



*"The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe"*

## **SMEs miss support measures in the Environmental Action Programme**

*UEAPME welcomes the specific references to SMEs but regrets that the set of SME measures in the Environmental programme fall short*

Brussels, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2013 – The adoption of the text agreed upon in the Trilogue end of June by the EP Environment Committee today was welcomed by UEAPME, the European Craft and SME organisation. UEAPME is satisfied with the recognition of specific assistance for SMEs in the uptake of new technologies in the text as well as with the importance to bear in mind the specific SME needs in the implementation of REACH. However, UEAPME deplores the incompleteness of the set of assistance measures for SMEs; indeed they also need help to improve their environmental performance and concurrently contribute to the resource-efficiency and low-carbon goals.

UEAPME called on the EU institutions to strengthen the role of SMEs in the programme as they represent 99% of all European companies and provide 67% of all jobs. They are the key players in the transition towards a resource efficient and low-carbon-economy; according to UEAPME *"SMEs deserve an enhanced role in the main programme guiding environmental policy and legislation until 2020"*, said Sustainable Development Director Guido Lena. Although, the mentions of specific assistance for SMEs in the uptake of new technologies and the consideration of specific SME needs in relation to the REACH implementation are welcomed, they are by no means sufficient. *"SMEs and especially micro-enterprises need a favourable set of measures ranging from information campaigns, technical and financial assistance to the access to appropriate skills, stated Mr. Lena, Only with such a comprehensive framework will SMEs be able to turn environmental challenges into opportunities as stipulated by Principle IX of the Small Business Act."*

The EU institutions agreed to give Green Public Procurement a strong emphasis within the Environmental Action Programme and opted for a 50% target of green criteria in public tenders. *"UEAPME accepts green targets in general but a binding 50% target will be a big challenge for SMEs unless the assistant measures supporting the greening of their businesses are implemented"* he concluded.

\*\*\*\* 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 80 member organisations covering over 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.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:**

Rosa Solanes, Environment Policy Advisor, Tel. +32 (0)2 230 7599, Email: [r.solanes@ueapme.com](mailto:r.solanes@ueapme.com)

Jenny Manin, Press and Communications Officer, Tel. +32 (0)496 520 329, Email: [pressoffice@ueapme.com](mailto:pressoffice@ueapme.com)