



“The voice of SMEs in Europe”

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Integrated Product Policy: UEAPME welcomes approach of the new Communication but calls for preliminary SME focused measures

Brussels, 18th June 2003. UEAPME, the European SME employers association, agrees with the overall approach recommended by the long awaited Commission’s Communication on Integrated Product Policy. UEAPME sees this approach as realistic and oriented to the full considerations of the three pillars of the sustainable development strategy.

Nonetheless, UEAPME calls on the Commission to focus on small businesses and micro-businesses in particular when carrying out the new Impact Assessment procedures. “This is justified by the fact that small businesses and their specific needs are not at all mentioned in the Communication” said Mr. Guido Lena, Director of Environmental Affairs at UEAPME.

As far as the IPP approach is concerned, UEAPME supports the fact that stakeholder involvement has been identified as one of the five key principles. UEAPME also welcomes the setting up of various measures aimed at helping SMEs move towards the implementation of IPP such as the Life Cycle Analysis database.

The Commission intends assessing the need to impose obligations on producers regarding the IPP approach by means of a discussion document in 2005. But, before deciding whether general obligations should be imposed on producers, it is vital that authorities:

- ensure awareness-raising measures amongst SMEs and, particularly, micro and small businesses;
- provide SMEs with technical assistance aimed at explaining the necessary changes to their production processes;
- provide SMEs with training measures aimed at ensuring that entrepreneurs and employees understand the objectives of the new strategy and can adapt it in various stages in its production process.

These measures should be implemented at national, regional and local level but under the supervision of the Commission. A budget should also be foreseen as early as 2004 to ensure that small businesses can meet the requirements of the IPP.

UEAPME is also very concerned as to how the future principles will be integrated in practice in future EC environmental policy. For instance, if the upcoming Directive establishing the framework for the eco-design of energy using products (EuP), which will “enshrine the IPP principles”, is the future model, then UEAPME will not be in a position to defend the concept any further which “would be most regrettable” concluded Mr. Lena.

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