



"The voice of crafts and SMEs in Europe"

"Youth on the Move" flagship initiative does not totally convince, say SMEs

UEAPME welcomes special attention towards VET and apprenticeship, calls for clarifications on labour market dimension

Brussels, 15 September 2010 – UEAPME, the European craft and SME employers' organisation, was left with mixed feelings by today's "Youth on the Move" communication by the European Commission, which is aimed notably at improving employment prospects and promoting learning mobility of young people. On the positive side, UEAPME welcomed the Commission's efforts to propose an integrated approach covering the world of education and the world of work. UEAPME in particular appreciated the valorisation of vocational education and training as well as of "learning at the workplace" through apprenticeship and lifelong learning. It also supported the announced measures to increase learning mobility in Europe. However, UEAPME criticised the overly negative language used on new forms of employment and the lack of concrete details on several actions announced today, calling on the Commission for clarifications.

Director for Social Affairs and Employment Policy **Liliane Volozinskis** offered the following comments:

"Europe will not be able to reach its growth objectives without the full contribution of young people. Today's communication is a first step in this respect. The Commission rightly pointed out the need to strengthen the links between education and labour markets. It also recognised the importance of fostering vocational education and training and promoting apprenticeships, as well as reducing the numbers of early school leavers. In doing so, today's communication will hopefully lead to a better match between the supply and demand sides of the labour market. This is fundamental for small enterprises, which have difficulties to find the right skills and competences especially among young people coming out of the education system, all the more so in the present downturn."

"The Commission made a good analysis on education and training and on the need to foster entrepreneurship and self-employment as a good option for young people. However, the same cannot be said when it comes to the chapter on employment and labour markets. The language on temporary contracts, for instance, is overly negative. The text overlooks the fact that atypical work contracts are needed for the fluidity of labour markets, acting as a stepping stone for outsiders or for more stable employment contracts."

"Potentially interesting new actions such as the 'Your first EURES job' initiative to help young people find a job abroad, a 'Mobility Scoreboard' to monitor the progress made or maximising the potential of the ESF to support young people are announced without details on their practical implementation. The Commission must clarify its intentions and go into further detail if it is serious about achieving the EU 2020 objectives and really making a difference for young people in Europe."

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EDITORS' NOTES: UEAPME is the employers' organisation representing exclusively crafts, trades and SMEs from the EU and accession countries at European level. UEAPME has 85 member organisations covering over 12 million enterprises with 55 million employees. UEAPME is a European Social Partner. For further information: <http://www.ueapme.com/>

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