



“The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe”

UEAPME presents Crafts and SME priorities to nominated Commissioners

Competitiveness is key to investments and job creation; better balance needed between support for growth and reforms

Brussels, 10 September 2014 – EC President Jean-Claude Juncker’s announcement of the new structured dossiers’ division for the entering members of the incoming European Commission marks the starting point of a new era of policy making at European level. Indeed, in order to lay the foundation for post-crisis growth and job creation, the new European Commission has to move from a defensive crisis fighting mode to an offensive approach, one driven by strong private investment. UEAPME, the European Association for Crafts and SMEs, wants to support such an approach and has briefed the nominated Commissioners about its [policy priorities](#) for the next five years. Furthermore, UEAPME informed the Commissioners about the specific questions the organisation would like to be put forward at the hearings to the Commissioners crucial for Europe’s SMEs.

In letters to the newly nominated Commissioners, *Peter Faross*, UEAPME Secretary General, argued that *“despite all the crisis measures during the last years, the economic crisis is not over and Europe must do more to strengthen growth and job creation in Europe. Such a strengthening of the Economy has to be built on two pillars: first off, the limited room of manoeuvre in public expenditures has to be used to invest in qualification and infrastructure and second, private investment in Europe has to become more attractive.”*

To motivate private investors and companies to invest in new business opportunities and new jobs in Europe, everything has to be done to improve the competitiveness of Europe’s economy. Putting competitiveness as a leading priority on the agenda is, according to UEAPME, the only way to overcome the current gloomy economic situation and to bring Europe back to a sustainable growth path, allowing the reduction of unemployment and helping young people to enter the labour market. To achieve this goal, each new legislation and all other initiatives have to be checked against their impact on competitiveness.

Finally, Mr Faross demanded *“an encompassing approach towards competitiveness, which includes all of its aspects ranging from structural reforms of goods and services markets to create new business opportunities to a regulatory framework which creates no unnecessary burdens. It has to include lean and efficient administrations as well as the provision of high quality, but cost effective public services. It has to improve the qualification of our workforce and needs to modernise Europe’s labour markets. Finally, it has to provide access to finance, modern technologies and resources like energy at competitive prices as well as better access to third country markets.”*

Responding to these lines for an improved competitiveness for European SMEs, UEAPME presented the priorities of Crafts and SMEs for the next years of European policy, These priorities require an ambitious growth strategy to lay the foundation to exit the crisis – to be embedded in the revised EU 2020 Strategy –, a new Small Business Act with a stronger focus on implementation and an integration of the dimension of Crafts and SMEs in all policies as well as the respect of the specific situation of Crafts and SMEs in all procedures. This document called *“SMEs mean jobs and growth”* should, according to UEAPME, guide the European Institutions in their SME policy over the next five years, Mr Faross warmly recommended it as a source for inspiration to the nominated Commissioners.

Finally, UEAPME informed the Commissioners about proposals for questions for their hearing, put forward to the different Committees in the European Parliament.

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(1) The UEAPME document *“SMEs mean jobs and growth”* can be found at:

http://www.ueapme.com/IMG/pdf/140611_UEAPME-2020_final.pdf

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](#) on Twitter.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Gerhard Huemer, Fiscal Policy Director, Tel. +32 (0)2 230 7599, Email: g.huemer@ueapme.com

Jenny Manin, Press and Communications Officer, Tel. +32 (0)496 520 329, Email: pressoffice@ueapme.com