



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **Cutting red tape for SMEs: Tajani participates in meeting of Stoiber group**

The economic outlook for the EU SMEs shows positive signs with a combined increase in aggregated employment and value-added of EU's SMEs. The Commission is taking action to ensure that its policies and programmes sustain this positive trend. Reducing administrative burden for small business is a joint challenge for the Commission and the Member States. This is why European Commission Vice President will address this issue at the meeting of the High level Group on administrative burden today in Brussels.

Antonio Tajani, European Commission Vice-President, responsible for enterprise and industry issues, said: *"Doing business is what European companies are set up for. Less bureaucracy for a company means more time for the core business. It means less expenses and more efficient management and use of resources. Better regulation and reducing administrative burdens, in particular for SMEs, are therefore a priority goal for the Commission."*

At the meeting Mr Tajani will address the following issues:

### **Make sure that the SME Test is well applied**

There is a need to ensure that the impact of legislative proposals on small and medium-sized enterprises is properly assessed by applying an [SME Test](#). It encompasses consultation with SMEs/SME representative organisations, a preliminary assessment of businesses likely to be affected, a cost/benefit analysis of the impact on SMEs and use of mitigating measures, if appropriate.

### **"Think Small First" principle**

The implementation of the "Think Small First" principle remains the core principle of the Small Business Act (SBA) for Europe. It implies a simplification of the regulatory and administrative environment in which SMEs are operating, notably by designing rules according to this principle. This is why we consequently promote a change in the way policies are made and in the way administrations interact with businesses.

### **Commission's regulatory fitness programme (REFIT)**

The EU regulation needs to be fit for purpose, proportionate and easy to apply. This is the objective of the Commission's regulatory fitness programme ([REFIT](#)) which you recently discussed with the President. It is a continuous effort to reduce administrative burden. The programme sets out the policy areas where the Commission will take further action to simplify or withdraw EU laws, to ease the burden on businesses and to facilitate implementation.

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## **Top 10 most burdensome legislative**

In 2012, the Commission ran a public consultation to identify the Top 10 most burdensome legislative acts. ([IP/13/188](#)). The following EU laws were identified by SMEs as being the most burdensome: REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals), VAT - Value added tax legislation, General Product Safety, Recognition of professional qualifications, Shipments of waste - Waste framework legislation - List of waste and hazardous waste, Labour market-related legislation, Data protection, working time, recording equipment in road transport (for driving and rest periods), procedures for the award of public contracts (public works, supply and service contracts), modernised customs code

## **Progress on reducing burdensome legislation**

In Summer 2013 the Commission reported that it had already **proposed simplification of the EU laws on:**

- data protection,
- posting of workers,
- general product safety,
- public procurement,
- [recognition of professional qualifications] and road transport.

It is now in the hands of the EU Parliament and of the Council to adopt the measures necessary to bring the full benefits to business.

New proposals were adopted recently on **VAT**. In addition, the Commission is now evaluating EU laws on

- health and safety at work,
- temporary agency work,
- working time,

with conclusions mostly lined-up for 2014, or 2015 in the case of occupational health and safety.

## **Reduced fees for SMEs under EU chemical legislation**

REACH came out on top in the TOP 10 consultation, but the Commission reacted quickly ([IP/13/247](#)). In March 2013 the European Commission lowered the fees and charges that SMEs have to pay to register chemicals. This step should help SMEs that produce or trade chemicals to remain competitive during the current difficult market situation. Depending on the size of the company, SMEs could benefit from reductions from 35% to 95% in relation to standard registration fees, and from 25% to 90% in relation to standard fees for authorisation requests. Moreover in ECHA, the EU's chemical agency, an SME Ambassador is helping SMEs with the registration of chemicals with the Agency.

The [SME Envoys](#), the network of high level representatives in Member States who serve as single points of contact to implement the updated [Small Business Act for Europe](#) work together with the Commission to reduce regulatory burden for SMEs both at the EU and in Member States.

[More information](#)