



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

## **UEAPME calls on EC to not follow EP report on Health and Safety**

**Brussels, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2015 – UEAPME asks the Commission not to follow the EP's recommendation for new legal actions, particularly in the field of musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) and harassment and violence at work. The costs of legislation on MSD would be borne mainly by SMEs and micro-companies. On harassment and violence, the EU social partners are implementing their autonomous agreement, which should be respected. It is more important to tackle the real causes and provide SMEs with supportive tools than to add to their burden.**

In his first reaction, UEAPME Secretary General Peter Faross said that *"the EP report on the EU strategic framework on Health & Safety in the workplace will create serious troubles for SMEs. The Commission in its own evaluation should not follow this negative path"*. He then went on to state that *"I believe that the report contains on the one hand some really useful guidance to better support SMEs – and even more micro-companies – in implementing health and safety legislation. However, asking for additional regulations at the same time will only increase problems for SMEs on the ground."*

For instance, the EP report calls for a legal instrument on musculoskeletal disorders (MSD). *"90% of the costs of such new legislation would come down to SMEs"*, said Mr Faross criticising the EP's position. *"You cannot say on the one hand that you want to invest in SMEs and at the same time add to their burden. It is much more important to tackle the real causes and provide SMEs with supportive tools for better implementation"*, he continued.

Similarly, the EP report wants the Commission to address severe cases of harassment and violence at work through new legislation despite the autonomous EU social partners agreement. *"This is the wrong approach"*, Mr Faross responded, *"the European social partners have just initiated new activities to improve the implementation of their own agreement. What happened to their autonomy?"*

The European Commission will soon start its own evaluation of the acquis on health and safety. *"We fully support this exercise"*, said Mr Faross, *"and I recommend that the Commission focus on solving real SME problems"*.

\*\*\*\* END \*\*\*\*

**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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