



Elīna Egle

Chairwoman of the Board

**FORUM OF SMALL AND MEDIUM
ENTERPRISES OF LATVIA**

Forum of Small and Medium Enterprises of Latvia (SMEs Forum) represents over 200 SMEs and helps more than 4000 small businesses to grow uniting them in the initiative "Support Small Business" - national winner of European Enterprise Promotion Awards in 2014. SMEs Forum is empowered by European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises - UEAPME, which is social partner of European Commission, to use the full potential of EU single market.

During this project we witnessed that Latvia is not suffering from lack in research, especially not in fundamental research, but Latvia needs to transfer the results of its excellent research into innovation, which translates into sufficient competitiveness, growth and employment supported from SMEs.

Today Latvia makes stronger focus of the societal challenge and industrial leadership, SMEs would like to see also a more output oriented approach in the excellence of research. Even fundamental research should keep its potential contribution to the solution of societal needs and economic welfare in mind.

The policy and financial instruments for SMEs should be designed with understanding that SMEs grow by starting from the needs of our society and from market ideas, covering all steps in the innovation cycle from ideas to market application. We will share the knowledge of SMEs who have turned their R&D capabilities and partnerships in business success. Our future cooperation should cover the whole innovation cycle from the feasibility phase to market application and market introduction by using a demand driven and market- oriented approach.

Latvia is a kingdom of SMEs as only 0.47% of companies can be named as large sized and cradle of innovation is SMEs. The added value for the economy from SMEs is 74% which is above the average 67% in EU. Therefore SMEs Forum is looking positively to the new financial perspective, which can give significant drive to improve the competitiveness of Latvia's economy and to strengthen sustainable growth and job creation.

