



“The voice of SMEs in Europe”

Press Release

IMMEDIATE ISSUE:

EU proposals on exposure to sunlight must be blocked by MEPs

- **Commission and Council trying to force through ridiculous rules on solar radiation**

Brussels, 1 September 2005 Proposed EU rules on solar radiation are being described as legislative overkill by UEAPME, the European small and medium business organisation, which is calling on the European Parliament to approve amendments to the Optical Radiation Directive ahead of a crucial plenary vote on Wednesday (7 September).

“Imposing technical obligations at EU level to regulate the effects of sunlight, which varies dramatically across Europe, borders on the ridiculous. We are calling on the European Parliament to inject some common sense into these proposals in their vote on the directive,” said **UEAPME Secretary General Hans-Werner Müller**.

The Council and the Commission are pushing for the original proposal, which introduced onerous and unrealistic obligations on employers with workers outdoors, to be endorsed by the Parliament. This is despite a recommendation from the Parliament’s Employment and Social Affairs Committee to make the directive more realistic by leaving it up to Member States to determine if any regulation is necessary.

UEAPME is calling on MEPs to stand strong in the face of this pressure and to amend the directive to prevent the introduction of excessive EU rules on exposure to sunlight.

“Imposing complicated EU level requirements for scientific risk assessments and detailed action plans on small businesses with outdoor workers is not only unrealistic but it would undermine the credibility of European legislation,” continued Mr Müller.

“Small firms with employees outdoors, for example cafés and construction firms, have neither the resources nor, more importantly, the expertise to undertake sufficient scientific analysis. These proposals would place an unmanageable burden on small and medium businesses and could open up a can of worms with regard to legal liability.”

“There is clearly a risk from over-exposure to sunlight but this risk varies dramatically across Europe and affects all members of the public when they are outdoors. It would be better addressed by the provision of adequate information both to workers and the general public at national level. Employees are the most important resource for most small businesses and it is crucial that they are sufficiently informed to protect themselves against all risks to their health.”

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EDITORS’ NOTE: UEAPME is the employer’s organisation representing the interests of crafts, trades and SMEs from the EU and accession countries at European level. UEAPME has 78 member organisations, which represent crafts and SMEs across the whole of Europe, covering over 11 million enterprises with nearly 50 million employees. UEAPME is a European Social Partner.

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