



UNION EUROPEENNE DE L'ARTISANAT ET DES PETITES ET MOYENNES ENTREPRISES
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EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF CRAFT, SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES
UNIONE EUROPEA DELL' ARTIGIANATO E DELLE PICCOLE E MEDIE IMPRESE

UEAPME TRANSPORT FORUM

Statement for the Transport Council Meeting, 8-9 December 2008

In the light of the upcoming Council meeting of the Ministers of Transport on Monday and Tuesday (8-9 December) in Brussels, Francesco del Boca, President of the UEAPME Transport Forum and entrepreneur, calls upon the ministers to consider the consequences that the greening transport package and in particular the revision of the Eurovignette Directive will have on the road transport sector of Europe.

Applying tolls on heavy goods vehicles for environmental damages according to the "polluter pays" principle shall make road transport more efficient and hence reduce external costs in the long run. However, considering the current crises putting charges only on the road transport sector *"is unacceptable and will distort competition within the various modes of transport without achieving the desired results"*, says del Boca.

"We agree with the objectives of the new proposal and road carriers have always tried to keep the impact on the environment as low as possible. Nevertheless, European SMEs operating in the road transport sector have already been hit hard by unpredictably rising prices for petrol and the sector is in a deep crisis as it is", continues del Boca. He predicts that charging only heavy goods vehicles will increase the costs of road transport without achieving the desired results - especially considering the fact that carriers in many parts of Europe are left with no real alternatives to road transport. In addition, the entrepreneur requests that the generated revenue must be reinvested into the road transport sector, e.g. providing financial incentives to SMEs to purchase cleaner lorries rather than co-financing other modes of transport that do not have to cope with environmental charges in the first place.

"We provide for 4.5 million jobs in Europe and account for 1.6 % of the EU gross domestic product. I trust that the policy makers of the European Union are aware of the importance of the road transport sector regarding economic growth in Europe and will adopt an approach to the revision of the Eurovignette Directive that will lead to a win-win situation for all stakeholders", del Boca concludes.

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Contact person:

Iris Marlovits

Rue Jacques de Lalaing 4, 1040 Bruxelles

i.marlovits@ueapme.com

T +32 2 285 07 01 | F +32 2 230 78 61