



"The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe"

EU patent: SMEs welcome unitary system, urge Italy and Spain to join

Brussels, 11 December 2012 – UEAPME, the European craft and SME employers' organisation, warmly welcomed the votes at the Competitiveness Council yesterday (Monday) and at the European Parliament today (Tuesday) paving the way to a unitary patent system in the EU. Small and medium-sized enterprises clearly stand to gain from lower patent-related filing, translation and legal costs, stressed UEAPME, which also called on the Spanish and Italian governments to join the unitary patent system in the interest of crafts and SMEs in their countries.

Enterprise Policy Director **Luc Hendrickx** offered the following comments:

"The votes at Council and Parliament this week mark the end of a dysfunctional single market in which the same invention is subject to up to 27 different legal systems. The new unitary system will increase legal certainty and make patents more affordable, by reducing filing, translation and legal costs. This will act as a driver for innovation, fostering SMEs' competitiveness and hopefully allowing Europe to catch up on R&D and innovation with its international competitors."

"As far as participating countries are concerned, we hope that Spain and Italy will drop opposition and join the system in the very near future in the interest of SMEs. This would guarantee rules that apply across the board in Europe and allow Spanish and Italian SMEs to file for the unitary patent in their own countries."

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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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