



"The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe"

Health and Safety Package rightly aims to support micro-companies

UEAPME supports the new focus on improving practical implementation instead of extra legislation

Brussels, 10th January 2017 – UEAPME takes note of the Occupational Health and Safety (OSH) package published today by the EU Commission, following the in-depth evaluation of the various existing directives in this field. UEAPME notably appreciates the specific guidance and support foreseen for micro and small companies to better implement existing rules instead of adding new legislation. To achieve effective implementation, close partnership is necessary at national level between public authorities, social partners, SME organisations and labour inspectorates. This should also contribute to avoiding unnecessary administrative burdens and high compliance costs. This approach can only become feasible if actions are dedicated to help micro-enterprises at local level to comply with these rules, including via SME organisations.

SMEs are rather positive about the Commissions' proposals on health and safety. The spirit of the proposals goes in the right direction, however everything depends on the concrete actions and practical implementation on the ground. Proper implementation can only happen if real actions are taken at local level to reach out to micro enterprises, and it has to involve SME organisations, which are close to these companies. Therefore, support programmes for capacity building of small business organisations are needed, allowing them to build-up the needed expertise and capacity for advisory services.

UEAPME Secretary General Veronique Willems expressed her support *"By focusing on implementation of existing rules instead of coming forward with new legislation, the OSH package goes in the right direction and this approach is supported by UEAPME."* She also emphasised that *"the necessary support for micro-enterprises goes through the reinforced partnership between public authorities, SME organisations and labour inspectorates. Indeed, the labour inspectorates should not see themselves as the police but should rather advise companies on how to implement existing rules"*. Finally, she highlighted the necessity to *"support SME associations in capacity building to allow them to be better able to help their members at local level."*

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EDITORS' NOTES: UEAPME is the employers' organisation representing Crafts and SMEs from the EU and accession countries at European level. UEAPME has 64 member organisations covering about 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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