plan-europe_en) targeted mainly at regions most dependent on fossil fuels in order to facilitate their transition to clean energy production. It has also recently presented a new 'European Climate Law', a new 'Strategy on Biodiversity for 2030', a new Industrial Strategy, the Action Plan for Circular Economy and the Strategy for Sustainable Feeding.

National plans

Member States, with the support of the Commission, are required to adopt integrated national energy and climate plans ([NECPs](#)) for the current period 2021-2030. They are also expected to set up sustainable long-term strategies (regulated by EU/2018/1999) every 10 years and update them every 5 years.

International cooperation

International climate agreements ratification, like the UN climate convention (UNFCCC), multilateral cooperation initiatives and engagement of other non-EU countries in the process, are key. The Commission and the High Representative will mobilise diplomatic channels like the United Nations, the G7, G20, the World Trade Organization and other relevant international fora.

Actions taken by the EU

- ★ 'From Farm to Fork Proposal' aimed at a sustainable system of agriculture, a circular pattern of production, and promoting the reduction of chemical pesticides, fertilisers and antibiotics.
- ★ [European Climate Law](#), amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 turned all these initiatives into a legal obligation, basically turning the 2050 climate neutrality objective into legislation.
- ★ [Circular Economy Plan](#) was launched to promote the consumption of sustainable products that last.
- ★ The European Industrial Strategy, a new policy directed towards a green transition in the industrial sector, to make it climate neutral and digitalised. The Commission will review single market legislation to ensure it is fit for purpose, and propose actions to ensure consistent application on the ground and rigorous enforcement of existing rules.
- ★ The Biodiversity Strategy, focused on protecting the most endangered natural resources.

An Impact Assessment Plan will evaluate the effects of the already existing actions, a new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change, strategies for smart sector integration, proposal to support zero carbon steel-making processes, proposal for more stringent air pollutant emissions standards for combustion-engine vehicles, etc.

This will have to be complemented by new proposals for legislation such as a directive on energy taxation, on combined transport, on alternative fuels Infrastructure or legislation on batteries, sustainable alternative fuels and waste [reforms](#).

ETPOA Board of Directors

President: Tonia Van de Vyver (Flanders Investment & Trade)

Vice-President: Vasso Kyrkou (Enterprise Greece)

Board Member: Alberto Cerdán (ICEX)

Board Member: Erzsébet Nagy (Hungarian Export Promotion Agency)

Board Member: Philippe Yvergnaux (Business France)

Head of Secretariat: Christos Skouras (Enterprise Greece)



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