



*“The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe”*

## **UEAPME puts forward SME proposals for European plastics strategy**

*Awareness-raising campaigns, EPR schemes, holistic approach needed for new legislation on plastics*

Brussels, 24<sup>th</sup> May 2018 – UEAPME welcomes the Commission’s communication on ‘A European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy’ in its position paper published today<sup>(1)</sup>. However, according to UEAPME, one major key element of this strategy should be awareness-raising campaigns aimed at changing the way European society deals with plastics. Additionally, the extended producer responsibility (EPR) schemes have to be adapted to SME manufacturers with no discrimination and adapted capacity building measures need to be available to SMEs. Moreover, the new legislation stemming from the strategy should be based on a holistic approach. Preventing and reducing plastics litter in the oceans is a priority, but requires international cooperation with serious commitments and targets.

According to **UEAPME Secretary General Véronique Willems**, *“for this communication to be achievable, awareness-raising campaigns need to be carried out in order to change the way European society deals with plastics. There is a real need to upgrade the collecting and recycling systems in the Member States as well as to ensure the regular availability of high quality secondary raw material in the required quantity and at reasonable prices.”*

To implement set targets in the waste sector, technical feasibility and practicability of solutions need to be considered. *“New legislation stemming from the plastics strategy should be based on a holistic approach”*, stated Ms Willems. This includes the analysis of the ecological impacts of products used as substitutes and of the socio-economic benefits of the plastic products to be replaced, such as single-use plastics.

Moreover, *“the extended producer responsibility (EPR) schemes have to be adapted to SME manufacturers with no discrimination, for instance regarding the amount of Euros paid per ton of waste”*, emphasised Ms Willems. SMEs should benefit from capacity building measures to join EPR schemes financed through the fees levied from firms joining the systems. EPR schemes should also be applied to goods imported into the single market in order to avoid competitive disadvantages for European producers.

Last but not least, preventing and reducing plastics litter in the oceans is a priority but, to be successful, this requires international cooperation with serious commitments and targets, just as for the fight against climate change.

(1) [https://ueapme.com/IMG/pdf/UEAPME\\_position\\_on\\_A\\_European\\_Strategy\\_for\\_Plastics\\_in\\_a\\_Circular\\_Economy.pdf](https://ueapme.com/IMG/pdf/UEAPME_position_on_A_European_Strategy_for_Plastics_in_a_Circular_Economy.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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