



"The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe"

EU Parliament vote on health and safety at work: SMEs deeply concerned

Call for legislation on musculo-skeletal disorders and harassment and violence will not solve true problems

Brussels, 13th October 2015 – Today, the European Parliament's Employment Committee voted in favour of new legislations as part of the Christensen report on the EU Strategic Framework on Health and safety at Work 2014-2020. Occupational Health and Safety (OSH) is one of the most regulated areas at EU level. The priority should not be to add to this heavy bulk of existing legislation, but to properly implement the existing rules. The directives are too complicated, too burdensome and too costly for small and micro companies which have neither the necessary expertise nor the resources for full compliance without targeted support. Furthermore, new legislative tools on musculo-skeletal disorders and harassment and violence will put additional burden on SMEs rather than solving problems in the field.

Commenting on the most important elements of today's EP vote, **UEAPME Secretary General Peter Faross** said:

"UEAPME is very concerned about the EP's calls for new EU legislation in occupational health and safety. Health and safety at work is one of the most regulated areas at EU level. Legal texts are sufficient as currently reported by COWI, a consultant hired by the EC for carrying out an evaluation report of OSH Directive. The priority should not be to add on this existing legislative framework but to facilitate its full implementation and to further simplify some texts. This is exactly what small and micro companies are requesting. For SMEs, directives are too complicated, too burdensome and too costly. Small and micro companies do not have the necessary expertise and resources for full compliance without technical and financial support."

"Furthermore compliance costs are much higher for small and micro companies than for larger businesses. Therefore calling for a new legislative tool on musculo-skeletal disorders (MSD) is not the right approach. It will not solve the problems in the field but add a lot of new constraints, administrative burdens and very high costs. 90% of these costs will be borne by SMEs as already proven in the past by the Impact Assessment conducted under the Barroso Commission. Instead work in the field of MSD should focus on awareness raising, prevention and tackling the multiple causes."

"Even more problematic is the request of the European Parliament to work on a legal act concerning harassment and violence at work, a topic dealt with European social partners through the negotiation of a Framework agreement and on which further actions are foreseen in the EU Social Dialogue Work Programme 2015-2017. The lack of respect of the EU social partners' role and autonomy is very disappointing and highly questionable. We now call on the EP Plenary vote to counteract and avoid creating additional burdens and new obligations on SMEs."

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EDITORS' NOTES: UEAPME is the employers' organisation representing Crafts 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.

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