



*“The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe”*

## **Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan sets right priorities, say SMEs**

Brussels, 9 January 2013 – UEAPME, the European craft and SME employers’ organisation, welcomed the “Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan” unveiled today (Tuesday) by the European Commission. According to UEAPME, the action plan sets out the right priorities to put entrepreneurship back on the agenda, giving Member States a clear signal to act in this respect. The association was particularly pleased with the recommendation for national governments to continue modernising labour markets, as well as with the focus put on business transfers and entrepreneurial learning. UEAPME also appreciated the Commission’s call for a “cultural change” towards entrepreneurship, as the current culture often fails to recognise and reward entrepreneurial endeavours. However, the organisation regretted the lack of references to the important role played by intermediary business associations in counselling and advising SMEs. Therefore, UEAPME called for the full involvement of these organisations in the implementation phase of the action plan.

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

*“The action plan unveiled today by the Commission has to potential to put entrepreneurship back at the top of the agenda and must be implemented as soon as possible. Faced with the crisis, policymakers have realised the importance of a thriving private sector and of removing unnecessary burdens. Europe will not recover without more entrepreneurs. Today’s plan covers many key priorities in this respect. It is a loud call to action towards Member States, which must do more on several issues, starting with more modern labour markets. Other chapters are also spot on, for instance on business transfers and on the importance of entrepreneurial learning, not only for prospective entrepreneurs but for all young people. Continuous training is another key aspect, as it is a precondition for all successful entrepreneurial activities.”*

*“The call for a ‘cultural change’ towards entrepreneurship is also timely and appropriate. Too often entrepreneurs are still perceived as greedy free riders who are responsible for all the world’s problems. This must change. The efforts of entrepreneurs must be recognised and rewarded, and this is true both for policymakers at all levels and for society at large.”*

*“Unfortunately, the importance of intermediary business organisations has been overlooked. Many SMEs would not exist without the irreplaceable counselling and advice they receive from business associations, which also play a key role as an interface towards decision makers. No strategy will really succeed unless it recognises and supports not only the role of entrepreneurs, but also the importance of their business organisations. That is why the success in the implementation of the action plan depends to a very large extent on the full involvement and cooperation with business organisations. UEAPME and its members are ready to do their part in this respect.”*

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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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