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## **SME UNION President Leitl welcomes adoption of stimulus package at EU summit**

„EU heads of state and government have given a strong signal of their capacity to act and communicated an atmosphere of restart by adopting the European Commission’s recent EUR 200 billion stimulus package”, said SME UNION President Christoph Leitl after the agreement at the summit in Brussels. “Now the EU chiefs have to walk the talk. The motto has to be to emerge stronger from the crisis” highlighted Leitl.

To tackle the economic slowdown in Europe, European SMEs need all the support they can get at this difficult moment: “Europe’s entrepreneurs need quick and less bureaucratic access to finance. We welcome the **temporary flexibilisation of state aid legislation**. In addition, the SME UNION President expects a **clear support from the member states representatives for the Small Business Act**. “The SBA, together with the annexed Action Plan, only will be a success, if the member states politically commit themselves for its quick implementation on national level. The council’s conclusions have to give a clear sign of this political willingness and clear commitments.”

**Access to finance for SMEs** must be a priority. “Banks are reluctant to provide loans to risky projects, like innovative ventures and start-ups. But especially these businesses need all the help they can get to survive the crisis and bring new jobs and growth to Europe”, underlined President Leitl. The European Investment Bank (EIB) should bring forth its **own SME Guarantee Fund** to provide counter-guarantees to national and regional institutions providing guarantees and equity side funds particularly to start-ups and innovative SMEs, donated with a yearly budget of at least EUR 500 million.

Leitl also welcomes the solution that was found to the Lisbon treaty impasse: “Especially on the times of crisis that we are living, the European Union represents an assurance for the citizens and the entrepreneurs. Today, Ireland and the Irish people have the opportunity to be a part of this strong and benevolent Europe”.

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**SME UNION** (Small and Medium Entrepreneurs Union) of the EPP (European People’s Party) is the network of pro-business Christian-Democrat, Conservative and Liberal politicians and political organizations. Its main objective is to help in shaping EU policy in a more SME friendly way. [www.sme-union.org](http://www.sme-union.org)