



"The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe"

UEAPME presents its main achievements for Crafts & SMEs

UEAPME succeeded as agenda setter and stopped unnecessary new burdens for SMEs

Brussels, 16 July 2013 – UEAPME, the European Craft and SME association, is the agenda setter for SME policy in Europe and defends the interests of Crafts and SMEs towards European Institutions and other European stakeholders. Today in Brussels, UEAPME President Gunilla Almgren presented UEAPME's most important achievements¹ since the beginning of her Presidency in January 2012. *"SMEs do not have the necessary resources to fight their battles alone neither at national level nor – of course – in a European context. Our role is therefore crucial to them and we try our best to improve the environment for Crafts and SMEs in the EU"*, President Gunilla Almgren introduced.

UEAPME's first aim is to put the needs and problems of SMEs and Crafts on the European Institutions' agenda and to convince European policy makers to come forward with legislations, support measures and programmes needed by small enterprises throughout their whole life-cycle, i.e. at their start-up phase, during their growth-phase, for innovation, internationalisation and job creation and in the phase where their business is transferred to the next generation. The most important achievements for SMEs, based on proposals brought forward by UEAPME, are:

- A new SME Instrument to support innovation in Horizon 2020
- Financial instruments being better supported by Structural Funds
- SMEs becoming a priority in regional development policy
- SMEs will be given more flexibility in the working time revision
- SMEs benefiting from support measures for energy audits.

The second challenge UEAPME tackles on behalf of Crafts and SMEs at European level is avoiding costly and unnecessary new burdens for SMEs that are put forward by the European Institutions and other stakeholders. Hence, UEAPME works at cancelling proposals that might be harmful to SMEs or at amending them in the interests of small enterprises. UEAPME managed to put a stop to a number of regulations, the five most important ones are:

- The costs of SME lending will not increase with the implementation of Basel III
- Stringent electronic-waste collection does not apply to small retailers
- Environmental footprint quantification remains voluntary
- SMEs do not have to pay for a longer maternity leave
- No costly new legislation on work-related musculoskeletal disorders for SMEs.

"To conclude", said President Almgren, "I would like to thank the UEAPME Member Organisations for their political support and the technical input from their experts without which UEAPME could not carry out its work or be as successful as we are at European level."

1. http://www.ueapme.com/IMG/pdf/130618_UEAPME-achievements-final_EN.pdf

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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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