



"The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe"

Data protection: SMEs welcome vote at ITRE Committee, urge LIBE to follow

Brussels, 20 February 2013 – UEAPME, the European craft and SME employers' organisation, welcomed today's vote at the European Parliament's Industry Committee (ITRE) on the revised data protection regulation. According to UEAPME, the report tabled by Sean Kelly MEP (EPP, IE) strikes a very good balance between the need for a solid legislative framework on data protection on one hand and the necessity not to overburden small and medium-sized companies on the other. In particular, the report keeps in place the exemption from the obligation to nominate a data protection officer for all SMEs whose activity does not require regular and systematic monitoring of data subjects. This is a much better approach than what is currently being suggested by the Parliament's LIBE Committee, which wants to extend this obligation to all legal persons processing more than 500 "data subjects" yearly, i.e. virtually all SMEs, with unacceptable costs and red tape for SMEs. Therefore, UEAPME called on the Parliament, and in particular on the LIBE Committee, to follow today's vote and to revert to the original EC text.

Enterprise Policy Director **Luc Hendrickx** commented as follows:

"We warmly welcome today's vote at the European Parliament's Industry Committee on the revised data protection regulation, and we would like to congratulate Sean Kelly MEP for his excellent work in favour of SMEs. There are several good elements that we hope will be carried over by the Parliament. The most significant is that Mr Kelly's report confirms the exemption for SMEs not dealing with data for a living from the obligation to nominate a data protection officer. Contrary to what some of his colleagues in the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee are suggesting, Mr Kelly decided not to tinker with what the Commission originally proposed on this point. This is a sensible choice that we trust will be taken on board by all MEPs, particularly by those in the LIBE Committee that has a first-hand responsibility on this file."

"Imposing a data protection officer to all legal persons processing more than 500 data subjects per year, as suggested by the LIBE Committee, means de facto extending this obligation to all SMEs. Any reputable small company has an address book with more than 500 entries. The European Commission's own impact assessment calculated a rate of 250 EUR per hour as the average cost of employing an external data protection officer. Assuming even a handful of hours of extra work per year for each of the millions of companies potentially involved, this already translates into a hefty 'data protection levy' with significant extra costs for SMEs. We hope that all MEPs realise what is at stake and revert to the original EC text."

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EDITORS' NOTES: UEAPME is the employers' organisation representing 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 please visit <http://www.ueapme.com/> or follow [@UEAPME](https://twitter.com/UEAPME) on Twitter.

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