

Better Regulation Package: construction SMEs welcome cutting red tape but say no to deregulation

Brussels, 19th May 2015 – The European Builders Confederation EBC – representing micro, small and medium construction businesses at European level – welcomes the new Better Regulation Package, released today.

Patrick Liébus, President of EBC, said *“Cutting red tape is essential to small businesses. Given their size, they have very few resources to cope with excessive burdens. Nevertheless, EBC strongly believes that simplification just cannot come at the expense of health and safety of workers and environmental concerns”*.

Patrick Liébus continued *“We specifically reject all proposals aiming at exempting micro-enterprises from providing the systematic documentation of risk assessment in health and safety. This is the only way companies have to demonstrate they comply with necessary health and safety rules. EBC also rejects ex-post exemptions from a general point of view: if legislation is too burdensome for 92% of the enterprises in construction, it is not appropriate! With the help of the “Think Small First” principle, it is possible to find the correct balance between the rightful protection of workers and the reduction of burdensome red tape for small businesses”*.

Patrick Liébus concluded *“On paper, the better regulation initiative contains a few positive provisions. Not only does it plan to take SMEs’ interests more thoroughly into account, but also to improve the involvement of the Council of the EU and of the European Parliament in assessing the impact of legislation. We have been requesting this for a long time. However, first and foremost the “Think Small First” principle needs to be applied, otherwise it will have zero impact on SMEs”*.

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Note to editors

Established in 1990, the European Builders Confederation - EBC - is a European professional organisation representing national associations of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises working in the construction sector. Through its national members, EBC represents 2 million construction microenterprises and SMEs. EBC is a member of UEAPME, on behalf of which it chairs the UEAPME Construction Forum.

The construction sector is of vital importance to the European economy. With 3 million enterprises, an annual turnover of around € 1600 billion and a total direct workforce of 13 million, the construction sector contributes at around 10% to the GDP of the European Union.

99.9% of the European construction sector is composed of small and medium-sized companies, which produce 80% of the construction industry's output. Small enterprises (less than 50 employees) are responsible for 60% of the production and employ 70% of the sector's working population.

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