

# UEAPME Newsflash

## EP vote on accounting exemptions disappoints UEAPME

The European Parliament's plenary voted this week on a resolution adopting and amending a proposal to allow Member States to exempt micro-companies from the obligation to draw up and publish annual accounts. UEAPME criticised the outcomes of the vote as a step back for the internal market, as it will create an uneven playing field between businesses operating in different Member States. The proposal will not generate a net cost reduction since micro-entities will have to keep filing accounts for national administrations, banks, suppliers and customers. Moreover, red tape will be displaced rather than reduced, as MEPs allowed Member States to add further obligations to exempted micro-companies, stressed UEAPME, which recommended simplifying the existing harmonised accounting rules as a better alternative and called on the Council to reject the current proposal. [Read more](#) or contact [Luc Hendrickx](#)

## Employment Council adopts parental leave agreement

The Employment Council meeting in Brussels this week formally adopted a directive implementing the framework agreement on parental leave that was signed by the European Social Partners in June 2009. The directive is the first to explicitly mention UEAPME, since the organisation was excluded from the negotiations of the original agreement in 1995. It aims to facilitate the reconciliation of parental and professional responsibilities for working parents, taking into account the increasing diversity of family structures while respecting national law, collective agreements and/or practice. The text will extend minimum parental leave to four months per partner, part of which is not transferrable, and will require changes to the national legislation within 2 years in Belgium, Ireland, Malta, Portugal, Romania and the UK. The directive will be soon translated into all the EU official languages. [Read more](#) or contact [Liliane Volozinskis](#)

## SMEs publish comments on industrial emissions directive

UEAPME published this week a position paper for the second reading on the industrial emissions directive, ahead of a Committee vote at the European Parliament in April. In the document, which was elaborated by our expert Guenther Grassl from WKÖ, UEAPME stressed once again that the directive will apply to many small and medium-sized enterprises that will find it more challenging to comply with the relevant legal provisions than it is for larger companies. Neither the Parliament nor the Council took sufficient steps in this respect in the first reading, wrote UEAPME, which also stressed that any extension of the scope must be carefully considered. Finally, UEAPME put forward specific suggestions on monitoring and reporting requirements and on soil protection measures. [Read more](#) or contact [Guido Lena](#)

## SMEs speak at seminar on Ombudsman's new mandate

The European Ombudsman P. Nikiforos Diamandouros organised a seminar on his new mandate in Brussels this week. Secretary General Andrea Benassi spoke at the event, which also featured the EC Vice President Maroš Šefčovič. About 20% of all complaints received by the Ombudsman in 2008 came from SMEs, said Mr Benassi. Their main complaint causes are linked to tenders and contracts with the European Commission as well as to late payments in this respect. The Ombudsman has a crucial role as mediator in such cases, stressed Mr Benassi, as he can solve pending issues in an impartial manner that does not damage the relationship between SMEs and the Commission. Commenting on the Ombudsman's priorities for his new mandate, Mr Benassi singled out the need to strengthen a culture of service within the EU institutions as the most important goal. [Read more](#) or contact [Maria Cimaglia](#)

## From Andrea Benassi's agenda: Paris, Hasselt, Brussels

**09/03:** In Paris, Secretary General Andrea Benassi met Pierre Burbat, his counterpart from our French member organisation UPA.

**09/03:** On the same day in Hasselt, the Secretary General met representatives from our member organisations CDM (LU), MKB (NL), UNIZO (BE) and ZDH (DE).

**11/03:** In Brussels, Mr Benassi met Hervé Guider, Secretary General of the European Association of Cooperative Banks (EACB).

**12/03:** Today in Brussels, the Secretary General has spoken at a conference organised by the European Ombudsman on his new mandate (*see above*).

➤ For questions on Mr Benassi's agenda, please contact the [UEAPME Secretariat](#)

### KEY EVENTS AHEAD:

- [European conference on CSR \(12/03, contact Luc Hendrickx\)](#)

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