



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

## **The European SME definition is still fit for purpose**

***UEAPME strongly opposes any attempt to widen the SME definition***

**Brussels, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2017 – In its position paper<sup>(1)</sup> published today, UEAPME opposes any possible changes to the SME definition. A first assessment with member organisations shows a broad support for the current definition, which is still fit for purpose. Any widening would only lead to including more beneficiaries and possible reduction of support for the micro enterprises who most need specific measures.**

Last June, the European Commission published a Roadmap to start consultations on the relevance and need to update the European definition of SMEs. The definition is a structural tool to identify the enterprises confronted with market failures and particular challenges due to their size (e.g. access to finance). It also covers these enterprises that are allowed to receive preferential treatment in public support and in EU support programmes targeted to SMEs.

After a broad consultation with its member organisations, both national and sectoral, UEAPME strongly opposes any widening of the European SME definition. There is no need to change the definition, in particular the headcount and financial thresholds. As the current definition already covers 99,8% of all European enterprises, any widening of it would dilute the available support for the smallest ones, i.e. those who need it the most. The two-year transition period – the period during which an enterprise can keep its SME statute when it has exceeded the thresholds – should also remain unchanged and the consequences of the two judgements of the Court of Justice should first be further examined by the Commission to clearly identify the concrete need for regulatory clarifications.

*"For UEAPME and our member organisations, it is clear that the current definition more than sufficiently covers the enterprises that are most in need of support. We cannot accept that the definition be widened at the detriment of those for which the instrument was created."* said **UEAPME Secretary General Véronique Willems**.

(1) [http://www.ueapme.com/IMG/pdf/UEAPME\\_position\\_on\\_SME\\_definition.pdf](http://www.ueapme.com/IMG/pdf/UEAPME_position_on_SME_definition.pdf)

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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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