



Brussels, 27 May 2009

**SME UNION sets up 12 priorities for upcoming Swedish EU Council Presidency:**  
Emphasis on measures to ensure SMEs access to finance and stimulus measures to support SMEs

The SME UNION, the business organization of the European People's Party, has set up 12 priorities for the upcoming Swedish EU Council Presidency. "The Swedish Presidency will still have to deal with the consequences of the financial and economic crisis but it will also have to focus on other upcoming European issues like the formulation of a new Lisbon Strategy for Jobs and Growth after 2010", emphasized SME UNION President Christoph Leitl. The SME UNION is confident that the Swedish Presidency will lead the EU in a proper way and hopes it will create an economic environment in which entrepreneurial initiatives of SMEs can prosper. The SME UNION has therefore 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.

The **most pressing points** are:

- Depending on the specific economic situation in the second half of 2009 further **measures to ensure SMEs access to finance and stimulus measures to support SMEs** will be necessary.
- The Swedish Presidency should set up an **EU Guarantee Fund for SMEs** that provides re-insurance for national and regional guarantee institutions. Due to the leverage effect, a multiple of the guarantee volume could be generated as new loan volume.
- During the Swedish EU Council Presidency instant regulatory action to **mitigate pro-cyclical effects of Basel II** is necessary as otherwise the crisis would be aggravated by banking regulation.
- The **Small Business Act (SBA)** is an ambitious plan to support SMEs throughout Europe and has the potential to finally **change European SME policy**. In order to gain positive effects for SMEs, the commitments set up in the SBA have to be implemented at European, national and local level.
- **Administrative burdens** have to be reduced; **red tape** for SMEs has to be cut. European businesses need a **long-term, predictable, transparent and easy regulatory framework** to be able to face future challenges

"We are looking forward to intense dialogues and a close cooperation with the upcoming Swedish EU Council Presidency and the newly elected European Parliament", concluded the letter which was sent by SME UNION President Christoph Leitl. Please find the details on the 12 SME priorities for the Swedish Presidency on [www.sme-union.eu/docs](http://www.sme-union.eu/docs).

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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)