



“The voice of SMEs in Europe”

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE ISSUE:

Energy-using products Directive made more workable for SMEs

Brussels, 12 April 2005, UEAPME, the European association for small and medium businesses and crafts, has welcomed the amended Directive on energy-using products (EUP) as a more workable solution for SMEs, in advance of the European Parliament plenary vote tomorrow (Wednesday).

“The original Commission proposal on EUPs would have placed an unmanageable burden on many small enterprises, which would have found it difficult to remain in business. The compromise amendments make the Directive less onerous for SMEs, while encouraging them to take an eco-friendly approach to manufacturing,” said **Guido Lena, UEAPME Director of Environmental Policy**.

The revision of the proposal means that manufacturers will only be obliged to take the most important environmental factors into consideration in the life-cycle analysis of their products, the rest will be on a voluntary basis. SMEs in the sector would have found it impossible to carry out obligatory life cycle analyses, covering all environmental factors, on their products. This change makes the Directive more manageable for small firms.

The revision also commits the Commission to use existing programmes to help SMEs, particularly very small businesses, to include environmentally friendly concerns, including energy efficiency, in the product design stage. Special attention will also be paid to SMEs in the Commission guidelines on the implementing measures of the proposal. These amendments will make it easier for small businesses to comply with the Directive.

The compromise amendments, to be voted on tomorrow, should also be accepted by the Council. The changes included to take account of SMEs were advocated by the Shadow Rapporteur in the European Parliament and were supported by UEAPME.

“This proposal is the fruit of a constructive working relationship with the Parliament and shows the advantages of co-operating with the relevant stakeholders in the legislative process. By considering the impact of the proposed legislation on SMEs, the European Parliament has limited its damaging effects on enterprise,” said **Hans-Werner Müller, UEAPME Secretary General**.

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EDITORS’ NOTE: The Directive on energy-using products is the first application of integrated product policy. Under the proposal, manufacturers of energy-using products (such as electrical or electronic goods) will be obliged to reduce the negative environmental impact of a product throughout the product life cycle. This includes ensuring a product maximises energy efficiency and that it can ultimately be disposed of in an environmentally friendly manner.

The text being voted on in the European Parliament tomorrow is the outcome of an informal dialogue in March and April, including the relevant actors from the Parliament, the Commission and the European Council, which aimed to prevent the proposal going to conciliation.

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