

Support for social dialogue welcomed by SMEs

Social dialogue is the best tool for adapting labour markets in good and bad times

Brussels, 25/01/2023 – SMEUnited welcomes the European Commission Communication on the European social dialogue and the proposal for a Council Recommendation on national social dialogue. Social partners at all levels are best placed to modernise labour markets and make them more resilient to strengthen SMEs productivity, innovation and competitiveness.

“We welcome the European Social dialogue communication, launching a new start of social dialogue with full respect for social partners’ autonomy. This comes at the right time, marked by a new challenging geopolitical, economic and social context,” stated Secretary General Véronique Willems.

As SMEUnited, we welcome several actions proposed by the Commission, e. g. setting up a research network to analyse and promote EU social dialogue or establishing an information session on the Commission’s work programme. Clarifications on the application of the better regulation toolbox on European social partners’ agreements are particularly useful. SMEUnited also appreciates the renewed support for social partners’ capacity-building measures notably in the context of the European Social Fund+ programming period.

Greater involvement of cross-industry social partners, especially SME representatives, at all levels in the European Semester process and in the implementation of the National Recovery and Resilience Plans remains a priority.

In the proposal for a Council recommendation, the principle of promoting collective bargaining at European level should go hand in hand with full respect for the diversity of industrial relations systems and the various levels of collective bargaining coverage in the Member States. Social partners, including SMEs, at national, regional or sectoral level should decide in an autonomous manner to engage in collective bargaining.

As SMEUnited, we are fully committed to continuing our role in the European social dialogue, ensuring that its outcome is fully in line with SMEs specificities and further promoting it at all levels.

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EDITORS' NOTES: SMEUnited is the association of Crafts and SMEs in Europe with 67 member organisations from over 30 European countries. SMEUnited represents national cross-sectoral SME federations, European SME branch organisations and associate members. SMEUnited is a recognised employers' organisation and European Social Partner. SMEUnited was formerly known as UEAPME. www.SMEUnited.eu | Twitter: @SMEUnited