



## **“The voice of SMEs in Europe”**

### **Press Release**

IMMEDIATE ISSUE:

#### **MEPs see the light and amend EU sunlight rules**

- **Member States left to decide if any solar radiation regulations necessary**

**Brussels, 7 September 2005** Proposed EU rules on solar radiation have been given a welcome reality check by the European Parliament, according to UEAPME, the European small and medium business organisation, following a crucial plenary vote on the proposed Optical Radiation Directive in the European Parliament on Wednesday (7 September).

“Today’s vote is a victory for common sense. Imposing EU-level obligations to regulate exposure to sunlight would be unrealistic, unnecessary and would further damage the credibility of EU legislation. Thankfully, the European Parliament has taken a rational approach to these proposals by leaving it up to Member States to decide at national-level if any sunlight rules are needed,” said **UEAPME Secretary General Hans-Werner Müller**.

The European Parliament has again sent a strong message to the Commission and Council that it will not stand by and accept the introduction of ill-conceived legislation. The European Council must now heed this call and rule out any EU-level solar radiation regulations.

“For a small business owner or employee, this type of over-regulation only reinforces their negative perception of the EU and European legislation. It is hypocritical to pay lip service to the principle of better regulation and yet insist on imposing further unwarranted legislation and onerous obligations,” continued Mr Müller.

“No small construction firm or café has the time, the resources or the scientific know-how to make a daily analysis of the risks of UV conditions and to determine and distribute the necessary protective equipment on the basis of this. The original proposals would also create an unrealistic responsibility on employers with regard to sunlight exposure, setting a dangerous precedent in terms of future legal liability.”

UEAPME has welcomed the sensible approach taken MEPs to this directive by leaving it up to Member States to decide whether or not more obligations are necessary to regulate exposure to sunlight. It is now calling on the Council to accept the common sense amendments made by the European Parliament.

There is clearly a risk from over-exposure to sunlight but this risk varies dramatically across Europe. Given the risk from exposure to sunlight affects all members of the public when they are outdoors, it would be better addressed by the provision of adequate information both to employees and the general public at national level. Employees are the most important resource for most small businesses and it is crucial that they are sufficiently informed to protect themselves against all risks to their health.

\*\*\*\*\* End \*\*\*\*\*

**EDITORS’ NOTE:** UEAPME is the employer’s organisation representing the interests of crafts, trades and SMEs in the EU and accession countries at European level. UEAPME has 78 member organisations, which represent crafts and SMEs across Europe, covering over 11 million enterprises with nearly 50 million employees. UEAPME is a Social Partner.

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