



## **SME UNION sets up “Low” Level Group to fight administrative burdens**

„After our successful fight for the **increase of the de-minimis-limit** for national funding to 200.000 EUR we will now combine all our efforts to reach our next ambitious aim: **The cut of the red tape burden by 25 percent until 2010**”, emphasized SME UNION President Christoph Leitl after the SME UNION’s Topic of the Year Conference on “Less & Better Regulation for European SMEs” on 20 November in Brussels. The Small and Medium Entrepreneurs Union of the European People's Party (EPP) will install an **expert group of real entrepreneurs** which will suggest concrete and practicable measures how to reduce bureaucracy, announced the SME UNION President during this event.

“The European Commission has set up a “High Level Expert Group on Administrative Burdens” headed by Edmund Stoiber. There are no real entrepreneurs in this expert group and no representatives from our new member countries from Eastern Europe. **Our group will be rather “low” level and down to earth. It will consist of small and medium entrepreneurs who have suffered from bureaucratic obstacles first-hand. Our group will present the results after 6 months and will not spend millions of Euros for consultants.** They will be able to speak from their own experience”, explained President Leitl. Especially SMEs are hindered in their growth and innovation capacity by too many and too complicated regulations.

The SME UNION fully supports the „Better Regulation” initiative of the European Commission. Commission Vice-President **Günter Verheugen** received yesterday the **SME UNION Political Entrepreneurship Award 2007** for his efforts “to make Europe more entrepreneurial”: “When Commissioner Verheugen got his dossiers enterprise and industry, I was a bit worried who would take care of SMEs in the Commission. But Vice-President Verheugen promised that he would not forget the special needs of small entrepreneurs and he has kept his word”, concluded SME UNION President Leitl in his laudatio. Verheugen replied that he will listen carefully to the voice of the SME UNION.

On the same day the business organization of the EPP held her bi-annual Political Bureau meeting and its members voted unanimously to chose as **topic of the year 2008 “European Small Business Act: answer to globalization – fostering the EU internal market”**. The SME UNION urges the European Commission to propose a Small Business Act (SBA) in order to do more to address the concerns SMEs in Europe: Binding guidelines and provisions tailored especially for SMEs should draw together different existing provisions and be included in new policies and regulations: The aim should be reducing administrative burdens for SMEs, increasing their participation in EU programmes, insuring their share in public procurement, giving them easier access to standardization and reducing obstacles to cross-border trade”, summarized SME UNION President Leitl.

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**The SME UNION** (Small and Medium Entrepreneurs Union) of the EPP (European People’s Party) is the business organization of the EPP and network of pro-business Christian-Democrat, Conservative and Center Right politicians and political organizations. As officially recognized EPP Association its main objective is to shape EU policy in a more SME friendly way. [www.sme-union.org](http://www.sme-union.org)