



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

## **“Smart regulation”: all EU institutions must do their part, warn SMEs**

Brussels, 7 March 2013 – UEAPME, the European craft and SME employers’ organisation, was left with mixed feelings by the communication on “smart regulation” listing the top 10 most burdensome pieces of EU legislation unveiled by the European Commission today (Thursday). On the positive side, the Commission seems to be moving away from its plans for blanket exemptions for micro enterprises from EU rules. It is also clearly treating the issue of smart regulation as a top priority. However, smart regulation will only be achieved if Parliament and Council are equally committed, stressed UEAPME, pointing out the current legislative debate on key policy files such as data protection and public procurement. Moreover, the association deplored that the “Think Small First” principle is mentioned only in passing in a text that is supposedly devoted to the needs of European SMEs.

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

*“Today’s communication has some good points and some shortcomings. On the plus side, the Commission seems to have shelved its plans to exempt micro enterprises by default from EU rules and has come up with a much more sensible case-by-case approach. It is also clearly taking smart regulation at heart, and it has obviously understood the need for SMEs to operate in a regulatory environment that respects their needs and lets them create growth and jobs.”*

*“On the other hand, it is high time for Parliament and Council to get on board. Just to give two recent examples, the Parliament risks seriously worsening what the Commission has suggested on a new legal framework for data protection in Europe, while the good proposals made by the EC to ensure greater and easier participation of SMEs to public tenders are now in the hands of both Parliament and Council, which disagree on several crucial provisions to reach this goal. Smart regulation will only be achieved if all the EU institutions paddle in the same direction, which is not always the case.”*

*“Last but not least, the ‘Think Small First’ principle is mentioned only in passing in today’s communication. This is regrettable, since the full application of this principle at all levels would be most logical and straightforward route to smart regulation. Conceiving legislation only when really necessary and taking the smallest companies as the benchmark is a much better option than focusing on exemptions or ‘lighter regimes’. We hope that the Commission will not put the ‘Think Small First’ principle on the back burner. This would send out the wrong signal to European SMEs, which are already under enough pressure from the current economic crisis.”*

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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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