



“The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe”

Economic governance package will be toothless if sanctions are weakened, warn SMEs

Brussels, 23 June 2011 – The “economic governance package” on the agenda of the European Council starting today (Thursday) will become a toothless exercise if the attempts by some Member States to weaken the rules on sanctions go through, according to UEAPME, the European craft and SME employers’ organisation. In fact, a number of governments are suggesting reverting to qualified majority voting to approve sanctions on Member States that do not comply with the Stability and Growth Pact, as opposed to the proposals by the European Commission and to the demands of the European Parliament to use qualified majority only to block those penalties from being applied. Going against the Commission’s and Parliament’s stance will mean that countries not in line with the Stability and Growth Pact will never be disciplined, as it has been the case so far. Taking sides with the Commission and the Parliament, UEAPME therefore called on MEPs to insist on their stance and on reluctant Member States to abandon their plans, which would render the whole economic governance package useless.

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

“If sanctions on Member States that do not comply with the Stability and Growth Pact are put to qualified majority vote at the Council, they will never be applied. The power play between Member States will lead to a situation in which a majority in favour of sanctions will never be found, as it has been the case so far. The whole economic governance package would become a toothless paper tiger if these plans go through. The original proposal by the European Commission, by which only a qualified majority at the Council will be able to block sanctions, is a much more sensible standpoint that would result in a fairer application of the package. Thankfully, the European Parliament is of the same advice. That is why MEPs should go ahead with their plans to use ‘reverse’ qualified majority voting and resist current pressures from some Member States, which have obviously learned nothing from the past mistakes.”

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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 80 member organisations covering over 12 million enterprises with 55 million employees. UEAPME is a European Social Partner. For further information: <http://www.ueapme.com/>

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Gerhard Huemer, Director for Economic and Fiscal Policy, Tel. +32 (0)2 230 7599, Email: g.huemer@ueapme.com
Francesco Longu, Press and Communications Officer, Tel. +32 (0)496 520 329, Email: pressoffice@ueapme.com