

## European Commission frequently disregarding its own SME Test guidelines, new study reveals

The European Commission regularly fails to apply its own guidelines on assessing the needs of SMEs. This is the main message from a new EUROCHAMBRES study of the application of the SME test within pre-legislative impact assessments, which is being presented to Commissioner Bieńkowska and the Network of SME Envoys in Brussels today.

Despite the strong commitment of the Juncker Commission to the ‘Think Small First’ principle, the overall quality of SME tests is disappointing. Indeed, in evaluating a range of impact assessments against the Commission’s Better Regulation guidelines, EUROCHAMBRES found that less than half contained what could be considered a good SME test.

Impact assessments reviewed in the study relate to key dossiers for SMEs, such as Posting of workers, Geo-blocking and Insolvency. Several were found to have weaknesses, such as insufficiently reflecting the views of SMEs, shortfalls in the quantification and monetisation of impacts, or a lack of attention to different SME size-classes (micro, small, medium).

*“This is the third time that we’ve conducted such an analysis of how well the European Commission respects its own guidelines on the SME test. Although the guidelines have changed, the overall picture is consistently unsatisfactory, stated Arnaldo Abruzzini, CEO of EUROCHAMBRES.*

The study puts forward several recommendations to the European Commission to improve the application of the SME test, including:

- Combine open public consultation with targeted consultation methods;
- Accurately assess the impact on SMEs for all policy options, not only for the preferred one;
- Make further efforts to quantify the costs and benefits on SMEs;
- Provide relevant units across the European Commission’s services with adequate assistance in the application of the SME test;
- Make the SME test a condition sine qua non for a positive opinion on impact assessments by the Regulatory Scrutiny Board.

*“It is crucial to our competitiveness that legislation relevant to SMEs – 99% of all EU businesses and well over half of employment and value added - is based on a thorough analysis of the impact on them. This cannot be optional; it must be a pre-condition for moving forward with a legislative process”, added Mr Abruzzini.*

Read the full study here: <http://bit.ly/2yXDhv9>

Further information: Ms Silvia Caneva, Tel. +32 2 282 08 80, [caneva@eurochambres.eu](mailto:caneva@eurochambres.eu)

Press contact: Mr Luis Piselli, Tel. +32 2 282 08 92, [piselli@eurochambres.eu](mailto:piselli@eurochambres.eu)

All EUROCHAMBRES’ press releases can be found [here](#)

