



# Promoting SME digitalisation in the Eastern Partner countries

## Regional Webinar

### Launch of EU4Business: From Policies to Action – Phase 2

#### Draft agenda

#### **Tuesday 18 May 2021**

*10:00 – 12:45 (GMT+2: France, Belgium, CET)*

*11:00 – 13:45 (GMT+3: Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine)*

*12:00 – 14:45 (GMT+4: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia)*

*12:30 – 15:45 (GMT+4:30: Afghanistan)*

*13:00 – 15:45 (GMT+5: Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan)*

*14:00 – 16:45 (GMT+6: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan)*

*16:00 – 18:45 (GMT+8: Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia)*

## ■ OBJECTIVE

This webinar will discuss the ways how the Eastern Partner countries can support the digital transformation of their small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Participants will exchange on the latest trends in SME digitalisation in the Eastern Partner countries, and how the adoption of new technologies should be matched by improved business processes and organisational set-ups to reap the full benefits of digitalisation. The panel discussions will touch upon avenues to support SME digital transformation through improved access to digital infrastructure, enhanced security and data protection, better access to digital technologies and stronger digitalisation skills. Senior policy makers from the Eastern Partner countries will share the latest efforts in promoting SME digitalisation and experts from OECD members will share their experience in designing and implementing policies and programmes promoting SME digitalisation.

## ■ CONTEXT

The Covid-19 crisis has given renewed urgency to efforts to support the digitalisation of SMEs, which has great potential to transform business models, and in doing so create new product and services, boost productivity and ultimately improve business performance. However, many SMEs lag behind larger firms in the digital transition as a result of important barriers with respect to skills, innovation, infrastructure, regulation and finance. They are often unaware of the opportunities to increase productivity and competitiveness, cannot clearly identify their digitalisation needs, and lack the financial means to embed digital tools in their operations. SMEs often fail to exploit the opportunities offered by e-commerce and their digital marketing activities lack professionalism and strategic planning. The SME digital gap slows productivity growth and increases inequalities among people, firms and places.

## ■ PARTICIPANTS

This webinar will bring together policy makers, experts involved in the design and implementation of policies that promote digital transformation of SMEs across OECD and the Eastern Partner countries. Other participants include representatives of the private sector as well as EU and OECD officials.

## ■ ABOUT THE PROJECT

The project is implemented within the framework of a multi-country project "*EU4Business: From Policies to Action – Phase 2*" in the Eastern Partnership with financial support from the European Union within the framework of the EU4Business initiative. The project is co-ordinated with the work programme of the Eastern Partnership Business Development Panel under Platform 2 on "Economic integration and convergence with EU policies". The project is co-financed by Poland.

## ■ TECHNICAL DETAILS

**Registration:** Advance registration is required. Please register [here](#).

**Access:** Please join the session 15 minutes prior to the start with the link provided following registration.

**Working Language:** English and Russian

## ■ CONTACTS

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**EU4Business**

This project is implemented with the financial support of the European Union within the EU4Business initiative. EU4Business is an EU initiative that helps SMEs in the six countries of the Eastern Partnership region to realise their full potential and boost economic growth.

## ■ DRAFT AGENDA

Please note that the timing of the agenda below is based on GMT+2 (Paris).

### 9:50-10:00 Online Access

Moderator: **William Tompson**, Head of Eurasia Division, OECD

### 10:00-10:15 Opening remarks

- **Andreas Schaal**, Director for Global Relations, OECD
- **Mathieu Bousquet**, Head of Unit NEAR C1, Neighbourhood East, European Commission
- **Konrad Pawlik**, Deputy Director of the Department of Economic Cooperation, Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

### 10:15-10:30 Keynote remarks

- **Nathan Furr**, Innovation and Strategy Professor at INSEAD Business School, France

### 10:30-11:30 SESSION I: Digital transformation for stronger, inclusive and more resilient economies

*Senior policy makers and experts will discuss the structural shifts caused by the digital transformation and how to help SMEs reap the benefits of digitalisation.*

Setting the scene: **Francesco Alfonso**, Economist, OECD Eurasia Division

#### Panellists:

- **Alexander Bornyakov**, Deputy Minister of Digital Transformation, Ukraine (tbc)
- **Mariam Lashkhi**, Member of Parliament, Education and Science Committee, Georgia
- **Hayk Aslanyan**, Advisor to the Minister of High-Tech Industry of Armenia
- **Anne Bioulac**, Vice President at Capgemini Invent
- **Dawid Solak**, Board member of the Platform of the Industry of the Future, Poland
- **David Gierten**, Economist, OECD Directorate for Science, Technology and Innovation

#### Questions and open discussion with participants

### 11:30-12:40 SESSION II: Promoting adoption of digital solutions and a digital culture by SMEs

*Panellists will discuss measures to promote adoption of digital technologies by SMEs through increased digital awareness and enhanced digital skills.*

Setting the scene: **Sandrine Kergroach**, Head of Unit, OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities

#### Panellists:

- **Orkhan Mammadov**, Chairman of SME Development Agency, Azerbaijan
- **Iulia Costin**, General Director, ODIMM, Republic of Moldova
- **Martin Lundborg**, Head of Research and Programmes, Mittelstand-Digital initiative of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy

- **Alina Paraiala**, Head of Digitalisation Initiatives Department, Digitalisation Authority of Romania
- **Edwin Liok**, Deputy Director, SMEs Go Digital, Singapore

*Private sector perspectives*

- **Karen Baghdasaryan**, Deputy General Director, Spayka LLC, Armenia
- **Viktor Podgaytskyi**, CEO and Co-Founder, Chisty Bereg, Belarus (TBC)
- **Jesus Lozano**, IT entrepreneur and senior expert on SME digitalisation

**Questions and open discussion with participants**

**12:40-12:45 Concluding remarks and next steps**

- **Daniel Quadbeck**, Head of Eastern Europe and South Caucasus Unit, Eurasia Division, OECD