



"The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe"

Small Business Act: a not so happy birthday, say SMEs

Brussels, 2 December 2009 – The Small Business Act adopted exactly one year ago by the Council has had a limited impact on the ground so far and much remains to be done to ensure the full application of its principles and guidelines, according to UEAPME, the European craft and SME employers' organisation. Speaking today (Tuesday) at a conference on the first anniversary of the Small Business Act co-organised in Brussels by the Group 1 of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) with UEAPME, EUROCHAMBRES and BUSINESSSEUROPE, Secretary General Andrea Benassi offered the following comments:

"Despite the efforts made in the last 12 months, the Small Business Act has not brought about the change of season we were expecting, neither when it comes to its principles nor on the specific legislative proposals it contains. Much remains to be done to ensure that it reaches the ground, at a time when SMEs face exactly the same challenges they were confronted with one year ago, further compounded by the economic crisis."

"Some of the legislative proposals contained in the SBA package, such as the State aid reform and reduced VAT rates, have been finalised and approved. However, they must be put to full use by Member States to bring about concrete improvements. Conversely, other parts of the package are still under debate. This is the case for the late payments directive, which was published behind schedule and will provide limited help against rising payment delays in its current form."

"The most significant shortcoming so far has been the lack of respect for the 'Think Small First' principle. One year ago, the Council pleaded to design all new measures, legislative or otherwise, in such a way that they can be easily understood and applied by all SMEs. It also promised systematic, specific, real and independent impact assessments for all rules to improve and simplify the regulatory environment for SMEs. Today, these words remain largely on paper."

**** END ****

EDITORS' NOTES: UEAPME is the employers' organisation representing exclusively crafts, trades and SMEs from the EU and accession countries at European level. UEAPME has 84 member organisations covering over 12 million enterprises with 55 million employees. UEAPME is a European Social Partner. For further information: <http://www.ueapme.com/>

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Luc Hendrickx, Director for Enterprise Policy, Tel. +32 (0)2 230 7599, Email: l.hendrickx@ueapme.com

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