



Federation of European Accountants
Fédération des Experts comptables Européens

IFAC/FEE Practitioners Symposium

Berlin, 28 January 2009

Outline of the Work of the FEE SME/SMP Working Party

José-Maria Bové

FEE Vice-President – SME/SMP Matters



The Federation of European Accountants

- Umbrella body for the accountancy profession in Europe
- Grouping 43 Member Bodies from 32 countries
- Representing a combined membership of over 500.000 accountants:
 - ↳ 45% in public practice
 - ↳ 55% in industry, commerce, government and education
 - ↳ Created in 1987
 - ↳ Located in Brussels, Belgium
- Website: www.fee.be

- SME/SMP Working Party
- SME/SMP Advisory Panel
- SME/SMP Congresses
 - ↪ Barcelona/Sitges (2004)
 - ↪ Versailles (2006)
 - ↪ Scheveningen/The Hague (2007)
 - ↪ Copenhagen (2008)
 - ↪ Next? 2010 May/June Venice?

- FEE Study on Transnational Organisations and Practices within the Accountancy Profession (April 2008)
 - ↳ Organisation models
 - ↳ Network definition
- Survey on thresholds in the Fourth Directive
- The Accountancy Profession's Contribution to the Debate on the Financial Crisis: Call for Action for European SMEs
- FEE Survey on Provision of Alternative Assurance Services

The Accountancy Profession's Contribution to the Debate on the Crisis

- I. Reflecting on the crisis
- II. Matters of specific relevance for statutory auditors during the financial crisis
- III. Call for Action for European SMEs
 - Access to finance (financial information)
 - Improvement liquidity position
 - ✧ Government schemes for underwriting SMEs' loans
 - ✧ Disclosure of average payment delay
 - ✧ Reduction of payment cycles by public authorities
 - ✧ Deferral of VAT remittances
 - Access to publicly funded aid should be simplified
 - SMEs' need further access to the opportunities in the Internal Market

EU Developments in the SME Area

- EC Fifth Roundtable: Access to Finance
 - ↳ EC Informal Group on Banks and SMEs
 - ↳ High-level Roundtable: How to improve SMEs' access to finance in view of the financial and economic crisis
- Small Business Act
- European Private Company(SPE)
- Simplification/Reduction of Administrative Burdens
- EC Ad-hoc SME Reflection Group
 - ↳ Review Fourth and Seventh Directives
 - ↳ Consultation paper February 2009
 - ↳ EC proposal MS option to exempt micro-entities from the Directives

FEE Survey on Provision of Alternative Assurance Services

➤ Why?

- Increasingly addressed by professional accountancy bodies, regulators, standard setters and various EU institutions
- Linked with move to increase in audit exemption thresholds in Europe
- Divergent views in different countries
- Voluntary except in Switzerland
- Presumably performed by professional accountants

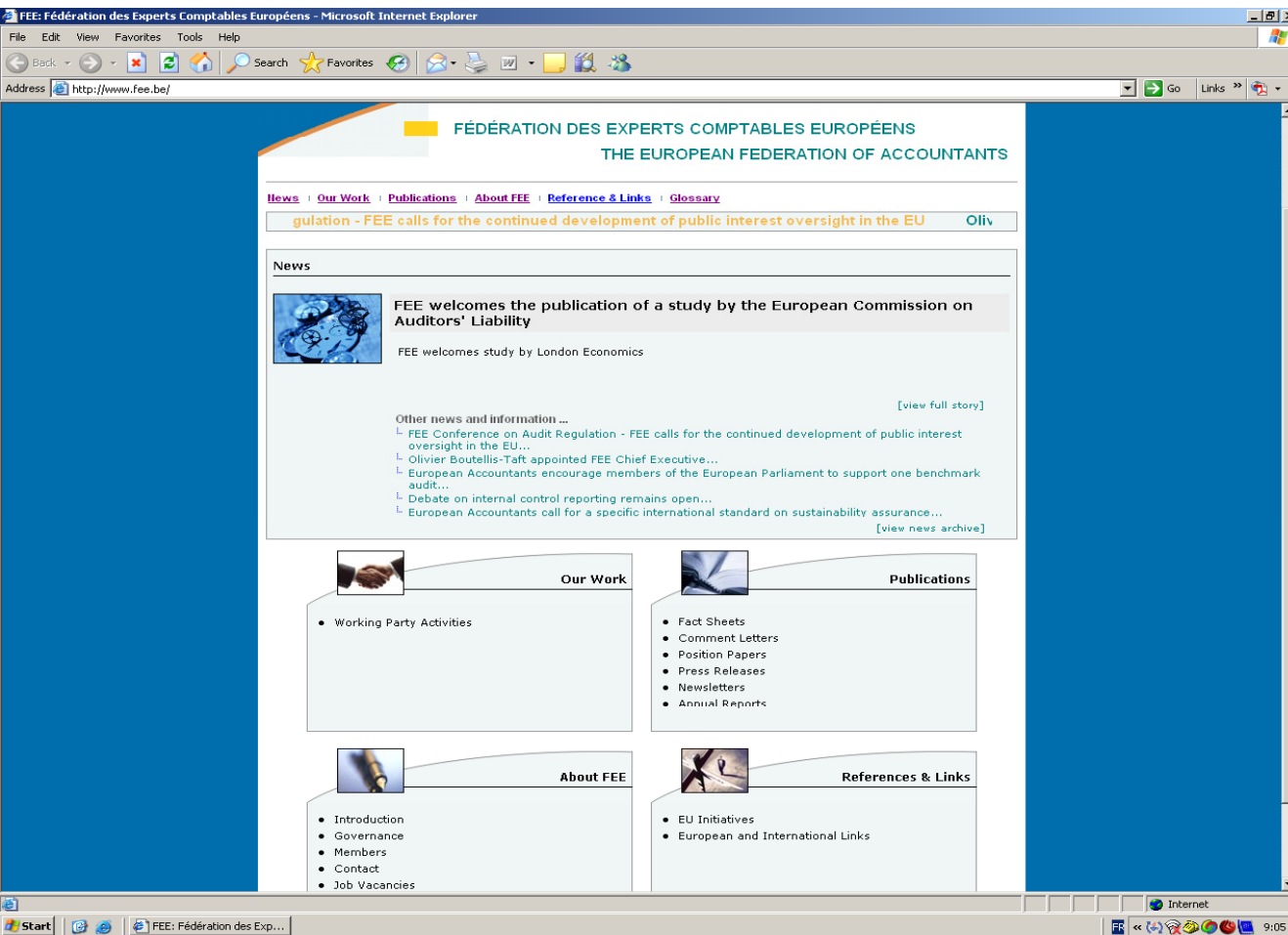
FEE Survey on Provision of Alternative Assurance Services

➤ Current international scene:

- European Commission: discussions in the Stoiber Group on “limited audit” proposals for SMEs
- Referred to by Pierre Delsaux, EC in his speech at the FEE SME Copenhagen Conference in September 2008
- The revision of the review and compilation standards by the IAASB
- IFAC paper supporting a single set of auditing standards



Visit us at FEE



Avenue D'Auderghem 22-28
1040 Brussels
Belgium

www.fee.be

Tel. +32 (2) 285 40 85
Fax: +32 (2) 231 11 12
Email: secretariat@fee.be