



"The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe"

Give Barroso a strong mandate, SMEs urge Parliament

Brussels, 15 September 2009 – The European Parliament should back José Manuel Barroso for a second term as President of the European Commission, according to UEAPME, the European craft and SME employers' organisation. One day ahead of the vote, scheduled for tomorrow at noon in Strasbourg, UEAPME called on all MEPs to reconfirm Mr Barroso, who has led the most SME-friendly Commission to date and shown a very good understanding of the challenges facing European small businesses in this time of economic crisis. A second term would give Europe the continuity it needs at this stage and ensure that President Barroso's ambitious agenda is transformed into concrete results. This would benefit European citizens and businesses alike, stressed UEAPME.

"Looking back at the past five years, President Barroso and Vice President Verheugen have clearly brought SMEs to the forefront of EU policy. Their Commission has demonstrated an unprecedented understanding of the many challenges and difficulties they face, and it has done its utmost to ensure that EU legislation is in line with their needs. A second term would give President Barroso a chance to continue in the same direction", said Secretary General **Andrea Benassi**.

The Barroso Commission has acted to uphold the internal market and support Europe's economy during the present economic crisis, continued Mr Benassi. It has lived up to its responsibility of guarding the Treaty against protectionist tendencies coming from some Member States, making it clear that solutions must be found by consensus and that beggar-my-neighbour policies must be ruled out. Together with the EIB and the ECB, the Barroso Commission is largely to praise for Europe's strong answer to the financial and economic crisis that we are witnessing, explained the Secretary General.

Speaking about Mr Barroso's programme, Mr Benassi stressed that it ticks all the right boxes and points to the right challenges for the future. *"Europe needs social stability and open markets based on fair competition to thrive, and this is particularly true for SMEs. We also need a strong Europe on the international stage. Both aspects are prominent in President Barroso's agenda. I am sure that all MEPs calling themselves pro-European share his views and are willing to give him the opportunity to put his programme into practice",* he continued.

"Mr Barroso has made a compelling case for how Europe can overcome the crisis and for how it must be led in the next years. He has also won the support of a sizeable part of the European Parliament in the last days. It is now up to MEPs to formally re-appoint him with the largest possible majority – only a strong vote of confidence by the Parliament will lead to the strong Commission that European businesses and citizens need", concluded Mr Benassi.

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EDITORS' NOTES: UEAPME is the employers' organisation representing exclusively crafts, trades and SMEs from the EU and accession countries at European level. UEAPME has 83 member organisations covering over 12 million enterprises with 55 million employees. UEAPME is a European Social Partner. For further information: <http://www.ueapme.com/>

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