



"The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe"

E- waste: UEAPME praises Parliament's limits to collection duties for micro companies

Brussels, 3 February 2011 – UEAPME, the European craft and SME employers' organisation, welcomed the limits on collection duties for micro retailers approved by the European Parliament today in its plenary vote on the revision of the Waste Electric and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive. Further to MEPs' vote, retailers will be obliged to collect small waste electric and electronic goods left by consumers at no cost and without any requirement on consumers to buy a new product of the same kind. However, this measure will not apply to micro retailers, which normally have a very limited surface area available in their shops and already wrestle to stay on the market despite the harsh competition from large supermarket and electronics chains. UEAPME was pleased with MEPs' decision, which avoids the disproportionate costs that would have arisen for smaller shops had such an obligation been applied across the board. On the other hand, concerns remain for SMEs subject to the text, said UEAPME, which called for an impact assessment to be made on the consequences of the new WEEE measures on the competitiveness of these companies.

Sustainable Development Director **Guido Lena** offered the following comments:

"Today's vote at the European Parliament limiting WEEE collection obligations for micro retailers is a sensible choice that we support. MEPs struck the right balance between the need to properly handle e-waste on one side and the reality of very small businesses on the other. While large stores may be able to cope easily with consumers walking in, leaving their old electronic goods and walking out, micro retail outlets where surface space comes at a premium would have been weighed down with more costs without any benefit, as no purchase obligations are foreseen by the directive. Fortunately, MEPs avoided this scenario today. We are grateful to all MEPs and groups that supported amendments in this direction."

"On the other hand, our concerns remain for those SMEs that will not benefit from the limits approved today. These companies will be transformed de facto into dumping grounds without their consent, a role that should be played by public authorities rather than by private enterprises. This sets a dangerous precedent and goes against the 'Think Small First' principle introduced by the Small Business Act. As no impact assessment was made beforehand and since these companies were not consulted in the run up to the vote, the least the EU institutions can do at this stage is to foresee an economic study to evaluate the consequences of the new WEEE measures on the competitiveness of these companies."

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EDITORS' NOTES: UEAPME is the employers' organisation representing exclusively 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: <http://www.ueapme.com/>

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Guido Lena, Director for Sustainable Development Policy, Tel. +32 (0)2 230 7599, Email: g.lena@ueapme.com
Francesco Longu, Press and Communications Officer, Tel. +32 (0)496 520 329, Email: pressoffice@ueapme.com