

For the attention of
 Karl-Heinz Lambertz, President
 Committee of the Regions
 president.cor@cor.europa.eu

Brussels, October 10th, 2017
 Prot n° 298-2017-bmd

Dear President,

On behalf of UEAPME, the Association of European Crafts, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment to the position of President of the Committee of the Regions. Your appointment comes at a crucial moment for the future of cohesion policy and for crafts and SMEs in European cities and regions.

SMEs play an important role in fostering competitiveness in the regions, where they contribute to maintaining the economic and social balance. The regional policies in favor of SMEs are essential to guarantee growth and jobs. Although the majority of European SMEs work in and for local and regional markets, a large number is also active in international markets and play an important role when using local products, know-how, and skills thereby creating jobs.

I have the pleasure to send you our position for a Reformed Cohesion Policy Post 2020. First of all, we underline the major role of regions in the implementation of ESIF and EU legislation in general. Secondly, we consider that the most successful economic and social development policies have been engaged in regions where an effective partnership between the political decision-makers and the economic and social SME representatives of those regions has been implemented. Thirdly, we are convinced that greater margins of flexibility should be given to regional authorities for selecting eligible operational measures and defining priority geographical areas in full partnership with economic and social partners.

Therefore, for UEAPME, the most important criteria for the future cohesion policy are:

- a. Flexibility,
- b. Shared management and partnership, in particular with SME organisations and
- c. The principle of multi-level and multi-actors governance as well as simplification and implementation of the Small Business Act principles "think small first" and "only once".

Enclosed document:

UEAPME vision on the implementation of a regional policy post 2020 taking the local and regional actors into account

I am fully convinced that cooperation between the Committee of the Regions and UEAPME could be of great importance for the future of SMEs in the regions taking into account the forthcoming negotiations on the Cohesion Policy Post 2020.

I remain available to discuss our proposals with you in person.

Yours sincerely,



Véronique Willems
Secretary General

Enclosed document:

UEAPME vision on the implementation of a regional policy post 2020 taking the local and regional actors into account