



## **“The voice of SMEs in Europe”**

### **Press Statement**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Waste Directive: no targets without impact assessment, say SMEs**

**Brussels, 9 April 2008 – The European Parliament’s Environment Committee delivered once again a negative message to small businesses when voting in second reading on the Waste Directive yesterday (Tuesday), according to UEAPME, the European craft and SME employers’ organisation. MEPs reinserted quantitative, legally binding and EU-wide targets for the recycling of waste and rejected sensible amendments aiming at carrying out an impact assessment study before setting goals. While UEAPME is not opposed to targets in principle, it had repeatedly called for a prior feasibility study, especially since large differences remain between and within Member States as far as the existing recycling facilities and rules are concerned. Moreover, the Committee voted down the creation of a consultative “waste forum” open to all stakeholders. On the other hand, UEAPME was pleased by MEPs’ support for a simplified “waste list” for SMEs.**

*“The arbitrary targets on recycling approved by the Environment Committee yesterday are neither based on existing statistics nor supported by an impact assessment study”, said **Guido Lena**, UEAPME Director for Environmental Policy. “MEPs regrettably decided to disregard these basic requirements and went ahead in a target-setting frenzy that is bound to do more harm than good”.*

Compulsory targets to be reached by 2020 were set as high as 70% for the recycling and reuse of construction and demolition waste by MEPs. Such a choice is purely arbitrary, not supported by any kind of evidence and might turn out to be disproportionately burdensome for smaller businesses in some countries or in sectors such as construction. *“Impact assessments were supported in theory by the Parliament’s rapporteur, but disappeared in practice during the vote”, commented Mr Lena.*

Another negative point for UEAPME was the dismissal of a consultative forum between the EU, Member States and all relevant stakeholders. *“Consultative fora have proved their worth in the fields of water and air legislation – they have helped to improve implementation and address possible problems at a very early stage. It is irresponsible not to use them for the Waste Directive”, stressed Mr Lena.*

UEAPME conversely welcomed the Committee’s decision to provide SMEs with simplified guidance on how to deal with hazardous waste. The so-called “waste list”, which is used to this end at the moment, is an extensive document that is excessively technical in some points and rather unclear in others. *“Reading a 40-page complicated document to find out whether the refuse at hand is hazardous or not is impractical per se – all the more so for small companies dealing with waste on an occasional basis. The simplified ‘waste list’ could be of great use in this respect, and it is possibly the only bit of good news in yesterday’s vote”, concluded Mr Lena.*

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**EDITORS’ NOTES:** UEAPME is the employers’ organisation representing crafts, trades and SMEs from the EU and accession countries at European level. UEAPME has 85 member organisations, which represent crafts and SMEs across Europe, covering over 12 million enterprises with 50 million employees. UEAPME is a European Social Partner. For further information: <http://www.ueapme.com/>

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