



*"The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe"*

## Parliament's report on energy efficiency leaves open questions for SMEs

*UEAPME praises report's overall content, remains doubtful on ecodesign and transport policy*

Brussels, 15 December 2010 – UEAPME, the European craft and SME employers' organisation, was left with mixed feelings by today's vote at the European Parliament's plenary on the so-called "Bendtsen report" on the EU Energy Efficiency Action Plan. The organisation praised most of the report's recommendations, which are going to feed into the plan to be presented by the European Commission in spring next year, in particular as far as assistance and funding possibilities for SMEs are concerned. However, UEAPME called for an impact assessment prior to increasing the speed and scope of the application of the Ecodesign directive as recommended by MEPs today. Finally, while clearly supporting initiatives that can lower the environmental impact of the transport sector, UEAPME spoke against the "modal shift" from high energy intensive transport modes to low energy ones advocated by the Parliament, calling on the Commission to revert to the "co-modality" approach, by which all transport modes are used in combination to achieve an optimal and sustainable utilisation of resources.

Sustainable Development Director **Guido Lena** offered the following comments:

*"Today's vote on the Bendtsen report will provide the European Commission with excellent input for its upcoming Energy Efficiency Action Plan. We fully share the report's recommendations on the need to devise mechanisms for assisting SMEs in achieving greater energy efficiency and to provide financing schemes at national, regional and local level to reach this aim. However, we are afraid that the some recommendations on ecodesign and transport policy may be a step too far for SMEs."*

*"On the Ecodesign directive, the report calls for a faster implementation and for the extension of the rules to a long and detailed list of new product groups. This cannot be done without a proper impact assessment of the consequence of such an extension on SMEs. Moreover, small and micro-companies should be given time to adapt to the new system as well as the necessary information and training."*

*"As far as transport is concerned, we clearly support all initiatives that can lower the environmental impact of the sector, including the roll-out of new technologies. However, each mode of transport has its own competitive advantages and depending on the segment it is not necessarily possible to shift freight or passenger transport from one mode to another. That is why an indiscriminate shift to low energy transport modes, as recommended by the Parliament, is not a realistic option. The 'co-modality' approach suggested by the Commission, by which the best of all transport modes are used in combination, is a much more feasible alternative and should be promoted as the way forward."*

\*\*\*\* END \*\*\*\*

**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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