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## **SME UNION President Leitl calls on EU summit to support EU Commission President Barroso**

"The European summit has to send out a strong signal of departure to European entrepreneurs and citizens. More than ever, Europe has to speak with one voice to overcome the impacts of the economic crisis and to show that it is a strong player on the global stage", said SME UNION President Christoph Leitl in the run-up of the summit of EU heads of state and government today and Friday in Brussels.

After the successful European Parliament elections, it is now time to set the course for a strong European Commission: "Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso has shown – especially during this tough last year - that he is the right man for this important position. We hope that the EU summit will give his support to Barroso." President Leitl underlined that it will be then up to Barroso to deliver and live up to the trust given to him: "Europe has to emphasize its position as a powerful and equal partner to the United States." President Leitl welcomed US President Barack Obama's new and ambitious proposals for the regulation of financial markets. Nevertheless he underlined that Europe has to play an important role and to contribute substantially to the restructuring of the worldwide financial rules.

Leitl also highlighted the need for a strong personality to fight for better SME framework conditions as Vice President Guenter Verheugen has done the last five years: "Especially SMEs are suffering from the current crisis. They should get all the help they need. But also when the crisis will be over, SMEs should not be left behind. All policies should be made in view of the needs and demands of small enterprises. SMEs are the backbone of our economy, so it is only logical that we need a strong EU Commissioner to take care of SME issues. The Small Business Act (SBA) was only the first policy step." The SBA has the potential to finally change European SME policy. It includes essential ambitious demands of the SME UNION. The SBA contains a lot of improvements for SMEs, from better regulation to special regulations.

Last but not least, the SME UNION has sent a letter to Swedish Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt with the 12 priorities it considers crucial to help European SMEs to overcome the current crisis and to emerge even stronger (see SME UNION Press Release of 08-06-2009 and [www.sme-union.eu/documents](http://www.sme-union.eu/documents)). "The new Commissioner in charge of SMEs will have to play a key role to put these measures into practice" concluded the SME UNION President.

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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)