



"The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe"

Horizon 2020: UEAPME requests more focus on innovation for SMEs

UEAPME demands coherent management structure and minimum budget for the SME instrument

Brussels, 30 May 2013 – At the Clean Sky SME Day, coinciding with the European Competitiveness Council discussion on the future Research and Innovation programme Horizon 2020, Gunilla Almgren, President of the European SME organisation UEAPME, put forward her main concerns about the ongoing negotiations between the European Parliament, Commission and Council. UEAPME had already welcomed the Commission's proposal to introduce an SME instrument which was recently amended by the European Parliament with some positive aspects due to UEAPME's input. The Parliament is therefore on board but the Council still tends to lean towards the research side of things as opposed to the innovation side, hence UEAPME demands reconsideration of these aspects, i.e. an effective single management structure, a dedicated budget to innovation and a bottom-up call.

Concerning Horizon 2020 and the SME instrument, President **Gunilla Almgren** stated that *"The SME instrument is foreseen for all societal challenges and leading technologies. However, if there is no coherent management structure and no dedicated budget for the SME instrument, nobody knows if or how it will be used."* Therefore, as from the start, UEAPME demanded a single management structure and a dedicated budget to ensure that the instrument is able to realistically take off.

Following UEAPME's concerns, the Members of the European Parliament have proposed to create such a single management structure, which applies the SME instrument in a coherent manner, and to dedicate a minimum amount of 4% of the overall budget to the SME instrument being used for bottom-up calls.

However, Ms. Almgren said *"The real problem we see now in the negotiations comes from the Council, where the Ministers of Science – naturally closer to their universities and research centres than to innovation – are refusing all improvements proposed by the Parliament. If the Ministers for Science win, this would mean no single management structure, no dedicated budget and no bottom-up calls. In this case we are really afraid Horizon 2020 will stay a programme for scientific research, but it will again fail to deliver successfully on innovation."* UEAPME therefore reiterates their request for a dedicated minimum budget and a single management structure to get a real Research and Innovation Programme and to make the SME instrument work.

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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 please visit <http://www.ueapme.com/> or follow [@UEAPME](https://twitter.com/UEAPME) on Twitter.

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