



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

## **Juncker Commission must not forget real economy in its final spurt**

*Improving competitiveness of and investing in SMEs means investing in Europe’s future*

Brussels, 12<sup>th</sup> September 2018 – In a first reaction to President Jean-Claude Juncker’s “State of the European Union” speech, UEAPME welcomes the fact that Juncker wants to focus on delivery for the last year of his Commission. Entrepreneurs especially need clear and reliable framework conditions to make their businesses fit for the future. Therefore, a crucial element for SMEs is a fast adoption of the next Multiannual Financial Framework and the related programmes, which are decisive in providing the needed support structures for SMEs to digitalise and innovate as well as to allow them to finance future investments. UEAPME urgently asks politicians on both sides of the Channel to clarify the future relationship with the UK and its consequences on business relations. Close economic ties and swift decisions are needed, but without cherry-picking on market access.

UEAPME President Ulrike Rabmer-Koller underlined that *“it is in the interest of Europe’s companies to put a strong focus on delivery for the main policy projects during the Jean-Claude Juncker Commission’s last year.”* As Juncker stated, currently only 50% of the European Commission’s proposals on projects – such as deepening the Monetary Union, creating a Digital Single Market or turning to a Capital Market and Energy Union – has been approved by the Parliament and the Council.

The European Institutions’ most important task for the next months will be to agree on the next Multiannual Financial Framework and the related programmes. Ms Rabmer-Koller stated that *“the Institutions must ensure that the programmes for regional development, for research and innovation, for single market development and the exchange programme ERASMUS can continue seamlessly in 2021”*, and she underlined that *“this will only be possible if the decisions are taken before the European Parliament elections in May 2019.”*

Finally, Ms Rabmer-Koller argued that *“UEAPME fully supports the approach of the EU 27 as regards the Brexit process, but SMEs have to know as soon as possible which rules they have to follow after March 2019”* and she expects all efforts to be made on both sides of the Channel so as *“SMEs can profit as much as possible from close economic relations with the UK after Brexit.”*

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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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