

# **Access to Finance as Main Challenge for European SMEs. Can COSME Help between 2014-2020?**

**László Borbás**

Óbuda University Keleti Károly Faculty of Business and Management  
E-mail: borbas.laszlo@kgk.uni-obuda.hu

*Abstract: Lack of finance is one of the most important problems of SMEs all over Europe. Insufficient financial resources are barriers to the growth and employment in the SME sector and at the same time jeopardize governments efforts reaching EU targets. In EU documents this is highlighted for many years and focused in the 'Programme for Competitiveness of enterprises and SMEs (COSME) 2014-2020'. Current position of EU Member States concerning access to finance was analysed by Commission staff working document in 2011. By the help of these documents we shall give an overall picture about the above mentioned topic.*

*Keywords: competitiveness, COSME, access to finance, EU 2014-2020, SME policy*

## **1 Introduction**

“Access to finance has become an important challenge for many SMEs since the beginning of the financial and economic crisis, as SMEs have been particularly affected by tightening credit conditions. As a response to the financial and economic crisis, most Member States have adopted measures to enhance SMEs access to finance, especially bank lending, through advantageous subordinated loans, loan guarantee schemes or microcredit programmes”. (COM(2011)78)

“Member States also increasingly use parts of their EU Structural Funds to support SMEs' access to finance, including through financial instruments available under the 'Joint European Resources for Micro to Medium Enterprises' (JEREMIE) managed by the European Investment Fund. However, the use of financial instruments for SMEs could be further intensified, including in particular in the areas of innovation, business modernisation and energy efficiency.” (COM(2011) 0642 final)

## 2 Current position of SMEs concerning access to finance

Based on Commission staff working document: Member States' competitiveness and policies, below we summarize the position of SMEs from the view of their access to finance.

### 2.1 Western Europe

#### Germany

Funds were dedicated to providing SMEs with loans and guarantees have been significantly reinforced during the crisis. These loans and guarantee funds were supported through ERDF resources. The stimulus package "*Wirtschaftsfonds Deutschland*" was phased out at the end of 2010. Over 20 000 enterprises, in particular SMEs, have received credit funding or guarantees with a total amount of about EUR 14 billion.

In 2010 the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology launched a start-up initiative "*Gründerland Deutschland*" comprising a broad range of programmes and activities. The aim of this initiative is to raise awareness of entrepreneurship and self-employment, including among pupils, apprentices, students and adults..(SEC (2011) 1187 pp.73-74.)

#### France

According to the EU study, the volume of early financing is slightly below the EU average and SME access to credit remained easier than in many other Member States. In January 2011, one fourth of enterprises between 10 and 500 employees reported cash and financing problems. In 2009, 30 % of SMEs noticed a declining willingness of banks to provide loans and the cost of credit remained significantly higher (by 25 %) for small enterprises. Access to finance is reported to be especially difficult for very small enterprises, innovative SMEs and mid-term investment. Mutual guarantee schemes and stronger development of private finance (e.g. venture capital, private equity) are foreseen to improve SME access to finance. The „Investments for the Future“ programme in France allocates more than EUR 800 million to finance SME growth and competitive development. Other funds are available from the *Innovation Agency* (OSEO) and the *Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations*.(SEC (2011) 1187 pp.102-103.)

#### Italy

Commission staff working document evaluated the Italian situation as follows: „The financial structure of Italian SMEs, which are relative less capitalised than counterparts in other Member States, appears to be a factor limiting dimensional growth, as well as a higher reliance on short-term borrowing. Attempts these last few years at developing alternative, non-bank, financing options for companies

have been only partly successful and, for example, the Italian venture capital and private equity markets remain relatively underdeveloped compared to other EU countries despite the potential to promote firm growth and improve corporate governance

In 2010 the Italian Investment Fund (*Fondo italiano d'investimento*) was set up which intends to address weaknesses by providing risk capital (or "expansion capital") to promising SMEs with an income between EUR 10 and EUR 100 million. (SEC (2011) 1187 pp.109.)

#### Austria

The banking sector dominates the financial market in Austria, and bank loans prevail as the main source of financing for industry, says the Commission's working document, while relatively smaller stock market and venture capital (VC) industry do not generate sufficient availability of capital-raising alternatives. Total Austrian venture capital investments in 2009 were at 0.05 % of GDP, against the European average of 0.19 %. Government stabilised the banking sector during the financial crisis, the banks have restricted their lending policies in particular to SMEs. Financing and guarantee schemes using public funds are available The Austria Wirtschaftsservice acts as a fund of funds participating in high-tech innovative start-ups. For early-stage financing additional Venture Capital Initiatives were launched in 2010. The access to private non-banking financing should further be improved.(SEC (2011) 1187 pp.157.)

#### United Kingdom

The UK scores above the EU average in all the entrepreneurship and SMEs related indicators, but SMEs access to finance remains a significant issue for the UK stated the EU working document. The economic crisis has had long lasting effects on access to finance for SMEs, particularly for small firms. According to Bank of England credit conditions for small companies generally remain tight, both in terms of cost and availability The UK government put in place several measures to improve SME access to finance such as state sponsored investment vehicles and reaching an agreement with UK banks requiring them to increase their gross lending to SMEs.(SEC (2011) 1187 pp.212.)

#### Ireland

As a consequence of the economic and financial crisis there is widespread concern about both access to finance and credit costs. Many businesses are reluctant to apply for credit in the first place or are given informal advice to abstain from a credit application. A credit review system has been set up to ensure that SMEs, sole traders and farm enterprises will have recourse to an independent, external review of bank's credit refusal decisions. A new scheme is intended to complement existing lending activities by the main financial institutions. Its objective is to encourage banks to lend to new or expanding commercially viable SMEs so that they can grow their company, develop new products or expand into

new markets. In addition, a Microfinance Start-Up Fund to provide loans to small businesses is being developed in Ireland .(SEC (2011) 1187 pp.85.)

## 2.2 Scandinavia

### Denmark

New firms package was accepted with measures aiming at providing funding and easing financial constraints for start-ups and SMEs.

Accepted measures are as follows:

- a growth loan guarantee scheme of DKK 1.5 billion to small businesses with high growth potential;
- strengthening of the loan guarantees and counselling for new and micro enterprises;
- extension of an Export Credit Fund
- introduction of an SME guarantee,

With "Agreement of Denmark as a Growth Nation", it has been decided to provide an additional 600 million DKK to the loan guarantee scheme. "Seed 2.0" is targeted specifically to start-ups and new firms and provides seed and pre-seed loan of 500 million to be matched by private funding up to DKK 1.5 billion. To facilitate exports for SMEs, in the Agreement of Denmark as a Growth Nation, the Export Credit Fund has been extended to 2015.(SEC (2011) 1187 pp.67.)

### Finland

Innovative high-growth companies are considered to be as key issue.

Accepted measures:

- A new financing instrument for innovative companies was launched by the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation (Tekes) in 2008;
- The Vigo Start-up Accelerator for innovative fast growing companies was launched in 2009.
- Fund for Growth Funds: Joint fund of private pension insurance companies and Finnish Industry Investment Ltd (2008);
- Establishment of regional evaluation service of business ideas coming from private inventors (Foundation for Finnish Inventions, 2009);
- Growth Avenue: A joint “one stop shop” service for growth oriented-companies that have a clear strategy to internationalise of which there are five pilot projects testing whether to expand the service to national level.

Proposed policy measures in growth venture policy such as:

Possible introduction of an R&D tax incentive for all enterprises to increase the number of start-ups with great growth potential and to promote the innovation culture among SMEs.

- Measures to improve access to equity financing.(SEC (2011) 1187 pp.198.)

#### Sweden

According to EU working document, as the Swedish economy is coming out of the crisis, the previously existing credit rationing has been lifted and companies are increasingly having sufficient access to risk capital. Sweden has undertaken to implement the ten principles of the Small Business Act as well as a series of actions to improve the business environment of SMEs. (SEC (2011) 1187 pp.206.)

### 2.3 Benelux States

#### Belgium

Anti-crisis measures were put in place such as easier access to finance and the credit mediator. Concerning access to credits, in particular for SMEs, federal and regional governments have taken measures to reinforce the capital of SMEs and other structural or short-term measures:

- creation of a credit ombudsman,
- the export credit guarantee scheme Belgacap,
- steps to reduce public payment delays and a system for cash advancements on outstanding payments for SMEs.
- loan guarantee schemes in cooperation with banks
- new programmes to support and stimulate innovation for SMEs by means of subordinated low interest loans for innovative projects. (SEC (2011) 1187 pp.49-50.)

#### Netherlands

The Netherlands scores are above the EU average concerning the time required to start a business and early stage financing, but significantly below average concerning bank loan conditions deemed acceptable by companies and slightly below average concerning the share of high-growth enterprises. (SEC (2011) 1187 pp.150.)

#### Luxembourg

Globally, Luxembourg enjoys a good average performance in access to finance for SMEs, state aid and share of SMEs with intra-EU imports and exports. (SEC (2011) 1187 pp.132.)

### 2.4 Mediterranean countries

#### Greece

The government has redesigned its instruments for providing targeted financial support to the business sector for fostering investment. The national state aid scheme for investments is marking a departure from grants towards tax rebates, with the exception of the measures in support of new enterprises. Another new instrument is the National Fund for Entrepreneurship and Development which is financed by the EU Structural Funds (OP Entrepreneurship and Competitiveness) providing loans to enterprises, mainly SMEs.

JEREMIE co-financed by the EU Structural Funds, has launched three actions until 2011, targeting newly established enterprises, seed capital and ICT projects. (SEC (2011) 1187 pp.91-92.)

#### Spain

Access to credit is one of the main concerns of Spanish enterprises. During 2011. The Government is working to develop the non-traditional funding mechanisms, like venture capital and business angels, which is still underdeveloped compared to other major European economies. A new fund to support intermediary organisations of this type has been launched in 2010 with the aim of carrying studies, seminars and dissemination. A new Guarantee programme for Entrepreneurs has been created in 2011 with the aim of encouraging small business development. (SEC (2011) 1187 pp.97.)

#### Cyprus

Access to and the cost of credit are concerns for Cypriot SMEs. Two financial products were put in place, the Funded Risk Sharing instrument which offers micro-credits and the First Loss Guarantee Financial instrument which offers credit risk protection to the amount of 50 % by loan with the aim of facilitating the access of micro and small enterprises and start-ups to bank credit. Payment delays, both from the state to businesses but also in transactions between businesses constitute another source of complaint. (SEC (2011) 1187 pp.114.)

#### Malta

Timely access to micro-credit programmes such as Jeremie, to venture capital, as well as selected delayed payment practices by some government institutions are important issues in Malta. Some steps to alleviate the existing problems have been already undertaken. (SEC (2011) 1187 pp.143.)

#### Portugal

Important measures eased access to finance to SMEs. The majority of Portuguese firms are highly dependent on bank credit for funding. A series of credit lines targeted to specific sectors or exporting SMEs provided a large volume of credit to SMEs including micro-sized companies. Other significant measures easing liquidity and financing constraints for SMEs were also taken. E.g. reinforcement of the National Mutual Guarantee System and credit export insurance lines. (SEC (2011) 1187 pp.170.)

## 2.5 Baltic states

#### Estonia

According to the EU working document, access to finance is getting easier due to initiatives taken to facilitate the availability of credit and equity for enterprises. Some measures are still operating. Start-up financing and venture capital are available in Estonia, although the lack of interesting investment projects is seen as

a major bottleneck. In order to attract more capital and leverage the effect of public financing, Estonia could encourage a more extensive use of non-traditional funding mechanisms and financial instruments like JEREMIE or JESSICA of the Structural Funds. (SEC (2011) 1187 pp.79-80.)

#### Latvia

In order to improve the competitiveness of enterprises, the following instruments have already been made available:

- loans for increasing the competitiveness and growth,
  - individual credit guarantees,
  - venture capital,
- seed and start-up capital funds.

The government is in the process of creating one united Financial Development Institution of Latvia to provide entrepreneurs with a one-stop-shop facility. Access to finance still remains a priority.

Very few investments are made, access to finance is especially difficult for companies operating in the domestic market. Export-oriented companies are considered to have more opportunities to secure financing. (SEC (2011) 1187 pp.121.)

#### Lithuania

Measures to support SMEs include access to finance, business internationalisation, and shifting priorities towards exporting enterprises in granting financing.

In order to actively improve SMEs' access to finance, ten instruments have been introduced between 2009 and 2011. These tools use EU structural funds, but the uptake of some of the instruments is still slow. (SEC (2011) 1187 pp.127-128.)

## **2.6. Central Europe**

#### Czech Republic

The national scheme of guarantees for SMEs expired in 2010 together with other temporary measures supporting businesses but no evaluation of their efficiency has been made available.

Financial instrument focusing on early stage financing is still missing, while the Operational Programme Enterprise and Innovations includes a commitment to implement a pilot project of the venture capital. The concept of the venture capital fund co-funded from the Operational Programme Enterprise and Innovations was finalised by the Ministry of Industry and Trade. (SEC (2011) 1187 pp.61-62.)

#### Hungary

To address challenges Hungary initiated several actions. The New Széchenyi Plan has identified new investment priorities in development and support policy. A more efficient support system, which allocates the EU sources, provides new tenders for SMEs. The simplification of the tendering system encourages enterprises to apply for non-refundable sources. Due to these steps the number of grant contracts increased payments has doubled in 2011. The Széchenyi Card programme has been extended, which provides preferential loans for SMEs, creating better financial conditions for SMEs. The role of non-banking funding mechanisms, like seed capital, business angels and venture capital is lagging behind that of other European economies. EUR 700 million under the JEREMIE Holding Fund have been available until 2011, but it has not had a sufficient leveraging effect. The allocation plan has been modified aiming at leveraging more additional private funds than before. Combinations of non-repayable grants with revolving instruments have been introduced under the heading of JEREMIE. (SEC (2011) 1187 pp.138.)

#### Poland

To stimulate innovation, access to the so called 'technology credit was simplified encouraging catch-up innovation, but its effects are not monitored. Innovation in SMEs needs to be effectively supported by measures improving the innovation environment.

As EU policy paper says, SMEs in Poland do not have yet access to public procurement equal to EU average. For this reason, to facilitate SME access to public procurement, legislative changes were made.

The Polish government took measures to improve access to finance. e.g. the JEREMIE programme. Further measures might be necessary to ease access to capital given a more restrictive attitude of banks towards lending. (SEC (2011) 1187 pp.164-165.)

#### Slovenia

The public guarantee scheme has not had the expected impact. Banks have tightened loan conditions, access to finance is generally not an issue for sound companies.

According to the opinion expressed in EU working document, a lot of progress has been achieved in the field of financial engineering. Important progress has been recognized in the field of equity financing: there are nine venture capital firms in Slovenia, including six supported by the Government through a EUR 26.7 million holding fund of the Slovenian Enterprise Fund co-financed by the ERDF. (SEC (2011) 1187 pp.184.)

#### Slovakia

Lending and guarantee conditions have been tightened for enterprises, in particular SMEs during the crisis. Insufficient access of SMEs to suitable



financing is an obstacle to the improvement of the business environment, growth and job creation, especially for small and micro enterprises, innovative start-ups and entrepreneurs who have experienced bankruptcy.

Support provided by Structural Funds represents the main tool available to SMEs. Despite the support offered via public funds, the provision of guarantees remain problematic.

A positive development for improving access to funding and introducing innovative financial instruments is represented by the start of JEREMIE initiative, financed from the EU Structural Funds under three 2007-2013 Operational Programmes and managed by the EIF through the Slovak Guarantee and Development Fund. (SEC (2011) 1187 pp.191.)

## **2.7 Bulgaria and Romania**

### **Bulgaria**

The access to finance for SMEs has become difficult and often impossible as there has been a substantial slow-down of bank lending to businesses, in particular, to young and innovative enterprises, stated the EU working document. SMEs face severe credit conditions with excessive interest rates and requirements for collateral. This hinders the SMEs from matching EU Structural Funds and as a result such funding is lost.

Private capital finance is undeveloped and has insignificant share in the market. Commercial banks rarely finance start-ups and there is no integrated venture capital framework setting the conditions for financing start-ups. Concrete examples of active venture-capital entities such as business angels can be found in the field of information technologies. (SEC (2011) 1187 pp.55.)

### **Romania**

Financial support to SMEs is provided via multi-annual national programmes and guarantee instruments. The National Credit Guarantee Fund for SMEs was capitalised and improved its guarantee activity. Legislative measures were taken to ensure the implementation of the *JEREMIE* initiative. There are actions, financed by the OP *Increase of Economic Competitiveness*, which provide support for new investments, for the internationalisation of SMEs, for the implementation of international standards, and for advisory services. (SEC (2011) 1187 pp.177-178.)

## **3 Commission proposals for the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020**

On 29 June 2011, the European Commission presented its proposal for the multi-annual budget for 2014-2020 which responds to today's concerns and tomorrow's needs. "A Budget for Europe 2020" focuses on priority funding at the EU level

that provides true added value. This innovative EU budget remains focused: the overall amount proposed for the next seven years is €1,025 billion in commitments (1.05% of the EU GNI) and €972.2 billion (1% of EU GNI) in payments.

### 3.1 Sector-specific proposals

Legislative proposals for each area covered by the next EU budget have to be discussed and accepted by the Council and European Parliament. The next EU budget will start in 2014. The main sectors to be covered by the new budget:

#### Cohesion

- Future Cohesion Policy
- European Social Fund
- European Globalisation Adjustment Fund
- Programme for Social Change and Innovation

- PROGRESS Programme
- PROGRESS Microfinance
- EURES

#### Agriculture

- The Common Agricultural Policy after 2013

#### Connecting Europe

- Energy
- Transport
- Broadband

#### Financial Instruments

- Europe 2020 Project Bonds

#### Health and Consumers

- Health for Growth Programme
- Consumer Programme

#### Customs Union and Taxation

- FISCUS Programme proposal

#### Justice and Home Affairs

- Asylum and Migration Fund
- Internal Security Fund

#### Education and Culture

Erasmus for All Programme  
Creative Europe Programme

Anti-fraud

OLAF's Community Programmes: Hercule III and Pericles 2020

Research, Innovation and Competitiveness

Horizon 2020 - Framework Programme for Research and  
Innovation

*Programme for the competitiveness of enterprises and SMEs  
(COSME) 2014-2020*

Strategic Innovation Agenda for the European Institute of  
Innovation and Technology (EIT)

European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

Life Programme

The European Earth monitoring programme (GMES)

Galileo and EGNOS programmes

External Relations

Strengthening Europe's place in the world: budget 2014-2020

Citizens

Europe for citizens' Programme 2014-2020

Civil Protection

Statistical Programme

### **3.2 Objectives and actions of COSME**

As a part of the above mentioned framework, within Research, Innovation and Competitiveness the Programme for the competitiveness of enterprises and SMEs (COSME) 2014-2020 includes initiatives for the access of finance.

#### **3.2.1 Main objectives of COSME:**

- facilitating access to finance for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)
- creating an environment favourable to business creation and growth
- encouraging an entrepreneurial culture in Europe

- increasing the sustainable competitiveness of EU companies
- helping small businesses operate outside their home countries and improving their access to markets

Among its expected results easier access to finance for entrepreneurs and small businesses can be found.

Difficulties in accessing finance for SMEs which struggle to demonstrate their creditworthiness and find it hard to gain access to risk capital is identified as main challenges that Union enterprises have to face.

### **3.2.2 Actions to improve SME access to finance**

1. Actions to improve SME access to finance shall include an equity facility and a loan guarantee facility.

2. The equity facility of the Competitiveness and SME Programme, the Equity Facility for Growth (EFG), shall be implemented as a window of a single EU equity financial instrument supporting EU enterprises' growth and RDI from the early stage (including seed) to the growth stage and financially supported by the Horizon 2020 and this Programme.

EFG shall use the same delivery mechanism as the equity facility for RDI to be established under Horizon 2020.

3. The Loan Guarantee Facility (LGF) shall be implemented as part of a single EU debt financial instrument for EU enterprises' growth and RDI, using the same delivery mechanism as the SME demand-driven window of the debt facility under Horizon 2020.

4. The equity and loan guarantees facilities shall comply with the provisions regarding financial instruments in the Financial Regulation and in the Delegated Act replacing the Implementing Rules and with more detailed specific operational requirements to be set out in Commission guidance.

5. The equity and loan guarantee facilities will be complementary to the Member States' use of financial instruments for SMEs in the framework of cohesion policy.

6. The equity and loan guarantee facilities may, where appropriate, allow pooling of financial resources with Member States willing to contribute part of the Structural Funds allocated to them in accordance with [Article 33(1)(a) of the Structural Funds Regulation].

7. Revenues and repayments related to GIF 2 under the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (Decision No 1639/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council) shall be assigned to the Competitiveness and SME Programme.

8. The financial instruments for growth-oriented SMEs shall be implemented in compliance with the relevant EU State aid rules.

#### **The Equity Facility for Growth (EFG)**

1. The EFG shall focus on funds that provide venture capital and mezzanine finance, such as subordinated and participating loans, to expansion and growth-stage enterprises, in particular those operating across borders, while having the possibility to make investments in early stage enterprises in conjunction with the equity facility for RDI under Horizon 2020. In the latter case, the investment from EFG shall not exceed 20% of the total EU investment except in cases of multi-stage funds, where funding from EFG and the equity facility for RDI will be provided on a pro rata basis, based on the funds' investment policy. The EFG shall avoid buy-out or replacement capital intended for the dismantling of an acquired enterprise. The Commission may decide to amend the 20% threshold in light of changing market conditions.

2. Support shall be in the form of one of the following investments:

(a) directly by the European Investment Fund (EIF) or other entities entrusted with the implementation on behalf of the Commission; or

(b) by funds-of-funds or investment vehicles investing across borders established by the EIF or other entities entrusted with the implementation on behalf of the Commission together with private investors and/or national public financial institutions;

#### **The Loan Guarantee Facility (LGF)**

1. The LGF shall be operated by the EIF or other entities entrusted with the implementation on behalf of the Commission. The facility shall provide:

- counter-guarantees and other risk sharing arrangements for guarantee schemes;
- direct guarantees and other risk sharing arrangements for any other financial intermediaries meeting the eligibility criteria.

2. The LGF shall consist of the following two actions:

- the first action, debt financing via loans, including subordinated and participating loans, or leasing, shall reduce the particular difficulties that SMEs face in accessing finance either due to their perceived high risk or their lack of sufficient available collateral;
- the second action, securitisation of SME debt finance portfolios, shall mobilise additional debt financing for SMEs under appropriate risk-sharing arrangements with the targeted institutions. Support for those transactions shall be conditional upon an undertaking by the originating institutions to use a significant part of the resulting liquidity or the mobilised capital for new SME lending in a reasonable period of time. The amount of this new debt financing shall be calculated in relation to the amount of the guaranteed portfolio risk and shall be negotiated, together with the period of time, individually with each originating institution.

3. The LGF shall, except for loans in the securitised portfolio, cover loans up to EUR 150.000 and with a minimum maturity of 12 months. The LGF shall be designed in such way that it will be possible to report on the innovative SMEs supported, both in terms of number and volume of loans.”(COM(2011)834 pp.32-33.)

To the specific objective: to improve access to finance for SMEs in the form of equity and debt, as a result indicator number of firms receiving loan (credit) guarantees and value of lending and number of VC-backed firms and value of investments (of which cross border deals) are associated. Latest known result is that proposed instruments are not yet launched and not the same as current instruments, so data from current instruments may not be comparable. Medium term target (result) 2017 in this field are the number of firms receiving loan (credit) guarantees (+/- 95 000) and value of lending (+/- €10.7 billion) and number of VC-backed firms: (+/- 180) and value of investments (+/- 220m) (COM(2011)834 pp.30-31.)

## 4 Conclusion

As we have seen, in almost all of the EU member states, excess to finance for SMEs is one of the greatest challenges that small firms have to face. The banking sector is quite reluctant to give loans or guarantees for micro,- small,- and medium sized firms referring to the higher risks and costs compared to big enterprises. Member states and the EU together have been working for long to find new solutions and to meet the demands of SMEs. In the new Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (COSME) which will run from 2014 to 2020, with a planned budget of €2.5bn, there are concrete objectives and solutions. Although current global economic crises does not provide a comfortable background, if we want to keep the competitiveness of European SMEs, we have to make efforts to give effect to this plan.

## References

- [1] Horváthová,P. The Talent Management and its Usage at Human Resources Management in Enterprises. International Periodical Research Bulletin"Prospectives of Innovations, Economics and Business".Prague:IEB,2009, Volume 3, pp.76-79.
- [2] Kadocsa Gy.: Competitiveness Survey of Small Enterprises in Hungary. 5th MEB International Conference Budapest, 2007
- [3] Kállay, L.: Paradigmaváltás a kisvállalkozás-fejlesztésben. Közgazdasági Szemle,7-8.,2002. pp.557-573.

- [4] Krugman, P.: Competitiveness: A dangerous obsession. *Foreign Affairs*, 2. 1994. pp.28-44.
- [5] Lengyel, I.: A regionális versenyképességről. *Közgazdasági Szemle*, XLVII.évf.2000.december, pp.962-987.
- [6] Lengyel, I.: Verseny és területi fejlődés: Térségek versenyképessége Magyarországon. JATEPress, Szeged. 2004.
- [7] Losoncz, M.: A magyar EU tagság gazdaságpolitikai kihívásai. Tri-Mester, Tatabánya. 2007.
- [8] Mazur, B.: Introduction to International Business. University of Finance and Management in Bialystok. 2006.
- [9] Mikusová, M.: Knowledge in Enterprise: The Role and Performance Measurement. In: IOCBM 2008. Boca Raton, Florida: Universal Publishers, 2008, pp.318-329.
- [10] Mustafa A. – Michelberger P.(szerk.): Vállalkozás és működése. INOK Budapest, 2005
- [11] Poór J. – Kiss K. – Francsovics A.: Kis- és középvállalkozások fejlődésének vizsgálata egy empirikus felmérés tükrében. Vezetéstudomány, Budapest, 2007
- [12] Porter, M.E. On Competition. The Free Press, New York. 1998.
- [13] “Think Small First” A “Small Business Act” for Europe, COM(2008)394 final, 25.6.2008.
- [14] Vokounova, D: Nakupne sprvanie v sucasnosti. *Studia Commercialia Bratislavensia* No19. 3/2012. Vol.5. pp.491-501.
- [15] “Implementing the Community Lisbon Programme – Modern SME policy for Growth and Employment”, COM(2005) 551 final, 10.11.2005.
- [16] “Small and medium-sized enterprises - Key for delivering more growth and jobs. - A mid-term review of Modern SME policy”, COM(2007) 592 final, 4.10.2007. [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/admin-burdens-reduction/home\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/admin-burdens-reduction/home_en.htm)
- [17] “Impact Assessment on the SBA”, SEC(2008) 2101. 2007 Observatory of EU SMEs. [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise\\_policy/analysis/observatory\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise_policy/analysis/observatory_en.htm)
- [18] Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing a Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (2014 - 2020) COM(2011) 834 final.

- [19] EU access to finance schemes created more than 175 000 jobs and will create more jobs MEMO/11/852 Brussels, 30 November 2011.
- [20] COMMISSION STAFF WORKING PAPER Member State Competitiveness Performance and Policies (2011 report) Accompanying the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Industrial Policy: Reinforcing Competitiveness SEC(2011) 1187 final.