

EUROCHAMBRES and UEAPME call for more and better impact assessments

Two leading European business organisations, EUROCHAMBRES and UEAPME, have today called on the European Commission, Parliament and Council for significant improvements in the measurement of the costs and benefits of EU policy on SMEs.

In a letter prepared to coincide with their participation in a CEBRE (Czech Business Representation to the EU) / Czech Presidency event on impact assessments, EUROCHAMBRES and UEAPME stressed that the 'Think Small First' principle, a key recommendation of the Small Business Act, should be systematically applied across all institutions throughout the life-cycle of EU legislative negotiations. More broadly, the two organisations applied pressure on all three institutions to improve their track record on impact assessments.

Ben Butters, Director of European Affairs at EUROCHAMBRES, said: *"81% of businesses gathered at the recent 'European Parliament of Enterprises' called for any piece of EU legislation that does not include a cost-benefit analysis for SMEs to be halted. SMEs feel that their needs are not adequately weighed up in the design and negotiation of new EU policy. This perception is reinforced by the fact that the total number of impact assessments carried out by the Parliament and Council can still be counted on the fingers of one hand."*

Luc Hendrickx, Director of Enterprise Policy & External Relations at UEAPME, added: *"This letter comes at a crucial moment. Institutionally, with a new Parliament, new Commission and new Presidency taking their seats in the coming months, this is a perfect opportunity to instigate much needed reforms across all three institutions and ensure that thorough, neutral, independent and systematic impact assessments are used by policymakers to make an informed choice on the various policy options on the table. Economically, there is not a moment to lose in minimising regulatory burdens on business."*

EUROCHAMBRES and UEAPME have been strong advocates of improvements to the EU's regulatory procedures for several years, but the current crisis makes the need for such reforms more acute than ever. The various economic recovery plans and stimulus packages will be fundamentally undermined if EU policy makers cannot in parallel provide a legislative environment that supports, rather than hinders, SMEs.

The joint EUROCHAMBRES/UEAPME letter on impact assessments can be downloaded from www.eurochambres.eu/Content/Default.asp?PageID=1&DocID=1786 or www.ueapme.com

EUROCHAMBRES – The Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry represents over 19 million enterprises in Europe – 96% of which are SMEs – through members in 45 countries and a European network of 2000 regional and local Chambers.

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UEAPME is the employers' organisation representing crafts, trades and SMEs from the EU and accession countries at European level. UEAPME has 83 member organisations, which represent crafts and SMEs across Europe, covering over 12 million enterprises with 55 million employees. UEAPME is a European Social Partner.

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