

Second meeting of the Eastern Partnership Panel on Small and Medium size Enterprises Policy (Prague, 15/16 June 2011)

The second meeting of the EaP Panel on Small and Medium size Enterprises Policy (SME Panel) under the auspices of Platform 2 of the Eastern Partnership took place in Prague on 15/16 June 2011 in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. The meeting was organised back to back with an OECD Ministerial meeting on 17 June 2011 that was focussed on Enterprise and Competitiveness Policies for Eastern European and the South Caucasus countries. Commissioner for Enlargement and the European Neighbourhood Policy Stefan Füle delivered an opening address to the participants of the Ministerial meeting.

On 15 June, a combined OECD/EU Working Group was opened by a first roundtable discussion on the results of the self-assessments of the Partner Countries as regards the Eastern Partnership project on "Enterprise Policy Assessment" conducted by the European Commission, OECD, EBRD and the European Training Foundation (ETF). Presentations were given by representatives of the Polish Government and the Czech Chamber of Commerce.

The SME Panel meeting as such took place on 16 June and focussed on the area of access to finance. This topic was presented by various financial institutions such as the European Investment Fund, the EBRD and the Czech Moravian Guarantee and Development Bank. In the afternoon session, the Commission informed the Panel on the "Think Small First Principle" and the European Enterprise Network. The representative of the Armenia's Delegation gave a presentation on the experience of Armenia with this business network. Finally, Panel participants were informed by the Commission on the state of play of the SME Flagship Initiative.