

SMEs call for adequate economic environment to deliver on social progress

High Level Conference discussed the future of the European Pillar of Social Rights

Brussels, 16 April 2024 – “SMEunited remains dedicated to social dialogue to develop the appropriate policy and reforms in order to tackle the challenges we are facing today. That is why we signed the La Hulpe declaration. We recall that social progress is delivered by resources created by economic development. Therefore, we must urgently act to regain European competitiveness and reinforce the position of our companies, in particular SMEs. We call on the EU Council to set a clear competitiveness agenda as part of the Strategic Agenda. For SMEs it is crucial to be able to do business, based on smart regulation and with reduced administrative burdens”, stated SMEunited Secretary General Willems.

The elements raised in the La Hulpe Declaration will provide for the discussions for the EU social agenda for the next mandate. A strong competitiveness agenda will allow SMEs to do business and create the resources to deliver on economic and social progress. A well-functioning and balanced social dialogue, where SMEs are at the table when reforms are designed and decided, is a crucial foundation to guarantee this.

The next step is to focus on the implementation of the twin transition and the legislation adopted in this mandate. The regulatory framework must be reviewed to ensure coherence and consistency. Tailored tools and guidance should be provided for SMEs to adapt their business models and processes. We must shift from delivering on law making to making law deliver.

“We call for a commitment to make SMEs strong again. Preparing for the next mandate, SMEunited imagines SMEs as bees. Bees are hard-working, agile, flexible. Bees ensure cross fertilisation, are crucial actors in several ecosystems. They depend on their beehive to thrive. That beehive for SMEs is built on “Think Small First and act accordingly”. The regulatory framework must be tailored to small companies, developing policy based on enterprises with an average of 4 employees” concluded Ms Willems.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Press & Communications | pressoffice@SMEunited.eu | [+32.2.285.07.25](tel:+3222850725)

EDITORS' NOTES: SMEunited is the association of Crafts and SMEs in Europe with 65 member organisations from over 30 European countries. SMEunited represents national cross-sectoral Craft and 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.

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