



“The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe”

Energy efficiency: EP report ok for SME users, less for SME producers

Brussels, 28 February 2012 – The report on the Energy Efficiency Directive adopted by the European Parliament’s Industry Committee today (Tuesday) is a step forward towards the creation of the favourable framework that SMEs need in order to fully achieve their energy savings potential. However, MEPs fell short of supporting SME producers that struggle to survive in the energy supply and distribution and in the energy services markets, according to UEAPME, the European craft and SME employers’ association. On the positive side, UEAPME welcomed the amendments aiming at reducing the information and technical barriers for SMEs willing to lower their energy footprint, as well as at introducing incentives for energy efficiency investments and supporting the micro-generation and micro-cogeneration of energy. The organisation also invited Member States to make use of the option introduced today by MEPs to exempt small energy retailers and distributors from applying the energy savings obligations for end users foreseen by the directive. At the same time, UEAPME warned of possible market distortions arising from large energy companies becoming active in the energy services and consultancy market.

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

“Small and medium-sized companies in Europe have a huge potential to help achieve the objectives of the Energy Efficiency Directive. They are indispensable for its successful implementation in their different roles as final energy users, small producers, energy service providers, building sector specialists and so on. The ‘Turmes report’ approved by the European Parliament’s Industry Committee brings several improvements for SME users. Unfortunately, it also leaves some concerns on the table when it comes to small energy retailers and distributors.”

“For SME users, today’s report brings several positive developments. First of all, it includes dedicated energy efficiency financing facilities, addressing the information and technical barriers that hinder SMEs from becoming more energy efficient. Secondly, it calls on Member States to lay out incentives for SMEs to carry out energy efficiency investments, such as schemes that would cover totally or partly the expenses incurred by SMEs undergoing energy audits and implementing their recommendations. Other positive additions to the original EC proposal include the support for micro-cogeneration as well as a simplified ‘install and inform’ process for putting in place micro cogeneration units.”

“For small retailers and distributors, the report has proposed the option for Member States to exempt small companies from the obligation to save 1.5% of their annual energy sales among their end users. We believe that there is merit in this proposal and that Member States should make use of this option. However, MEPs could have done more to prevent the dominant position that large energy companies might acquire in the energy services sector, because of this obligation, at the disadvantage of the independent small energy service providers operating in this market.”

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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/>

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