



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

## **Commission's strategy on internationalisation is spot on, say SMEs**

Brussels, 9 November 2011 – UEAPME, the European craft and SME employers' organisation, warmly welcomed the "Small Business, Big World" communication released by the European Commission today (Wednesday). According to UEAPME, the EC blueprint to help SMEs "go global" gives an accurate overview of the many challenges encountered by small companies willing to trade beyond the single market. The organisation also welcomed the focus put by the Commission on the importance of business support measures, on ensuring and measuring their effectiveness and on targeting the enterprises that need the most assistance. Finally, UEAPME welcomed the plans to reform the "Europe Enterprise Network", to set up an international business portal where all information about existing and new support schemes can be found, as well as the establishment of an "Internationalisation Forum" to discuss and exchange best practices.

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

*"The communication unveiled by the Commission today is a spot on analysis of the obstacles facing SMEs that want to tap into the potential of global markets. With only one out of ten small companies currently operating beyond the EU borders, it is clear that these hurdles must be lowered for SMEs to really profit from fast growing international markets. Today's communication rightly focuses on targeted business support as the key that can open many doors in this respect."*

*"The EC blueprint should ensure more coordination and more efficiency among the many existing business support initiatives. Although several worthwhile opportunities are present, SMEs and business organisations are often unaware of their existence. The creation of an internet based information portal can help in raising awareness, as well as a closer involvement of intermediary business organisations. In this respect, we welcome the Commission's plans to review its 'Europe Enterprise Network'. We believe that its action on the ground should take into account the diversity of SME organisations, creating synergies and ensuring coherence with the role they play. The creation of an 'Internationalisation Forum' is also a positive development. We look forward to contributing to its work to further promote SMEs' global business activities."*

\*\*\*\* 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 82 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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