



“The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe”

SMEs welcome Clean Energy Package but need more support

SMEs need more financial and technical assistance, access to market and to skilled employees

Brussels, 30th November 2016 – UEAPME⁽¹⁾ welcomes the Clean Energy Package published today by the European Commission to align the energy efficiency legislation with the 2030 Framework for Climate and Energy Policies and with the Climate Agreement reached in Paris last year. SMEs are key players in the energy efficiency sector. They are energy users and as such can rationalise to a large extent their energy consumption but need the right financial and technical support schemes to do so. SMEs are also energy service providers and as such they offer a wide array of clean and innovative solutions but in order to make a change they need to openly participate in the market and have access to skilled employees. UEAPME will now proceed to a deep analysis of the package in order to raise its demands during the legislative procedure.

As far as the proposed directive on Energy Efficiency is concerned, UEAPME welcomes the fact that the article on “Energy audits and Energy management systems” remains untouched and hence, energy audits for SMEs remain voluntary. **UEAPME Secretary General Peter Faross** said: *“making energy audits mandatory for SMEs would be too expensive and burdensome for them. In spite of this, we are pleased with the current system where Member States have to put forward programmes supporting SMEs to undergo energy audits and, more importantly, they have to implement the recommendations from these audits”*. Nevertheless, UEAPME would like the Commission to ensure these programmes do indeed exist and are implemented at national level.

The Commission’s decision to prolong the Energy Efficiency obligations beyond 2020 is positive news for SMEs, in particular for construction SMEs. Indeed, UEAPME appreciates the flexibility granted to Member States in selecting their preferred policy measures. However, UEAPME is of the opinion that the scheme should not prioritise any type of buildings and that improvements to the energy efficiency of buildings should benefit all energy consumers while remaining inclusive and non-discriminatory.

On a final note, UEAPME would like to see the role of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) better highlighted in the Energy Efficiency Proposal. *“EFSI has shown so far very good examples of bundling SME projects in the field of energy efficiency and this should not only be continued but enhanced,”* said Mr Faross.

(1) the European Employers Association for 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 64 member organisations covering about 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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