



"The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe"

Green Paper on Pensions a good starting point for debate, say SMEs

Brussels, 7 July 2010 – UEAPME, the European craft and SME employers' organisation, welcomed the "Green Paper on Pensions" published by the European Commission today (Wednesday). UEAPME congratulated the European Commission for having the courage to put on the table a crucial issue for the future of the European social model, for intergenerational solidarity and for our society and economy as a whole. In the light of the challenges posed by demographic change and the economic crisis, there is an urgent need to ensure the adequacy and sustainability of national pension systems, stressed UEAPME. The organisation supported the overarching objectives of the Green Paper including the references made to prolong working life and avoid early retirement. It also welcomed the horizontal approach of the Green Paper, which covers the issue of pensions in Europe from a financial, economic and social angle at the same time.

Secretary General **Andrea Benassi** offered the following comments:

"Demographic change, further compounded by the current crisis and by low growth and employment levels, is putting pension systems under significant strain. It is increasingly clear that actions must be taken if we want to ensure that retirement systems remain sustainable both in the near future and in the longer term. Today's Green Paper is a very good starting point for a crucial debate that must take place if we want to ensure that pensions are adequate, sustainable and safe in all the EU Member States."

"The Green Paper rightly recognises that pensions are a prerogative of Member States. At the same time, Member States can only benefit from the Europe-wide public debate that the Commission has launched today. The exchange of good practices could be useful for issues such as retirement age, early labour market exit, and extended working life. Discussions will certainly be difficult and consensus will be hard to achieve on some aspects, but as SME employers we look forward to contributing to this debate, which should integrate the financial, economic and social dimensions. We congratulate Commissioners Andor, Rehn and Barnier for having the courage to put these issues on the table".

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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 85 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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